

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF DEMOCRATIC AND AUTOCRATIC LEADERSHIP STYLES AND THEIR IMPACT ON STUDENTS ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ENUGU STATE

Blessing Adamaka Anukaenyi Ph.D
Department of Educational Foundations
Godfrey Okoye University Enugu State

Abstract

The study examined Comparative Analysis of Democratic and Autocratic Leadership Styles and their impact on Students Academic Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Enugu State. Two research questions were developed and answered and two hypotheses formulated and tested for the study. The study adopted a descriptive survey design, an ex- facto. A total population of 4864 teachers were gathered from the total number of public secondary schools in Enugu State, and a sample of 352 teachers was used for the study. A research instrument was constructed by the researcher and used for the data collection. The instrument was validated and its reliability established through a test re-tests method. The data obtained were analyzed using the Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient. The results revealed that democratic leadership style positively influenced academic performance of students, autocratic leadership style was not adopted by principals' and did not influence academic performance of students and that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female teachers on the influenced of the democratic leadership style of principals on the students' academic performance. It was recommended among others that democratic leadership style should be adopted as it promote students' academic performance.

Keywords: Leadership Styles, Principals, Academic Performance

Introduction

Leadership is the ability of a leader to act in other to enable others work in an environment where in each individual serving under him finds himself encouraged and stimulated to a point where he is helped to realise his potential to contribute meaningfully. Leadership has to do with casting vision and motivating people to catch and actualize the vision. The emergence of a leader is usually caused by the need to work towards a common goal and coordinated interests to achieve a common purpose. Supporting the above view, Ukdeje (2009) has it that leadership is the major determinant of success in any organisation or group. However, leadership is the process of influencing group activity towards goal achievement (Stoghill, 2001). It is the behaviour of an individual when he is guiding and directing activities of the group towards a shared goal (Unachukwu & Okoji, 2014). It is an impute into an organisation and involves interpersonal influences as one initiates structures and acts that result in a consistent pattern of group interaction aimed at high productivity and individual fulfilment. The school leader can be called by a variety of titles: Principal, Head teacher, leader of school, the school father, adviser, chief executive, chief administrator, public relations man, policy maker, organiser, school authority, projectionist and others. These and many other nomenclatures reveal a great deal about the way

people see the school leader performing his tasks. Principals are instructional leaders of their schools. Upon them depends to a large extent the instructional programmes of their schools.

In running a successful school leadership, effective administration is of prime importance. According to Hornby (2002), administration is seen as activity carried out by the administrator in order to plan, organize and successfully run a business, school or other institutions, a process or act of organizing activities in such a way that something is done/achieved. Edem (2006), in his view sees administration as that which involves planning of activities which the aim is to fulfil the goals of a particular organization. This therefore calls for the ability of the administrator to make the right decisions in order to fulfil the required goals. In this view therefore, it has to do with educational setting, while administration is regarded as a service, activity or tool with which the cardinal objectives of the educational process may be adequately realized.

Nkwoh (2011) is of the opinion that educational leadership deals with the organisation of human and material resources available in education sector which are tactically implemented for the realization of educational goals. It could be seen that a quality school leadership is otherwise, in accordance with the quality of a schools' product as determined by the quality of students admitted into the school, calibre of teachers, quality of instructional materials, resource maintenance and teaching /learning environment. Invariably, the quality of any school leadership determine the quality of staff, students, resource availability, classroom management and instructional processes in the school (Diwunma, 2006)

In this clew, school leadership therefore involves the effective management of the educational curriculum and teaching, moral care, discipline, evaluation of assessment and examinations, resource allocation, costing and forward planning, staff appraisal, community relationship, use of practical skills necessary for surviving the policies of school organizations; which includes- decision making, negotiation, bargaining, communication, conflict resolution, organizing of meetings and others.

Unachukwu and Okoji (2014) sees poor academic performance as any performance which falls below a desired standard. The criteria of excellence could range between 40% and 100%, which is dependent on the subject yard stick of the evaluator or assessor. For instance an English Language SS3 student scoring 70% is in no doubt regarded to be a very good performance. According to Babalola and Ayeni (2009), poor academic performance of a student in an academic institution in examination is one in which the person fails to attain a set standard or performance in a given evaluation exercise such as test, examination or series of continuous assessment. This standard is usually based on a number of stipulated objectives and other school activities. A candidate who scores below the standard is regarded as showing a poor academic performance in school. Studies carried out by Lawal (2011) unfolds that there are four major leadership styles. These include; Democratic leadership style, autocratic leadership style, laissez-faire leadership style, and situational/ contingent leadership style. Aviolio and Bass (2002) noted that democratic leadership style is where the leader accommodates and allows the subordinates to be part of decision making during meetings, consultations, conferences, etc. This style of leadership also allows criticisms and praises by the led. A feeling of responsibility, welcomes new ideas and changes, as well as creates a forum for interactions. In the case of its relationship on the students'

academic performance, when the principal accommodates the teachers and co-opt them as part of the planning and decision making body at their level, they perform optimally

towards the discharge of their duties hence they are part of the vision, this in turn enhances the students' academic performance.

In his view Ihedioha (2003) is of the opinion that democratic leadership style creates a palliative teaching and learning environment whereby the learner in his academic activities develops a positive influence of success in the carrier. Again, Eze (2014) opines that the adoption of democratic leadership style by principals is one of the best ways of encouraging the teacher(s) to freely drive home into the learner(s) the virtues of positive influence. In view of these facts, democratic leadership style has some positive contributions towards enhancing students' academic performance.

The autocratic leader does not give his subordinates' opportunity to contribute to decision making. Mgbenu (2005) and Alaezi (2002) opined that autocratic leadership style deters the productive ego of the teacher towards his students; the straight's which affects the learner negatively. According to Shankea (2014), autocratic leadership style is a system which is characterized by the leader taking decisions alone without any form of consultation/consideration of his subjects, after which he simply announces or issues instruction on what is expected of them. Here the members of the group are not offered the chance of making their individual contributions in matters pertaining to the organization; rather they are only on the acceptance side. Ibiam (2015) assert that this is a type of leadership by force. Another important principal's leadership style is the democratic style. According to Mgbenu (2005) described democratic leadership style as the kind of principals leadership style where the leader gives consideration to his subordinates granting them opportunity to contribute in decision making during meetings, conferences and consultations. Stroud (2006) revealed that it is the kind of leadership that considers the effort, suggestion, contribution and weakness of teachers and students during decision making.. In his view, Anyanwu (2004) frowns at the negative tendencies of autocratic leadership style which its adoption as a leadership style produces little or no result in the learner. Lawal (2011) explained that democratic leadership style, coercive leadership style and charismatic leadership style has been seen as one of the most important factors in the school improvement which enhances academic performances of the students. Based on the background, the study investigated the Comparative Analysis of Democratic and Autocratic Leadership Styles and their impact on Students Academic Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Enugu State.

Research Question One:

- i. What is the influence of democratic leadership style on the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Enugu State?
- ii. What is the influence of autocratic leadership style on the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Enugu State, Nigeria?

Hypotheses

Two null hypotheses were postulated to guide the study which was;

H0₁. There is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female teachers on the influence of democratic leadership style of principals on the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Enugu State.

H0₂ There is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female teachers on the influence of autocratic leadership styles of principals on the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Enugu State.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey design, and an ex- facto. This is because the event had already taken place and the researcher cannot manipulate the independent variable. The study was carried out in Enugu State. A total population of 4864 teachers were gathered from the total number of public secondary schools in Enugu State, and a sample of 352 teachers was used for the study. The sample was selected using multi-stage sampling technique. A research instrument was constructed by the researcher and used for the data collection. The questionnaire of two sections titled Influence of leadership styles of principals on the academic performance of students in public secondary schools (ILSPAPSPSS). The instrument was validated by three experts, two from Educational Management and one from Measurement and Evaluation in College of Education, Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike. The reliability of the instruments ILSPAPSPSS was established through a test re-test method for stability of the instrument. 50 copies of the questionnaire were administered to the secondary schools teachers that were part the population but not included in the sample size. The instruments were re-administered to the same respondents within an interval of two weeks. The response (results) of the first and second administration of the instrument were analysed using the Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient, which yielded a reliability index of 0.85. The data collected through the administration of the instruments were analyzed using mean-scores and standard deviation in answering the research questions. The research hypotheses for this study were tested using t-test statistic at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question One

What is the influence of democratic leadership style on the academic performance of students of public secondary schools in Enugu State?

Table 1 Mean responses of respondents on the influence of democratic leadership style on the academic performance of students.

Item No	Item Statement	No of Respondents	Total	Mean	SD	Remarks
1.	Democratic leadership style adopted by principals' promotes effective teaching and learning.	352	1072	3.05	1.75	Accepted
2.	Democratic leadership style adopted by principals' brings conducive learning environment.	352	1014	2.88	1.70	Accepted
3.	Democratic leadership style adopted by principals' brings principal-teacher relationship.	352	1062	3.02	1.74	Accepted
4.	Democratic leadership adopted by principals' promotes students academics performance.	352	1049	2.98	1.73	Accepted
Average score				2.98	1.73	Accepted

Data in Table 1 above showed that items 1, 2, 3 and 4 had mean scores above 2.50. It implies that the items are accepted as positive, since they received mean scores above the acceptance level of 2.50. It also implies that the respondents agree that democratic leadership style adopted by principals' promotes effective teaching and learning, agree that democratic leadership style adopted by principals' brings conducive learning environment, agree that democratic leadership style adopted by principals' brings principal-teacher relationship and agree that democratic leadership adopted by principals' promotes students academics performance influence academic performance of students. Therefore, one can find out that from the responses of the respondents that democratic leadership style, influence academic performance of students of public secondary schools in Enugu State as show by the average mean scores of 2.98 and standard deviation of 1.73.

Hypothesis One

There is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female teachers on influence of democratic leadership style of principals on the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Enugu State.

Table 2: t-test analysis of the mean responses of male and female teachers on the influenced of democratic leadership style.

Variable	N	Mean	SD	DF	Standard error	t-cal	t-critical	P-value
Male Teachers	186	2.65	1.63					
				350	0.17	0.43	1.97	0.83
Female Teachers	166	2.63	1.62					

The results of the above analysis showed that the calculated t-value of 0.43 was less than the critical t-value of 1.97 when tested at 0.05 level of significance with 350 degree of freedom. We fail to reject null hypothesis and state that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female teachers on influence of the democratic leadership style of principals on the students' academic performance. This implies that male and female teachers are of the same view that the democratic leadership style adopted by principals' has a great influenced on the academic performance of the students.

Research Question Two

What is the influence of autocratic leadership style on the academic performance of students of public secondary schools in Enugu State, Nigeria?

The results of the analyses are presented on table 3 below.

Table 3 Mean responses of the respondents on the influence of autocratic leadership style on the academic performance of students.

Item No	Item Statement	No of Respondents	Total	Mean	SD	Remarks
5.	Autocratic leadership style adopted by principals' promotes effective teaching and learning.	352	789	2.24	1.50	Rejected
6.	Autocratic leadership style adopted by principals' brings conducive learning environment.	352	806	2.29	1.51	Rejected
7	Autocratic -leadership style adopted by principals' brings principal-teacher relationship.	352	811	2.30	1.52	Rejected
8	Autocratic leadership adopted by principals' promotes students academics performance.	352	804	2.28	1.51	Rejected
	Average score			2.28	1.53	Rejected

Data in Table 3 above show that items 5, 6, 7 and 8 had mean scores above 2.50. It implies that the items are not accepted since they received mean scores below the acceptance level of 2.50. it also implies that the respondents agreed that autocratic leadership style adopted by principals' did not promotes effective teaching and learning, agreed that autocratic leadership style adopted by principals' did not brings conducive learning environment, agreed that autocratic -leadership style adopted by principals' did not brings principal-teacher relationship, agreed that autocratic

leadership adopted by principals' did not promotes students academics performance. However, one can find out that from the responses of the respondents that autocratic leadership style was not adopted by principals' and did not influence academic performance of students of public secondary schools in Enugu State as shown by the average mean of 2.28 and standard deviation of 1.53.

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female teachers on the autocratic leadership styles adopted by principals of public secondary schools on the students' academic performance.

Table 4 t-test analysis of the mean responses of male and female teachers on the autocratic leadership styles on the students' academic performance.

Variable	N	Mean	SD	DF	Standard error	t-cal	t-critical
Male Teachers	186	2.43	1.56	350	0.17	0.48	1.97
Female Teachers	166	2.39	1.55				

The results of the above analysis showed that the calculated t-value of 0.48 was less than the critical t-value of 1.97 when tested at 0.05 level of significance with 350 degree of freedom. Therefore, the null is accepted that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female teachers on the autocratic leadership styles adopted by principals of public secondary schools on the students' academic performance. This implies that male and female teachers are of the same view that principals did not adopt autocratic leadership styles in public secondary schools.

Discussion of Findings

The influenced of democratic leadership style on the academic performance of students of public secondary.

This study revealed that democratic leadership style, influence academic performance of students of public secondary schools in Enugu State. The corresponding hypothesis affirmed that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female teachers on the influenced of the democratic leadership style of principals on the students' academic performance. This implies that male and female teachers are of the same view that the democratic leadership style adopted by principals has a great influenced on the academic performance of the students. This finding is in line with the finding of Lawal (2011) who explained that there are three major leadership styles that can be adopted by secondary schools principals such as democratic leadership style, charismatic leadership style and coercive leadership style. This finding also agree with the finding

of Obi (2003) who opined that this styles of leadership is an achievement oriented which sets challenges goals and emphasizes improvement in work performance.

This study found out that autocratic leadership style was not adopted by principals' and did not influence academic performance of students of public secondary schools in Enugu State. The corresponding hypothesis affirmed that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female teachers on the autocratic leadership styles adopted by principals of public secondary schools on the students' academic performance. This implies that male and female teachers are of the same view that principals' did not adopt autocratic leadership styles in public secondary schools. This implies that male and female teachers are of the same view that the type of leadership style adopted by principals' has a great influenced on the academic performance of the students. This finding is in agreement with the view of Lawal (2011) who explained that democratic leadership style, coercive leadership style and charismatic leadership style has been seen as one of the most important factors in the school improvement which enhances academic performances of the students.

Conclusion

This study examined the Comparative Analysis of Democratic and Autocratic Leadership Styles and their impact on Students Academic Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Enugu State. From the findings, the researcher concluded that democratic leadership style, influence academic performance of students of public secondary schools in Enugu State, autocratic leadership style was not adopted by principals' and did not influence academic performance of students of public secondary schools in Enugu State, and that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female teachers on the influenced of the democratic leadership style of principals on the students' academic performance. This implies that male and female teachers are of the same view that the democratic leadership style adopted by principals' has a great influenced on the academic performance of the students.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher recommends that;

1. Principals' should adopt democratic leadership style in Enugu State Public secondary schools in order to promote students' academic performance.
2. More of democratic leadership style should be further encouraged and autocratic leadership style should be discourage.
3. Periodic monitoring of schools by the education board should be carried out so as to ensure democratic leadership towards students' academic performance.

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