

PRINCIPALS' LEADERSHIP SKILLS AND TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL ATTITUDES AS CORRELATES OF SECONDARY SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS IN OGUN-EAST SENATORIAL DISTRICT, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The problem of schools in recent times has been the inability to achieve goals in the face of the existing leadership skills, professional attitudes of the staff and some other crucial factors. This was why this study adopted correlational research design to examine the correlation between independent variables and dependent variable in the study. The population of the study comprised 2,430 public senior secondary school teachers in Ogun-East Senatorial District, Nigeria. A sample of 500 teachers was randomly selected. "Principals' Leadership Skills Assessment Scale", "Teacher Professional Attitude Questionnaire", and "School Effectiveness Questionnaire" were the instruments used for the data collection. Three research questions were answered, and four null hypotheses tested. The findings revealed that decision making skill (Mean = 3.04), organizational skill (Mean = 2.97), and interpersonal skill (Mean = 2.90) were most prevalent among principals of public senior secondary schools in Ogun East Senatorial District. Also, the teachers in the schools showed positive attitudes towards teaching profession (Mean = 2.87); while the schools under consideration were effective (Mean = 2.62). Furthermore, both principals' leadership skills and teacher attitudes jointly contributed to school effectiveness ($F_{2, 497} = 622.743$; $p < .05$). It was concluded that both independent variables for this study were needed for school effectiveness. The study recommended that teachers should put up ideal professional attitudes, while the principals should possess the required leadership skills that could enhance school effectiveness.

KEYWORDS: Principals, leadership, professional, attitude, effectiveness.

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INTRODUCTION

A school administration that is worth its salt must endeavour to achieve their set goals and objectives. When the school goals are well achieved, then the school can be regarded as being effective. Of course, school like any other corporate organization is expected to achieve its goals and maintain its operations through good leadership behaviour inside and outside the school, teachers' loyalty and commitment, parental involvement, and community supports. The concept 'school effectiveness' refers to a body of research work which investigates the factors responsible for determining school performance (Al-Mechlafi & Osman, 2022). It is the extent to which the set goals or objectives of a school programme are accomplished. According to Bolanle (2014), the parameters for measuring the effectiveness of a secondary school include the level of discipline in school, school climate, teachers' performance and the number of students who successfully passed their school leaving certificate examinations.

Burusic, Babarovic and Velic (2016) viewed the school effectiveness as an act that transcends beyond student passing final examination. It also encompasses students' attainment in other domains of learning (in the areas of both the affective and psychomotor domains). It also refers to the extent to which the students have improved in their performances in terms of assessments' results (Todd & Mason, 2005). The school goal can be achieved through the continuous supervision of the teaching and non-teaching staff (Ayandoja, Aina & Idowu, 2017). Thapa, Cohen, Guffey and Higgins-D'Alessandro (2013) claimed that school effectiveness is positively influenced by the staff and principal's experience, values and norms. A good interaction between principal and teachers also improves school effectiveness, in terms of strong and purposeful principles, shared visions and goals, effective teaching and learning, effective evaluation and monitoring, positive learning environment and effective parental involvement (Bello, 2016).

Effective school is a function of so many factors ranging from good leadership and followership, availability of resources, teachers' efficient job performance, and professional attitudes of teachers by the efforts of other staff. There is no doubt that effective school is one factor that determines the quality of education. The school, indirectly or directly determines the effectiveness of the curriculum, learning facilities and infrastructure, time and learning process (Salmagundi, 2015). From the management perspective, effective schools seek optimal utilization of all school components, and school effectiveness depends mainly upon the school administrator, who is the head. Calman (2017) highlighted eight factors of school effectiveness, which include: strong and effective principal's leadership; sustained focus on instruction and learning; safe and positive school climate and culture; high expectations for all students and staff; effective use of students' achievement data; teaching practice; productive parent involvement; and building the skills of staff members. A school is considered effective when it consistently improves its success history through staff and students' attitudes to a superlative performance.

It is very significant to understand that every institution of higher learning depends on secondary education as a hub; hence secondary education is a feeder to the tertiary education system in Nigeria. The role of a secondary school principal cannot be overemphasized, especially in coordinating the school affairs.

Chalikias and Raftoponlon (2020) observed that one of the primary functions of the school principal is to assign duties to personnel to pursue the goals and objectives of the school. Other than this, the principal is seen as the chief accounting officer, whose functions include school management, school administration, and providing leadership in curriculum and instructional development. He must ensure that he directs the efforts of other personnel towards the achievement of the school goals. Onwubiko, Eze, Udeh, Okoloagu and Chuka-Okosa (2015) observed that the role of the school principal is that of an administrative head, a manager, a community public relations officer, a supervisor, an instructional leader, a curriculum innovator, and a catalyst of planned revolution in the educational system.

Leadership is of importance in management and administration of school organization, thanks to its far-reaching effect on the accomplishment of educational goals. Due to its key role within the success or failure of school organizations, leadership has long been a spotlight of study by students, theorists, researchers and practitioners. Leadership means inspiring people to try to do their best to realize a desired result. Principals as leaders who are in the position to influence others must have the skills that will make them take full advantage of that position to channel all efforts into fulfilling the school visions. Every school principal as a leader of his or her school must possess adequate skills sufficient for the realization of the school goals. Skill therefore, may be a proficiency that is acquired or developed through training or experience. Umar, Kenayathulla and Hoque (2021) defines skill as the ability and capacity acquired through systematic and sustained effort to smoothly and adaptively carryout complex activities or job functions involving cognitive skills, technical skills and interpersonal skills. However, skill might be said to be the acquired energy or expertise over time that aids or facilitates the accomplishment of tasks. Leadership skills therefore entail leadership ability, competence, proficiency, and so on, which require a specific mindset to steer, communicate positively and effectively, being brave and honest, and taking responsibilities.

These skills involve the leader motivating, inspiring people, completing projects on time, setting priorities, break even through procedures, organizing projects and programmes, working closely and smoothly with others, and taking the initiatives as occasions demand. It also involves strategic thinking, problem solving, decision making, and effective communication. It equally entails creating a conducive environment for teaching and learning, provision, maintenance and good use of instructional materials, time management, self-motivation, delegating people, giving and receiving feedback, add groups and conducting meetings, leading effective discussion, managing conflict, understanding group process, resource allocation and management, staff development, staff evaluation, among others. One other attribute so essential for such leaders of schools is attitude. Attitude means the individual's prevailing tendency to respond favourably or unfavourably to an object, person or group of people, institutions or events. Attitude can be positive or negative. The attitude of the teacher has an impact on the behaviour of the students in the classroom as well. The teacher spends most of the school day in the close interaction with his students and as a result; his basic attitudes and actions, his tastes and mannerism have great influence on the students and how he intends to cooperate with the school management to achieve the school goal. Teachers create the

emotional climate in the classroom just by being friendly and calm. This directly affects the emotion of the children, because children learn attitudes and behaviour mostly by example. The effectiveness of education depends upon the quality of teachers working in an institution. The quality of teachers in turn depends upon the quality of training they received from their different training institutions (Lone, 2019). Also, Kahveci (2023) identified positive and negative attitudes of teachers. The negative attitudes include professional inadequacy and irresponsibility, discrimination and injustice, as well as negative classroom management and communication, while the positive attitudes of teachers include effective communication and ethical attitude, professional competence and commitment, as well as individual support and trust.

A teachers who accepts teaching as his or her profession keeps direct relationship with the school head, other teachers, students, parents, communities and the society at large. They do not hesitate to share their experiences with their colleagues. And, they seek guidance and provide supports to others in the field of education. They consider themselves as guides, coaches and leaders in the process of teaching and learning. Hence, most attitudes are the results of direct experience and observations from the environment in which teachers operate as practitioners (Bass, 1999 as cited in Ahmad et al. 2013). Based on this background, this paper investigated the relationships among principal leadership skills, teachers' professional attitudes and secondary school effectiveness.

Statement of the Problem

Effective school system has been a consistent issue in secondary schools. Over the years, there had been a great outcry about the work and deplorable state of the Nigerian public secondary schools and their products. They often referred to secondary schools as being ineffective, based on their observable poor quality. This situation is not different in Ogun State. The problem is terrible to the extent that researchers can see that the average performance of students in both internal and external examinations, which exhibit all kinds of unwanted behaviours such as going to school late and absenteeism. If teachers report to work on time, check class attendance regularly, attend to their instructional roles, and maintain discipline in the classroom, students would learn and perform well resulting to an effective school system. It is in the light of the above, this study is to examine principals' leadership skills and teachers' professional attitudes as correlates of secondary school effectiveness in Ogun-East Senatorial District, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The major objective of this study was to examine the correlation among principals' leadership skills, teachers' professional attitudes and secondary school effectiveness in Ogun-East Senatorial District, Nigeria. Specifically, the study examined:

1. Correlation between principal leadership skills and secondary school effectiveness in Ogun-East Senatorial District;
2. Correlation between teachers' professional attitudes and secondary school effectiveness in Ogun-East Senatorial District;

3. Joint contribution of principal leadership skills and teachers' professional attitudes to secondary school effectiveness in Ogun East Senatorial District; and

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested in the study:

- Hypothesis One:** There is no significant correlation between principal leadership skills and secondary school effectiveness in Ogun East Senatorial District.
- Hypothesis Two:** There is no significant correlation between teachers' professional attitudes and secondary school effectiveness in Ogun East Senatorial District.
- Hypothesis Three:** There is no significant joint contribution of principal leadership skills and teachers' professional attitudes to secondary school effectiveness in Ogun East Senatorial District.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the correlational research design. The rationale for this design is because; the study intended to find relationship between the variables without manipulating any of the variables.

Population of the Study

The population for this study consisted of 2,430 senior school teachers in 121 public secondary schools in nine local government areas in Ogun-East Senatorial District (Source: Ogun State Ministry of Education, 2022).

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample for this study consisted of 500 teachers (representing 25.5% of the population) in Ogun-East Senatorial District, which was selected through simple random sampling technique. This ensured that respondents have an equal chance of being selected. In achieving this, five local government areas were randomly selected. In each local government area, 50 public senior secondary schools were randomly selected, and out of the selected schools, 10 secondary senior school teachers were randomly selected for the study.

Research Instruments

The study used three (3) adapted instruments; tagged: 'Principals' Leadership Skills Assessment Scale (PLSAS), Teacher Professional Attitude Questionnaire (TPAQ), and School Effectiveness Questionnaire (SEQ).' The psychometric tests of all sections of the instrument were carried out, and the reliability coefficients of Principals' Leadership Skill Assessment Scale (PLSAS) yielded 0.72, 0.74, 0.68, and 0.72 respectively. This indicated that each of the four sections of the instruments had high internal consistency. Also, Teacher Professional Attitude Questionnaire (TPAQ) was adapted from Attitude Towards' Teaching

as a Career (ATTC) designed by Eleje (2022) who worked on attitude towards the teaching profession of secondary school teachers. The ATTC had two parts of A and B. Section A sought information on the demographic data of the respondents. On the other hand, Section B sought information on the opinion of the respondents regarding teachers' attitude and it has one cluster, which sought information on the attitude of secondary school teachers towards the teaching profession. The reliability coefficient of ATTC was 0.74. The TPAQ items was structured on four points rating scales of Strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree(D), Strongly Disagree (SD) with numerical values of 4,3,2 and 1 respectively for positively worded items while negatively worded items will be reversely scored.

Lastly, School Effectiveness Questionnaire (SEQ) was adopted from the School Effectiveness Questionnaire (SEQ) based on the questionnaire developed by the Connecticut State Education Department (1990) to measure school effectiveness. The SEQ had earlier been modified four times. This version of the SEQ had retained five categories from the original questionnaire. Modifications were made based upon the present literature on school and instructional effectiveness. The SEQ instrument was structured using a four point Likert Scale of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree with response scores of 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively. The SEQ instrument had a total of 20 items which was subjected to reliability test yielding 0.80.

Methods of data analysis

The inferential statistics of Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to analyze data collected to test null hypotheses one and two, while multiple regressions was used to analyze data collected to test hypothesis three at .05 level of significance.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Findings

Hypothesis One: There is no significant correlation between principal leadership skills and secondary school effectiveness in Ogun-East Senatorial District.

Table 1: Correlation Coefficients between Principal Leadership Skills and Secondary School Effectiveness

Variables	N	Mean	S.D	DM	DS	MS	IS	CS	OS	PLS	SE
DM	500	12.16	3.108	1							
DS	500	7.84	3.224	.314**	1						
MS	500	12.15	4.620	-.305**	.059	1					
IS	500	11.28	3.104	-.100*	.095*	.083	1				
CS	500	11.20	3.312	-.095*	.018	.195**	.166**	1			
OS	500	14.85	4.315	-.071	.054	.284**	.347**	.139**	1		
PLS	500	69.49	6.020	.197**	.440**	.448**	.506**	.480**	.755**	1	
SE	500	52.38	3.778	.070	-.006	.176**	.363**	.480**	.669**	.684**	1

Note. DM= Decision making skills, DS= Delegation skills, MS= Motivational skills, IS= Interpersonal skills, CS= Communication skills, OS= Organisational skills, PLS= Principal leadership skills, SE= School effectiveness

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 1 presented the Pearson’s correlation coefficients among the study’s first independent variable: principals’ leadership skills (decision making skills, delegation skills, motivational skills, interpersonal skills, communication skills, and organizational skills) and secondary school effectiveness in Ogun-East Senatorial District, Nigeria. The result indicated that there is no significant correlation between decision making skill and school effectiveness ($r = 0.070, p > 0.05$). There is no significant correlation between delegation skill and school effectiveness ($r = -0.006, p > 0.05$).

Results also showed that motivational skills is positively correlated with school effectiveness ($r = 0.176, p < 0.05$), interpersonal relation skills is positively correlated with school effectiveness ($r = 0.363, p < 0.05$), communication skills is positively correlated with school effectiveness ($r = 0.480, p < 0.05$), organizational skills is positively correlated with school effectiveness ($r = 0.669, p < 0.05$), and principals’ leadership skills is positively correlated with school effectiveness ($r = 0.684, p < 0.05$). The above result implies that the null hypothesis one which stated that there is no significant correlation between principal leadership skills and secondary school effectiveness in Ogun East Senatorial District is rejected. This means that leadership skills were related to the school effectiveness in this study.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant correlation between teachers’ professional attitudes and secondary school effectiveness in Ogun East Senatorial District.

Table 2: Correlation Coefficient between Teachers’ Professional Attitudes and Secondary School Effectiveness

Variables	N	Mean	S.D	df	r	Sig.	Decision
TPA	500	57.21	6.315	523	.845**	.000	Rejected
SE	500	52.38	3.778				

Note. TPA= Teacher professional attitudes, SE= School effectiveness. S.D= Standard deviation

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 4.6 showed the correlation coefficient between teachers’ professional attitudes and secondary school effectiveness in Ogun-East Senatorial District. The results indicated that at 523 degrees of freedom, teachers’ professional attitudes with mean and standard deviation scores of 57.21 and 6.315 respectively



was found to be strongly and positively correlated with secondary school effectiveness with mean and standard deviation scores of 52.38 and 3.778 respectively. The result implies that there is a significant correlation between teachers’ professional attitudes and secondary school effectiveness in Ogun East Senatorial District ($r = .845, p < 0.05$). Thus, the null hypothesis two was rejected. This simply means that teachers’ professional attitudes were related with the school effectiveness in this study.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant joint contribution of principal leadership skills and teachers’ professional attitudes to secondary school effectiveness in Ogun East Senatorial District.

Table 3: Regression Model Summary Indicating the Joint Contribution of Principal Leadership Skills and Teachers’ Professional Attitudes to Secondary School Effectiveness

Model Summary						
R = .845		R Square = .714		Adjusted R Square = .708		Std. Error of the Estimate = 3.36170
ANOVA						
Model	Sum of Square	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig	Remark
Regression	14782.684	2	7391.342	622.743	.000	Rejected
Residual	5899.126	497	11.869			
Total	20681.810	499				

Dependent Variable: secondary school effectiveness

Predictors: (Constant), teacher professional attitudes, principals’ leadership skills

Table 3 showed the joint contribution of principals’ leadership skills (decision making skills, delegation skills, motivational skills, interpersonal skills, communication skills, and organizational skills) and teachers’ professional attitudes to secondary school effectiveness in Ogun-East Senatorial District, Nigeria. The regression model summary in Table 3 indicated that all the measures of principals’ leadership skills and teachers’ professional attitudes jointly contributed significantly to secondary school effectiveness in Ogun-East Senatorial District ($F_{2, 497} = 622.743; p < .05$). The R^2 adjusted value of 0.708 indicated that 70.8% of the variability observed in school effectiveness was accounted for by the combined contribution of the two independent variables (principals’ leadership skills and teachers’ professional attitudes). Therefore, the null hypothesis three which stated that there is no significant joint contribution of principal leadership skills and teachers’ professional attitudes to secondary school effectiveness in Ogun-East Senatorial District was rejected. This implies that principal leadership skills and teachers’ professional attitudes significantly contributed jointly to school effectiveness in Ogun-East Senatorial District. The result simply means that both the principal leadership skills and teachers’ professional attitudes jointly contributed to the school effectiveness in this study.

DISCUSSION

This study was conducted to examine principals' leadership skills and teachers' professional attitudes as correlates of secondary school effectiveness in Ogun-East Senatorial District, Nigeria. Hypothesis one tested revealed a significant positive correlation between principal leadership skills (motivational skills, interpersonal skills, communication skills, and organizational skills) and secondary school effectiveness in Ogun East Senatorial District. Thus, the null hypothesis one was rejected. This present finding lends credence to the study by Kochamba and Murray (2008) on critical leadership skills needed by the principals for the achievement of school effectiveness. The leadership skills identified were technical, human relations, conceptual and transformative leadership skills which were regarded as being essential for the achievement of school effectiveness.

This finding also corroborates the study by Akinola (2013) who discovered that there was a significant positive relationship between principals' skills and school effectiveness in the secondary schools in South Western Nigeria. Of course, this findings were expected because Onwubiko et al (2015) cited in Umar, Kenayathulla and Hoque (2021) observed that the role of a school principal as a school leader was that of an administrative head, chief accounting officer, a manager, a community public relation officer, a supervisor, an instructional leader, a curriculum innovator, and a catalyst of planned revolution in the education system. This implies that to ensure school effectiveness, the principals' leadership skills are crucial.

However, when each element of the principals' leadership skills was tested in terms of their level of significant relationship to school effectiveness; decision making and delegation skills were uncorrelated with school effectiveness. This simply means that out of the array of skills tested, it was only motivational skills, interpersonal skills, communication skills, and organizational skills that had significant relationship with the school effectiveness. So, it is believed that people with strong interpersonal skills, motivational skills, communication skills and organizational skills tend to build good relationships and can work well with orders in promoting their organizations. According to Kapur (2020), when the leaders (such as school principals) put into operation relevant leadership skills, they are able to render a significant contribution to the organizational goals.

The reason decision-making skills was uncorrelated to the school effectiveness could be attributed to the fact that the study did not distinguish what type of decision-making was being tested. There are participative (democratic) decision-making as well as non-participatory (non-democratic) decision-making skills. As good as decision-making skills could be, however, failure to distinguish which of the type or form of decision making being tested might have been responsible to the result of the hypothesis tested. Furthermore, delegation skills had no significant relationship to the school effectiveness; the reason for this finding could be as a result of so many factors. For instance, such factors could include delegation without proper communication can lead to low-quality work or under-productivity. Also, delegating roles and

authority to subordinates could make the leader lose control over them; and that could cause ineffectiveness in school. However, proper delegation such as carefully choose the right person for the job, focusing on goal, being open to new ideas, empowering your team to make decision, motivating one's team, training and retraining of future leaders can significantly benefit organizational effectiveness.

The hypothesis two tested revealed a significant positive correlation between teachers' professional attitudes and secondary school effectiveness in Ogun-East Senatorial District. It is very true that teachers are the main drivers of quality outputs in schools. This finding corroborates the study by Ojo (2018) who investigated teachers' professional attitudes and students' academic performance in secondary schools, and the study revealed a significant relationship between all the sub-variables of teachers' professional attitude (teachers' professional communication attitudes, teachers' professional classroom management attitudes, teachers' professional pedagogical attitudes, and teachers' professional mastery of subject matter attitudes) and students' academic performance. Interestingly, the quality of output produced by any level of education is dependent on the quality of its teachers. Obadara (2005) cited by Ojo (2018) opined that teachers are highly essential for the successful operation of the educational system and serves as a key to the educational development. This implies that the professional attitudes displayed by the teachers matter a lot in the educational process. Furthermore, teachers play key roles within an educational environment such as guiding learners for the future, teaching moral and social values, giving information relevant to education and imparting skills, good behaviour or attitudes, and knowledge. All these key roles by the teachers are essential towards school effectiveness.

Hypothesis three tested revealed a significant joint contribution of principal leadership skills and teachers' professional attitudes to secondary school effectiveness in Ogun East Senatorial District. The result further indicated that 71% of the variance in the dependent variable (school effectiveness) was as a result of the overall contribution of the two independent variables (principal leadership skills and teachers' professional attitudes). The remaining variation in school effectiveness was attributed to unexplained variables not under the scope of this study. It should be noted that if the principal possesses the right leadership skills and the teachers possess positive professional attitude, schools would be effective. Umar, Kenayathulla and Hoque (2021) in their study of the effectiveness of principal leadership practices in secondary schools found that about 14% of the variation in school effectiveness accounted for leadership skills of the school principal. As a result, there is a compelling need for secondary school principals to identify and promote the professional development needs of teachers and to ensure that teachers are effectively trained to enhance the development of secondary schools.

CONCLUSION

This paper concluded that public senior secondary school effectiveness is significantly related to principals' leadership skills and teachers' professional attitudes. The findings of this study have pointed to the fact that leadership skills and professional attitudes of teachers play pivotal roles on effective school. The positive

nature of teachers' professional attitudes towards teaching profession have influence on their classroom performance and teaching practice, and therefore are correlated with school effectiveness. In addition, the inter-correlation among the study's variables points that good interaction and cooperation between principal and teachers could also improve school effectiveness.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were proffered:

- 1) Principals of secondary schools should be provided with training that can enhance their leadership skills.
- 2) Principals must learn to use ideal decision making and delegation skills appropriate for making their schools effective.
- 3) School leaders should observe and evaluate teacher's instruction to provide valid feedback for the overall purpose of improving school effectiveness.
- 4) Teacher should be provided with training and retraining programmes where their professional attitude can be re-echoed to them.

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