

# Principals' leadership styles and teachers' job performance: Evidence from Edo State, Nigeria

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## Abstract

This study investigated the relationship between principals' leadership styles and secondary school teachers' job performance in Edo Central Senatorial District, Nigeria. A correlational design was adopted for the study. Two adapted questionnaires titled "Principals' Leadership Style Questionnaire" (PLESQUE) and "Teachers' Job Performance Questionnaire" (TEJOPAQ) were administered to teachers and principals drawn from a population of 397 senior secondary school teachers and 69 principals in the Senatorial District respectively. The Cronbach alphas for the three sub-scales in PLESQUE were .710, .883 and .848 for democratic, autocratic and laissez-faire leadership styles respectively, while the Cronbach alpha for TEJOPAQ was .882 for teachers' job performance. Percentages, multiple regression and Pearson product-moment correlation were used to test the hypotheses at the .05 level of significance. Results showed that democratic, autocratic and laissez-faire leadership styles jointly contributed about 68.3% variations in the job performance of teachers, while democratic and laissez-faire leadership styles had the most prominent positive influence on teachers' job performance in the area of study. It was recommended, amongst other things, that the use of a democratic leadership style should be encouraged among the principals of senior secondary schools in the district.

## Keywords

Leadership styles, principals' leadership, teachers, job performance, school management, school administration, administrative functions

## Introduction

A school is an institution established for the purpose of teaching and learning. It is a place where pupils and students are refined and where formal education is given to the youths of the society. The successful coordination of instructional and administrative tasks within the school system

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depends largely on human factors. In the secondary school system there are two categories of human factors that render educational services – the teaching and non-teaching staff. Secondary school principals are the most senior members of the teaching staff that are appointed to pilot the affairs of the school by virtue of their qualifications, intelligence or knowledge and teaching experience. They are the chief executive officers or administrators that occupy the apex position in the organizational structure of the school. They could also be regarded as the line officers responsible for making major decisions and activities necessary for the achievement of the school goals (Bass, 1999).

In Nigeria in general, and in the Edo Central Senatorial District in particular, the importance, place and desired level of involvement of principal leadership in the overall health and success of schools are nonnegotiable and have been consistently referenced in the Nigerian National Policy on Education documents. In Nigeria's National Policy on Education, it is clearly stated that the school principal is expected, as part of his/her statutory contribution to the health and success of the school, to carry out a number of administrative functions, amongst which is the supervision of instruction on a regular basis. In performing this particular function, the principal is to aid and guide the teachers to translate the provisions of the National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004) and the content of the curriculum or syllabus into workable lessons for learning (Adejumobi and Ojikutu, 2013). Peoples' perception of principals in the course of discharging their statutory duties has largely informed a rise in the variety of names and titles they are variously identified with in different quarters, including director, instructional supervisor, adviser, public relations officer, curriculum director, chief education officer, school leader, among others. Howbeit, these appellations tend to point to something more about school principals; that is, that they not just "titular heads" but important administrators occupying a position of leadership (Clark, 2000).

With the increasing number of schools and subsequent rise in secondary school student populations in Nigeria, within which is Edo Central Senatorial District, Ololube (2004) argues that the job or task of the principal has changed and increased considerably both in scope and complexity. According to Ololube, many principals now carry out the functions of admission and placement of students, orientation and assignment of staff, preparation and administration of school budget, development of the curriculum, improvement and supervision of instruction, reporting of students' progress and evaluation of staff. Besides, principals are also responsible for coordinating, supervising, controlling and directing teachers of diverse cultural backgrounds, experience, beliefs and work behavior. In an effort to effectively engage these duties and meaningfully achieve in their schools, principals tend to become democratic, autocratic or laissez-faire in their leadership style (Holdford, 2003).

Recent studies have been undertaken to determine the frequently used leadership styles among principals and other school leaders in schools (Adebayo, 2003; Adeyemi, 2011; Haruni and Mafwimbo, 2014). Adeyemi (2011) investigated principals' leadership styles and teachers' job performance in senior secondary schools in Ondo State, Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive research design. The study population comprised all 281 senior secondary schools in Ondo State, Nigeria. The sample was made up of 240 principals of schools and 1800 teachers, who were the respondents in the study. Two instruments were used to collect data for the study – the Principals' Leadership Style Questionnaire (PLESQUE) and the Teachers' Job Performance Questionnaire (TEJOPAQ). The data collected on the two tests were analyzed using the Pearson product-moment correlation. A correlation coefficient of .81 was obtained, indicating that the instruments were reliable for the study. Data were analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, *t*-tests and Pearson

product-moment correlation, while the hypotheses were tested at .05 alpha level. Among other findings, it was found that the democratic leadership style was the most commonly used leadership style among principals of senior secondary schools in the state.

Haruni and Mafwimbo (2014) investigated the influence of leadership styles on teachers' job satisfaction in Songea and Morogoro Districts, Tanzania. The study employed a cross-sectional research design, with samples of 200 teachers from 20 selected primary schools in Songea and Morogoro Districts. Interviews, documentary analysis and questionnaires were used to collect the data. The data were analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively using tables, frequencies and percentages. It was found that the democratic leadership style was the most dominant in the best-performing primary schools. It is, therefore, suggested that there is much to be learnt from the democratic leadership style as a copying strategy in low-performing primary schools.

Werang and Lane (2010) examined the relationship between principals' leadership, school organizational climate and teachers' job performance in Merauke regency, Gambia. The population comprised 164 teachers at state senior high schools in Merauke regency. The descriptive survey design was used in the study. The population was approximately 170 teachers in the region, while the sample drawn was 118, representing 69.4% of the population. Questionnaires were the main tool of the research to collect data. The data were collected through the aid of a structured questionnaire. Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) was used to analyze the data collected. Based on the data analyses, the result revealed that (a) there was a significant relationship between principals' leadership and teachers' job performance at state senior high schools in Merauke regency, Papua; (b) there was a significant relationship between school organizational climate and teachers' job performance at state senior high schools in Merauke regency, Papua; and (c) the majority of principals in Merauke regency were often autocratic in the use of their office as the administrative head of the school.

Kozaala (2012) investigated the leadership styles and job performance of teachers in 15 secondary schools in Kamuli District. The study was cross-sectional in design and collected data from a total of 50 respondents, including 15 head teachers, 30 members of the Board of Governors and five officials from the Ministry of Education and Sport at Kamuli District. Data were collected via a self-administered questionnaire, and an interview schedule with teachers was analyzed using the Pearson correlation coefficient. Results showed that head teachers and principals in secondary schools in the Kamuli District used the autocratic leadership style while administering their schools; they use directive language when talking to teachers, they make personal decisions without consulting teachers and regards democratic leadership style, they do not delegate work or responsibility to teachers. Teachers felt left out of most pertinent issues pertaining to their schools; they were demotivated and felt rejected, thus having a negative impact on the job performance of the junior teachers.

The influence of principals' leadership styles on the job performance of teachers has been reported in recent studies. Mehrab et al. (2014) investigated the relationship between principals' leadership styles and the performance of physical education teachers in secondary schools in western provinces of Iran. Results showed that the correlation coefficient between the leadership style of principals and the performance of teachers was equivalent to .16. Furthermore, 26% ( $r^2 = 26\%$ ) of the teachers' job performance, as shown by the efficiency variance, was explained by leadership style dimensions. Hence, the multiple regressions showed that the dimensions of leadership styles (partnership and consultative styles) together could not express a significant influence on teachers' performance.

Okoji (2016) conducted a study titled "Relationship between secondary school principals' leadership style and teachers' job performance in selected rural communities of Ondo State, Nigeria". The results showed that there was a significant relationship between autocratic leadership style and teachers' job performance ( $r = -.314, n = 300, p < .01$ ). A significant relationship also existed between democratic leadership style and teachers' job performance ( $r = .118, n = 300, p < .05$ ). Considering the findings of this study, a mixture of autocratic and democratic leadership styles by principals would promote better job performance among teachers.

Omeke and Onah (2007) carried out a descriptive design study that investigated the influence of principals' leadership styles on secondary school teachers' performance and satisfaction in the Nsukka Education Zone of Enugu State, Nigeria. The study found that only democratic leadership style enhanced teachers' job performance and satisfaction, while autocratic and laissez-faire styles did not. Kiboss and Jemiryott (2014) examined the relationship between leadership styles of principals and teachers' job satisfaction and performance in Kenyan public secondary schools. The Pearson correlation coefficient and *t*-test were used to establish the relationships between principal's leadership styles and teachers' job satisfaction and gender differentials at the .05 level. The study found that principals' democratic leadership style, among others, has a great impact on the working atmosphere in a school and, consequently, on teachers' job performance.

Bwiruk (2009) investigated the effectiveness of head teachers' leadership style on teachers' performance in Bushenyi District, Ghana. The study revealed that pseudo-democratic and autocratic leadership styles existed in Bushenyi schools and was affecting service delivery. It was also found that a transactional, democratic and middle-of-the-road leadership style positively influenced teachers' observance of their professional code of conduct and was considered to be the most effective in promoting teachers' performance regarding the completion of their respective academic tasks. In cases where this style of leadership was applied, it had led to good results due to its being good for building morale, team spirit, creating confidence plus setting of goals.

Recent studies by Bogler (2001), Duze (2012) and Mwangi (2013) have been conducted to determine the relationship between an autocratic leadership style and teachers' job performance. Bogler (2001) examined the effects of principals' leadership style (transformational or transactional), principals' decision-making strategies (autocratic versus participative) and teachers' occupational perceptions of teacher satisfaction from the job. The most salient finding was that principals' autocratic leadership affected teachers' satisfaction and job performance both directly and indirectly through their occupational perceptions.

Duze (2012) investigated the leadership styles of principals' and the effect on job performance of teachers' and supportive staff in senior secondary schools in the Delta State of Nigeria. The population comprised all 358 senior secondary schools in the state, from which a sample of 120 was selected through the simple random sampling technique. Three instruments were used for data collection – PLESQUE, TEJOPAQ and supportive staff job performance questionnaires. The data collected were analyzed using frequencies, percentages, analysis of variance and regression statistics. Results showed that autocratic leadership style was the most commonly used among principals of secondary schools in Delta State, followed by laissez-faire, and lastly democratic. Job performance was found to be the lowest under autocratic principals compared to other styles (democratic and laissez-faire).

Mwangi (2013) investigated the effects of leadership styles on teachers' job performance and satisfaction in public secondary schools in Nakuru Country, Ghana, and determined if the principals' leadership styles affected teachers' job performance. Among the key findings of the study, Mwangi found that teachers who lack enthusiasm were unable to teach effectively, causing

students to not learn well. However, the findings showed that principals' autocratic leadership was significantly helpful in enforcing teachers to perform their duties.

There are a few studies on the relationship between laissez-faire leadership style and teachers' job performance in Nigeria (Ejaigu, 2013; Ozuruoke et al., 2012). Ejaigu (2013), for instance, investigated the influence of administrator's leadership styles on business educators' job performance among tertiary institutions in Delta State, Nigeria. The findings revealed that administrators' laissez-faire leadership, among other leadership styles (democratic, autocratic and bureaucratic), influenced business educators' job performance.

Bass and Avolio (1997) explain that a laissez-faire leadership style occurs when there is an absence or avoidance of leadership. In this case, decisions are delayed and reward for involvement absent. No attempt is made to motivate followers or to recognize and satisfy their needs (Bass and Avolio, 1997). Laissez-faire leadership is not the best leadership style to use in the school system because complete delegation without follow-up mechanisms may create performance problems, which are likely to affect the job performance of teachers. This is in agreement with MacDonald (2007) who opined that the laissez-faire leadership style is associated with the highest rates of truancy and delinquency, and with the slowest modifications in performance of teachers, which can lead to unproductive attitudes and disempowerment of subordinates.

Similarly, Okoji (2016) examined the relationship between secondary school principals' leadership styles and teachers' job performance in selected communities of Ondo State. Based on the findings, it was concluded that a mixture of autocratic and democratic leadership styles by principals would promote better job performance among teachers. Studies in this vein have also been conducted in Ekiti State (Ogunyinka and Adedoyin, 2013), with similar reports. In Edo State, only an unpublished work by Okpo (2015) (an undergraduate student from the Department of Educational Foundations and Management, Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma) titled "Influence of principals' leadership style on teachers' job performance in secondary schools in Esan West Local Government Area of Edo State," can be recalled or referenced.

Due to the relatively small geographical coverage of one local government, Okpo (2015) suggested the need for further studies in one or more districts of Edo State for better generalization. Invariably, this study was carried out in one of the districts in Edo State (comprising five local government areas). The findings of Okpo (2015), which revealed that principals' democratic leadership style has the most profound influence on teachers' job performance, may be as a result of the relatively small sample coverage. From the foregoing, particularly from the studies referenced herein, it is apparent that the ability or the effectiveness of principals in terms of guiding and directing teachers in the school environment to do their jobs and be fully interested in their job is related to the principals' style of leadership. This means that principals' leadership style plays a significant role in effecting the level of teachers' job performance.

No doubt, some studies had been conducted in this area, but it is unclear from these studies how and what principals' leadership styles either impact or inform the level of teachers' job performance. Furthermore, for the area and population of this study, there is almost no earlier work or research on the issue of principals' leadership styles and teachers' job performance. As a result, there is a dearth of studies or a gap in knowledge on this topic in Edo Central Senatorial District, Nigeria.

Thus, this study was carried out to fill this gap in knowledge. That is, to find out, on the one hand, if principal leadership is related to teachers' job performance and, on the other, to find out

which particular leadership style(s) are related or are more positively and/or negatively related to teachers' job performance in Edo Central Senatorial District, Nigeria.

## **Research questions**

To guide this research study, the following five research questions were raised.

1. Which leadership style do principals of secondary schools in Edo Central Senatorial District most frequently use?
2. What is the influence of principals' leadership styles on teachers' job performance in Edo Central Senatorial District?
3. What is the relationship between democratic style of leadership and teachers' job performance in Edo Central Senatorial District?
4. What is the relationship between autocratic style of leadership and teachers' job performance in Edo Central Senatorial District?
5. What is the relationship between laissez-faire style of leadership and teachers' job performance in Edo Central Senatorial District?

## **Research hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested in the study:

1. Principals' leadership styles have no significant influence on job performance of teachers in Edo Central Senatorial District.
2. There is no significant relationship between democratic style of leadership and teachers' job performance in Edo Central Senatorial District.
3. There is no significant relationship between autocratic style of leadership and teachers' job performance in Edo Central Senatorial District.
4. There is no significant relationship between laissez-faire style of leaders and teachers' job performance in Edo Central Senatorial District.

## **Method of study**

A correlational research design was adopted for the study. All 69 principals and 397 senior secondary school teachers in the Senatorial District were drawn for the study, making a total of 466 participants. Two instruments were used for the study: PLESQUE and TEJOPEQ. PLESQUE was adapted by the researcher from the work of Afariogun (2014) to measure principals' leadership styles, while TEJO-PAQ was adapted from the Annual Performance Evaluation Report (APER), designed by the Spokane Public School in order to rate teachers' job performance. The items from PLESQUE were adapted from a doctorate degree thesis written by Afariogun (2014). In Afariogun's (2014) work, the instrument covered three principal leadership styles: democratic, autocratic and laissez-faire leadership styles. Ten item statements were raised under each of the principals' leadership styles. This gave a total of 30 items. PLESQUE was divided into three parts: Part A, Part B and Part C. Part A was used to collect data on the name of school and other demographics of respondents. Part B contained a total of six item statements raised to determine the leadership styles that were mostly used by principals of schools, while Part C contained 30 items on leadership styles of principals: democratic (items 1–10), autocratic (items 11–20) and laissez-faire (items 21–30).

In the course of adapting the original instrument of Afariogun (2014), items 13, 20, 25 and 30, which dealt with principals' leadership behavior on disciplinary issues, were slightly modified. These modifications were informed by the need to cover other aspects of principals' job description other than the supervision of instruction and maintenance of disciplinary issues. For instance, item 20, which read "*meetings are in a one-way communication for decisions are taken by the authority (principal) only,*" was slightly modified to "*Decisions on co-curricular activities are only made by my school principals without consulting others.*" All items were rated on a four-point scale of "strongly agree" (4), "agree" (3), "disagree" (2) and "strongly disagree" (1).

In the second instrument (TEJOPEQ), the 10 job functions specified by APER for teachers were adapted. These functions comprised: (a) planning lessons, (b) teaching lessons, (c) evaluation of lessons, (d) classroom management, (e) handling of students discipline and attendant problems, (f) interest in teaching pupils, (g) knowledge of subject matter, (h) professional preparation and scholarship, (i) professional characteristics and (j) effort toward improvement when needed. All the aforementioned job functions in APER were rated as "satisfactory" (S), "requires improvement" (R), "unsatisfactory, specific comments and documentation" (U) and "not observed or not applicable" (N). In the course of adaptation, only the first five aspects (planning lessons, teaching lessons, evaluation of lessons, classroom management and handling of student discipline and attendant problems) were covered to measure teachers' job performance. Three items each were raised under the five items to make a total of 15 items covered. The 15 items raised under each of the aforementioned teacher's job functions were rated on a four-point scale of "strongly agree" (4), "agree" (3), "disagree" (2) and "strongly disagree" (1).

Face and content validity of the instrument were ensured by experts in the field of educational administration and planning of the Department of Educational Foundations and Management in Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma Edo State. The reliability of the instruments was determined using Cronbach alpha analysis. The Cronbach alphas for the three sub-scales in PLESQUE were .710, .883 and .848 for democratic, autocratic and laissez-faire leadership styles respectively, while the Cronbach alpha for TEJOPAQ was .882. In order to administer the instrument, due permission was taken from the principal of each school in the local governments to solicit their cooperation in the administration of the questionnaires. The questionnaire was administered within a period of four weeks.

A total of 397 copies of the questionnaire were administered to all of the teacher participants in order to study their perceptions on principals' leadership style and its influence on or connection to their job performance levels, while a total of 69 other questionnaires were generated for the principals in the study to rate their teachers' job performance. However, 21 copies of the questionnaire for the teachers were incorrectly filled out and were thus removed from the analysis. Hence, 376 copies of the questionnaire were used, representing a 94.7% use rate. The collected data were properly coded and carefully analyzed, while the research questions for the study were descriptively analyzed using percentages. Hypothesis 1 was tested using multiple regression analyses, while hypotheses 2, 3 and 4 were tested with the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. The hypotheses were tested at the .05 alpha level of significance.

## **Choice of research design and methodology**

A correlational research design was adopted for this study. The choice of this research design was informed by the particular purpose of the study – to explore the relationship between two variables; namely, principal leadership styles (independent variable) and teachers' job performance (dependent variable). Scholars have always agreed that studies that seek to find out or discover the

relationship(s) between variables or suggesting a causal comparative relationship should use a correlational research design or an ex-post facto research design (Gall et al., 2007). However, in this case the researchers chose a correlational research design for the study, because the relationships or linkages looked at in this study did not fully capture the indices required for the choice of a causal comparative study; namely, a cause and effect relationship or one relying on observation of relationships between naturally occurring variations in the independent and dependent variables (p.306). In appreciation of this fine differentiation, the researchers chose and employed a correlational research design for the study, applying the correlational statistics of the Pearson product-moment correlational coefficient and regression analysis.

Further, earlier studies have shown that principal leadership is only second to teacher classroom effectiveness in their impact on the attainment of schools' overall academic performance and excellence (Louis et al., 2011). The intent to embark on this study was informed by the need to find out whether principal leadership, together with its styles of expressions, in Edo state, as reflected in the school district of Edo Central Senatorial District, has any relationship with teachers' job satisfaction which, as earlier observed, is positively related to students' academic performance levels. In the spur of this intent, the researchers proceeded to find out the possible correlation that may exist between principal leadership styles and teachers' job performance, especially as it is experienced in the specific school district of Central Senatorial District of Edo State, Nigeria.

## **Results**

The results from the analysis of the research questions and the testing of hypotheses are presented in the following sections.

**Research question 1:** Which leadership style do principals of secondary schools in Edo Central Senatorial District most frequently use?

From Table 1, the results regarding democratic leadership style showed that the majority of the respondents (216), representing 57.6%, attested that their principals always took suggestions from teachers before making decisions on a school plan, while 159 (42.3%) similarly noted that their principals always discussed his/her plans on co-curricular activities with students before introducing them. Concerning autocratic leadership style, the majority of respondents (170), representing 45.2%, attested that the principal of their school sometimes imposed decisions against the will of the teachers, while 169 (44.9%) noted that sometimes their principal did not accept suggestions that would alter his/her decisions. On laissez-faire leadership style, the majority of respondents (178), representing 47.3%, attested that the principal of their school did not show any concern for the day-to-day activities of the school, while 162 (43.1%) noted that the principals of their school did not supervise what teachers did in the class or the staffroom. This clearly reveals that democratic leadership style was the most commonly used by principals, while autocratic and laissez-faire leadership style were sometimes used by principals of secondary schools in Edo Central Senatorial District.

**Hypothesis 1:** Principals' leadership styles have no significant influence on job performance of teachers in Edo Central Senatorial District.

The results in Table 2 showed that the regression coefficient ( $\beta$ ) of .670 and .298 for democratic and laissez-faire leadership styles had a statistically significant and positive relationship with

**Table 1.** Analysis of the frequently used leadership styles among principals in secondary schools in Edo Central Senatorial District.

S/n	Variable	Always	Sometimes	Never
Democratic leadership style				
1	My principal solicits suggestions from teachers before making decisions about a school plan	216 (57.4%)	130 (34.6%)	30 (8.0%)
2	My principal discusses his/her plans on co-curricular activities with students before introducing them	159 (42.3%)	153 (40.7%)	64 (17.0%)
Autocratic leadership style				
3	The principal of my school imposes decisions against the will of the teachers	126 (33.5%)	170 (45.2%)	80 (21.3%)
4	The principal of my school does not accept suggestions that will alter his/her decisions	140 (37.2%)	169 (44.9%)	67 (17.8%)
Laissez-faire leadership style				
5	My school principal does not show any concern for the day-to-day activities of the school	108 (28.7%)	178 (47.3%)	90 (23.9%)
6	My school principal does not supervise what teachers do in class or in the staffroom	95 (25.3%)	162 (43.1%)	119 (31.6%)

S/n: Serial Number.

**Table 2.** Regression analysis on principals' leadership styles and job performance of teachers in Edo Central Senatorial District.

R = .827  
 R-square ( $R^2$ ) = .683  
 Adjusted R-square = .681  
 $F_{(3,372)} = 267.433$

Model <sup>a,b</sup>	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	p-value	Remark
	$\beta$	Std. error	Beta			
(Constant)	.519	.127		4.087	.000	
Democratic leadership style	.670	.054	.577	12.413**	.0001	Significant
Autocratic leadership style	-.116	.037	-.094	-3.177**	.0002	Significant
Laissez-faire leadership style	.298	.046	.301	6.454**	.0001	Significant

Job performance = constant +  $\beta_1$  democratic leadership style +  $\beta_2$  autocratic leadership style +  $\beta_3$  laissez-faire leadership style;  
 Job performance = .519 + .670 democratic leadership style - .116 autocratic leadership style + .298 laissez-faire leadership style;

<sup>a</sup>Dependent variable: job performance;

<sup>b</sup>Predictors: (constant) democratic leadership style, autocratic leadership style, laissez-faire leadership style; T: strength of the relationship that is found to exist between between the individual leadership styles and teachers' job performance in the schools studied in the schools district.

\*\*Correlation is significant at the .05 level (two-tailed).

teachers' job performance ( $p < .05$ ), while the regression coefficient ( $\beta$ ) of  $-0.116$  for autocratic leadership style was statistically significant but negatively related with teachers' job performance ( $p < .05$ ). The positive sign of the regression coefficient of  $0.298$  for democratic and  $0.298$  for laissez-

**Table 3.** Relationship between principals’ democratic style of leadership and teachers’ job performance in Edo Central Senatorial District.

Variables	<i>n</i>	$\bar{X}$	SD	Pearson <i>r</i> -coefficient	<i>p</i> -value	Remarks
Democratic leadership style	376	2.75	.62	.801*	.001	Null hypothesis rejected ( $p < .05$ )
Teachers’ job performance		2.83	.72			

\*Correlation is significant at the .05 level (two-tailed).  
SD: standard deviation.

**Table 4.** Relationship between principals’ autocratic style of leadership and teachers’ job performance in Edo Central Senatorial District.

Variables	<i>n</i>	$\bar{X}$	SD	Pearson <i>r</i> -coefficient	<i>p</i> -value	Remarks
Autocratic leadership style	376	2.60	.58	.016*	.752	Null hypothesis retained ( $p \geq .05$ )
Teachers’ job performance		2.83	.72			

\*Correlation coefficient is not significant at the .05 level (two-tailed).  
SD: standard deviation.

faire leadership styles showed that democratic and laissez-faire leadership styles positively influence teachers’ job performance, while the regression coefficient of  $-.116$  showed that autocratic leadership style negatively influences teachers’ job performance. This further implies that the job performance of teachers is significantly predicted by the leadership styles of principals in secondary schools in Edo Central Senatorial District. The results in Table 2 further showed that the *R*-square ( $R^2$ ) of .683 and adjusted *R*-square ( $R^2$ ) of .681 reveal that the leadership styles (democratic leadership style, autocratic leadership style and laissez-faire leadership style) jointly explained 68.3% of changes in teachers’ job performance in secondary schools in the district. The correlation coefficient (*r*) of .827 show that the leadership styles were positively and moderately correlated with teachers’ job performance in the district, while the *F*-statistics ( $F_{(3,372)}$ ) of 267.433 showed that the leadership styles combined, jointly and significantly predicted job performance of teachers in secondary schools in the district.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant relationship between democratic style of leadership and teachers’ job performance in Edo Central Senatorial District.

The data in Table 3 showed that the mean and standard score of the respondents ( $N = 376$ ) were 2.75 and .62 for democratic leadership style, and 2.83 and .72 for teachers’ job performance, respectively. The Pearson correlation coefficient of .801 was statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. This result indicated that there was a significant positive relationship between democratic style of leadership and teachers’ job performance in Edo Central Senatorial District.

**Hypothesis 3:** There is no significant relationship between Autocratic Style of leadership and teachers’ job performance in Edo Central Senatorial District.

**Table 5.** Relationship between principals' laissez-faire style of leadership and teachers' job performance in Edo Central Senatorial District.

Variables	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Pearson <i>r</i> -coefficient	<i>p</i> -value	Remarks
Laissez-faire leadership style	376	2.60	.73	.738*	.001	Null hypothesis rejected ( $p < .05$ )
Teachers' job performance		2.83	.72			

\*Correlation is significant at the .05 level (two-tailed).

SD: standard deviation.

The data in Table 4 showed that the mean and standard score of the respondents ( $N = 376$ ) were 2.60 and .58 for autocratic leadership style, and 2.83 and .72 for teachers' job performance, respectively. The Pearson correlation coefficient of .016 was statistically significant at an alpha value of  $p > .05$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained. This result indicated that autocratic style of leadership among principals had no significant positive relationship with teachers' job performance in Edo Central Senatorial District.

**Hypothesis 4:** There is no significant relationship between laissez-faire style of leadership and teachers' job performance in Edo Central Senatorial District.

The data in Table 5 showed that the mean and standard score of the respondents ( $N = 376$ ) were 2.60 and .73 for laissez-faire leadership style, and 2.83 and .72 for teachers' job performance, respectively. The Pearson correlation coefficient of .738 was statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected while the alternate hypothesis was retained. This result indicated that there was a significant positive relationship between laissez-faire style of leadership and teachers' job performance in Edo Central Senatorial District.

The data collected from the principals were analyzed to find out their leadership styles' influence on teachers' job performance levels. This was performed with a view to knowing whether a particular leadership style correlated with higher or lower teacher job performance than the others, as shown in Tables 2–5. The results from the analysis, however, showed that teachers who were viewed to have higher job performance levels worked with principals or in schools where principals perceived to operate democratic or laissez-faire styles of leadership.

In other words, it was found that there was a significant positive influence of democratic and laissez-faire leadership styles on teachers' job performance. It is important to note, nonetheless, that while the three leadership styles influenced teacher's job performance levels, they did, however, exert this influence differently and/or variedly. While democratic and laissez-faire leadership styles were found to have different levels of significant positive influence on the teachers' job performance, the autocratic leadership style was found to have no positive significant influence on the teachers' job performance levels. Thus, these differences accounted variedly for the 68.3% level of influence on the teachers' job performance levels reported earlier.

## Discussion

Results from the analysis showed that the democratic leadership style was used the most by principals of secondary schools in Edo Central Senatorial District, while the autocratic and laissez-faire leadership styles were sometimes used. This means that the democratic leadership

style, for the most part, appears to be the preferred leadership styles for most of the principals captured in the study. This finding echoes the research finding of Adeyemi (2011), who found that the democratic leadership style was the most frequently used leadership style among principals of senior secondary schools in Ondo State. While the work of Adeyemi (2011) was carried out in Ondo, our study was conducted in a particular Senatorial District in Edo State; hence, the locations are some 80 km apart. The striking observation that must be made about the finding is that while these principals exercise their leadership in separate locations, they tend to believe and have preference for and more regular use of the same leadership style. In other words, there is sameness or semblance in the leadership style of choice or preference in both locations as found by the two studies.

Also, this finding of the study is in line with the submission of Haruni and Mafwimbo (2014), which asserted that the democratic leadership style was the most dominant leadership style among school heads in primary schools. They noted that there was much to be learnt from the democratic leadership style in low-performing primary schools. This finding is, however, in contrast to a study by Werang and Lane (2010), which revealed that the majority of principals in Merauke Regency, Gambia, were often autocratic in their leadership style, and also that by Kozaala, (2012) who reported that head teachers and principals in secondary schools used the autocratic leadership style.

Furthermore, the results from the study showed that there was a significant relationship between principals' leadership styles and teachers' job performance in Edo Central Senatorial District. This means that the leadership style of the principals impacted either positively or negatively on the teachers' performance in the district studied. This concurred with Mehrab et al. (2014) who found that the leadership style of principals and performance of teachers were correlated. This is also in agreement with the findings of Okoji (2016), who revealed that there was a significant relationship between autocratic leadership style and teachers' job performance. In this study, a significant relationship was also found to exist between democratic leadership style and teachers' job performance. Okoji's suggestion was based on the findings that a mixture of autocratic and democratic leadership styles by principals would promote better job performance among teachers.

The results from the testing of Hypothesis 2 showed that there was a significant relationship between democratic style of leadership and teachers' job performance in Edo Central Senatorial District. They showed, for the most part, that the independent variable – democratic leadership style – impacted positively on the dependent variable – teachers' job performance – in the district. These results actually corroborated the findings of Omeke and Onah (2007), which revealed that only democratic leadership style enhanced teachers' job performance and satisfaction, while autocratic and laissez-faire styles did not. The results were also in alignment with the findings of Kiboss and Jemiryott (2014), which showed that principals' democratic leadership style, among others, had a great impact on the working atmosphere in a school and, consequently, on teachers' job performance.

Thus, it is reasoned that the democratic leadership style most probably exerts such a positive influence or impact on teachers' job performance largely because, by virtue of its conception and practice in schools, it tends to allow room for a freer and greater involvement of teachers in school leadership functions, effective engagement with teachers issues and concerns, and encouragement and incorporation of the rich value of teacher leadership in the overall quality of school success. Further, the findings from this study also strongly agree with the findings of Bwiruk (2009), which revealed that a transactional, democratic and middle-of-the-road leadership style positively influenced teachers' observance of their own professional code of conduct and contributed in promoting teachers' performance with regards to the timely completion of assigned tasks.

The results from the testing of Hypothesis 3 showed that there was no significant relationship between autocratic style of leadership and teachers' job performance in Edo Central Senatorial District. While the results showed that the autocratic leadership style was used in the Senatorial District, and there was a relationship between this leadership style and teachers' job performance, the instances of use were relatively lower, the strength of the relationship was either weak, negative or insignificant, and the impact of this leadership style was either not positive or insignificant. These results are in disagreement with the findings of Bogler (2001), which showed that principals' autocratic leadership affected teachers' satisfaction and job performance both directly and indirectly through their occupational perceptions.

The results, however, partly concur with the findings of Yusuf (2012), who noted that autocratic leadership style had a negative influence on students' academic achievement and performance of their teachers. Conversely, the results run against the findings of Duze (2012), which showed that autocratic leadership style was the most frequently used leadership style among principals of secondary schools in Delta State, followed by *laissez-faire* and, lastly, democratic. In Duze (2012), job performance was found to be lowest, coming after democratic and *laissez-faire* leadership styles, on the scale of school principals' preference for leadership styles. This finding also negates the submission of Mwangi (2013), who states that principals' autocratic leadership was significantly helpful in getting teachers to perform their duties.

The results from the testing of Hypothesis 4 showed that there was a significant relationship between *laissez-faire* style of leaders and teachers' job performance in Edo Central Senatorial District. This means that principals who operated a *laissez-faire* leadership style had a significant relationship or influence on their teachers' job performance in the schools studied. In some instances, it was positive, and in others it was negative, with a negative influence or relationship having the greater reflection of the quality of the relationship. This finding is in consonance with the findings of Ejaigu (2013), which showed that administrators' *laissez-faire* leadership among other leadership styles (democratic, autocratic and bureaucratic) influenced business educators' job performance. This result is, however, contrary to the findings of Ozuruoke et al. (2012), who found that teachers' job performance was better in schools with leaders that use an autocratic style than in schools with leaders demonstrating *laissez-faire* styles.

## Recommendations

The following recommendations were made on the basis of the findings in the study.

1. The use of the democratic style of leadership should be sustained by principals in Edo Central Senatorial District.
2. That prospective principals in the district should be trained and equipped with the tools for the effective application of the democratic and/or distributed leadership style to elicit and spur improvement in teachers' job performance.
3. That the adoption and use of the *laissez-faire* leadership style in the district should be done with caution and care to minimize its possible negative impact on teachers' job performance.
4. That the use of autocratic styles by principals in the district should be discouraged.
5. Leadership practice and functions in schools in the district should be devolved or distributed and greater teacher involvement in leadership functions should be sought and encouraged.

6. Leadership training courses should be integrated into teacher training programs in such a way that would-be principals of schools in the district may learn and be acquainted with the democratic leadership style and its effective use.

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