AN ASSESSMENT OF LEADERSHIP PRACTICES AND CHALLENGES OF PRIVATE SCHOOLS PRINCIPALS IN ZARIA METROPOLIS

BY
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Abstract

The study assessed leadership practices and challenges of private schools principals in Zaria metropolis as at 2015/2015 academic session using survey research. Data for the paper was derived from primary source only, using a structured questionnaire which was adopted from the works Edwards and Aboagye (2015) that employed Leadership Practice Inventory (LPI) developed and tested by Jim Kouzes. The sample size of the study was drawn using purposive sampling, thus a sample size of twenty two (22) principals drawn from private schools in Zaria metropolis which is restricted to Tudun wada, Sabongari, kwangila, samaru and shika axis. The data was analaysed to test hypothesis of the study using one sample t-test after aggregating the mean scores for responses. Thus from the results the leadership practices adopted for the study which include model the way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act and Encourage the Hearts serve as point of challenges to principal of private schools in Zaria metropolis. Therefore the null hypothesis of the study is rejected. Therefore, the study recommends that the proprietors or managements of the schools should provide institutionalised mechanisms or frameworks to propel or encourage the principals to effectively deploy these leadership practices to the general good of the organisations.

Introduction

It is argued that in this changing, global environment, leadership holds the answer not only to the success of individuals and organizations, but also to sectors, regions and nations. Despite recognition of the importance of leadership, however, there remains a certain mystery as to what leadership actually is or how to define it. Leadership is a complex construct open to subjective interpretation. Everyone has their own intuitive understanding of what leadership is, based on a mixture of experience and learning, which is difficult to capture in a succinct definition.

The way in which leadership is defined and understood is strongly influenced by one's theoretical stance. There are those who view leadership as the consequence of a set of traits or characteristics possessed by 'leaders', whilst others view leadership as a social process that emerges from group relationships. Such divergent views will always result in a difference of opinion about the nature of leadership.

Education has been acknowledged as a spring board and vital source of economic and social development of nations both developed and developing. In Nigeria, private schools have increasingly been playing an instrumental role in provision of qualitative education at all strata from nursery to university. In the course of their operations they are faced with varying challenges, leadership constraints are germane to the very survival and optimal operation of the schools. Despite these obstacles, private schools have managed to survive and thrive, finding a niche for themselves and contributing to the development of education sector. Therefore, the paper is aimed at assessing whether leadership Practices serves as challenges to private school princips in Zaria metropolis. This is consequently expected to proffer empirical solutions to the research question for the study, which is stated, thus:

    i.   Do leadership practices serves as challenges to private schools principals in Zaria metropolis?

To proffer empirically backed result for the research question raised, therefore the following null hypothesis it expected to be tested. The null hypothesis is stated, thus:

H_{01}- Leadership Practices do not serve as challenges to private school principals in Zaria metropolis

    The focus of the paper was directed at investigating whether some identified factors served as leadership challenges that affected private schools principal, specifically in Zaria metropolis in the 2014/2015 academic session. Also, the study is expected to be of significant importance to researchers, as it will serve as reference material for future research works.

Literature Review

The school is the mirror that reflects the success or failure of the educational systems, being the executive level of the educational plans and policies. The success of the school in achieving its purposes is a true reflection of the successful leadership practices in the school. Glynn and Defordy (2010) state that there are almost as many different definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept. Definition of School leadership may be based on competencies, skills, attitudes, behaviours, and importantly be based on performance. Bush and Glover (2014) suggest a typology of school leadership in eight domains: instructional, managerial, transformational, moral and authenticity, distributed, teacher, system, and contingent leadership. The authors described school leadership domains in educational administration, educational management, educational leadership, and concluded that school leadership connotes influence on instructions, school culture, values, visions, management of resources, and several compositions of what constitute leadership in any social organization. Hence in an attempt to define school leadership one can fall on the perspective of leadership practices. Kouzes and Posner (2012) opine that exemplary leadership is the influence of desirable result from a relationship with people, accomplishments in any situation, and the reliance of good practices for success (Leithwood et al., 2006). School leadership should focus on moving people, teachers, parents, and staffs through practical influence (Leithwood et al., 2006). In a broader sense, the results of leadership have effect on people, school culture, and educational attainments of children. Hence, school leadership is all about „people issues", transformation, visionary ideas, and practical solutions in situations (Yukl, 2010; Moors, 2012). Hargreaves (2004) insists that school leadership should include inclusivity, a paradigm shift to initiate reasonability in teachers" emotions, and a driving force towards a common vision and moral purpose.

Krug, Ahadi, and Scott (1991) conducted a study to explore principals' leadership role and behaviors. Leaders adapted behaviour to situations. Leaders viewed their role behaviours as: (a) promoters of the instructional process, instructional leadership role; and (b) managers of the school, managerial leadership role. Principals were found to engage in the same daily tasks and role responsibilities, but principals applied their personal beliefs about the leadership role to the task. Some principals exercised an instructional leadership focus, while others employed a managerial focus. The leadership role was found to be dependent on the beliefs of the leader. Principals interpreted the situation and determined the direction their leadership behaviour would take. The results of the study indicated that one facet of successful school leadership was the framing of principals' daily behaviours and role in terms of an instructional or a managerial leadership role focus (Krug, Ahadi, & Scott, 1991). Principals seeking to become leaders of successful schools applied their beliefs in the instructional leadership role to the behaviours they assumed. Leaders conceptualized their role as instructional and took advantage of activities, tasks, and events by applying an instructional leadership role focus (Krug, Ahadi, & Scott, 1991).

Anonymous (0000) examined leadership qualities among nine private school principals in Singapore. Findings from the study indicate that effective principals are able to establish trust, create structures that promote principal-teachers communication and maintain a high level of moral values. Specifically, it presents the findings from the case of ten private schools in Singapore. The results from our study indicate that financial goal rank top above all other goals set by the private school principals. The emphasis on maximizing financial gain is a cause of concern as many school principals have lost their intellectual integrity as well as their academic values in their pursuit of financial gains.

Day, Harris and Hadfield (2001) studied 12 schools in England and Wales which focused on heads who were deemed effective by the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED). They conclude that good leaders are informed by and communicate clear sets of personal and educational values which represent their moral purposes for the school. The leaders possess the following qualities: respect for others, fairness and equality, caring for the well being and whole development of students and staff, integrity and honesty.

Xiu Cravens, Ellen Goldring and Roberto V. Peñaloza (2002) examine the results from principal surveys collected from charter, magnet, private and traditional public schools comparing leadership challenges and practices across school choice types, and exploring the influence of school governance structures on leadership practices. Preliminary analyses show that differences across school types in terms of challenges faced by principals, and their leadership practices, are small. However, there are noteworthy differences

between charter schools that are affiliated with parent organizations and charters with no affiliation in terms of acquiring financial resources and the amount of time principals spend on instructional development. This paper broadens the understanding of school leadership in a choice environment by examining not only the association between leadership practices and school types, but also the influence of school management structures on instructional development beyond school type differences.

Al-Safran, Brown and Wiseman (0000) investigated the effect of principal's leadership style on school outcome, focusing on the indirect relationship between the leadership style and the school environment. They also went further to investigate the impact of culture on leadership style as related to school environment and outcome. Data for the study were drawn from the TIMSS for 1995, with emphasis on Kuwait and the USA. Descriptive statistics and an ANOVA were used for the statistical analysis. The result of analysis supported the hypothesis that the principal's leadership style was related to school outcomes. This relationship is found to be direct and indirect through the school environment. In the USA schools, the integrative principal leadership style is found to encourage and create a cooperative school environment for better school outcome than schools with authoritative principals. The principal's leadership style was found to be very different between Kuwait and USA school. Kuwait schools' principals are authoritative in their leadership style, while their USA counterparts tend to be integrative. Interestingly, although Kuwait school principals are authoritative in nature, data indicated that a cooperative school environment showed higher school outcomes. This suggests that the USA model is inapplicable in a culture similar to Kuwait. This study also concludes that there are no universal or appropriate leadership styles for all cultures.

Abdulrasheed and Bello (2015) investigated challenges to secondary school principals' leadership in government own secondary schools in the areas of instructional supervision and provision of funds. The sample for the study was 133 principals of government own secondary schools, selected on the basis of 7 principals from each state of the 19 states that constitute northern region of Nigeria. The instrument for data collection was a 20 items questionnaire title: Challenges to Secondary School Principals Leadership Challenges Questionnaires (CSSPLQ). Two research questions were formulated, data collected were converted to mean, standard deviation and used to answer the research questions. The researcher adopted the test –retest method to determine the reliability of the instrument. A correlation coefficient of 0.81 was obtained at 0.05 percent level of significance, which indicates a high reliability. The two research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation for the analysis. An item with a mean score of 2.50 and above was accepted, while an item with a mean score of less than 2.50 was not accepted. Thus, they found that, the principal are not actively involved in the instructional supervision process in schools, rather they delegated it to the senior maters in their various schools. The second findings also reveal that poor funding of schools is a major problem of principals' leadership ineffectiveness and lack of availability of funds directly to the schools account to run the schools appear also as problem. The third finding reveals that, secondary school education board (overseer of secondary school in the region) did not have a system of organizing seminars for capacity building to retrain and improve leadership effectiveness of principals in the region. The forth finding posited that, principals have lesser authority to discipline teachers who were not committed to their duties base on external interference from the secondary school board. It was observed that principals lost focus on instructional supervision of teaching and learning in their schools. The study also reveals that principals and teachers need seminar, workshops for capacity building at least once in an academic year. Lastly, Northern region governments' forum should provide fund directly to school bank accounts for principals' to effectively execute their daily school activities.

Marks and Printy (2003) Focusing on school leadership relations between principals and teachers, this study examines the potential of their active collaboration around instructional matters to enhance the quality of teaching and student performance. The analysis is grounded in two conceptions of leadership (transformational and instructional). The sample comprises 24 nationally selected restructured schools— 8elementary, 8middle, and 8high schools. In keeping with the multilevel structure of the data, the primary analytic technique is hierarchical linear modeling (HLM). The study finds that transformational leadership is a necessary but insufficient condition for instructional leadership. When transformational and shared

instructional leadership coexist in an integrated form of leadership, the influence on school performance, measured by the quality of its pedagogy and the achievement of its students, is substantial.

Balyer (2012) Therefore, this study purposes to discover the level of transformational leadership behaviors that school principals demonstrate at schools during their administrative practices on daily basis. The participants of this study were 30 teachers from 6 different schools determined with equal gender variable in the 2011/2012 academic year in İstanbul, Turkey. The participants were chosen by using a purposive sampling method described as the best used with small numbers of individuals or groups which may well be sufficient for understanding human perceptions, problems, needs, behaviors and contexts, which are the main justification for a qualitative audience research (Bailey, 1994). Data Collection and Analysis The data were collected by using the "repertory grid" technique, which is a constructed interview method. This technique can best be characterized as a semi-structured interview (face-to-face, computerized, or phone interview) in which the respondent is confronted with a triad of elements and then asked to specify some important ways in which two of the elements are alike and, thereby, different from the third Results reveal that school principals demonstrate high level of characteristics of transformational leadership in terms of idealized influence, inspirational motivation, individualized consideration and intellectual stimulation behaviors. Results of this study reveal that principals of this sample demonstrate high level of characteristics of transformational leadership like idealized influence, inspirational motivation, individualized consideration and intellectual stimulation. It can be concluded from this study that teachers' opinions concerning their principals' transformational leadership behaviors are positive in general. It can also be inferred that female principals' behaviors are perceived more polite than male colleagues.

Al-Jaradat and Zaid-Alkilani (2015) aimed at identifying the successful leadership practices for solving school problems by the principals of the secondary schools in Irbid educational area. It also aimed at identifying the differences in the principals' evaluations of these practices by the variables of gender, academic degree, and work experience. The sample consisted of (473) male and female principals. They completed a 40-item questionnaire developed for the purposes of this study. The questionnaire contained four domains: successful leadership practices for teachers' problem-solving; students; local community and parents; and school environment and supplies. To be assured of validity of the instrument, the researchers applied it to a sample of (30) principals employing Chronbach Alpha coefficient. The results showed that the reliability coefficients of the different problems were as follows: teachers' problems (0.86), students' problems (0.90), local community and parents' problems (0.78), school environment and supplies' problem (0.88). The total reliability coefficient was (0.89), indicating that the instrument is reliable and suitable for the study objectives. Pearson correlation coefficient between each item and the domain it belongs to was calculated, and the correlation coefficients ranged between (0.61-0.89). The correlation coefficients of the items to the domains were as follows: teachers' problems (0.88), students' problems (0.82), local community and parents' problems (0.80), school =0.05), environment and supplies' problem (0.91). Summarily, pearson correlation coefficient and Chronbach Alpha correlation coefficient were used to calculate the validity and reliability of the study instrument. T-Test was also used to decide the differences among the responses of the study sample according to its variables. The results of the study showed that successful leadership practices for school problem-solving were high, except for the local community and parents' problem-solving domain, which was at medium degree. The results further showed statistically significant differences among the principals' responses to the successful leadership practices attributed to the gender, academic degree and work experiences variables.

Edwards and Aboagye (2015) discuss self-reported leadership practices inventories (LPI) of graduate students to highlight their transformational school leadership potentials. The study participants were conveniently sampled from two Ghanaian public universities. Data from the self-reported LPI scores indicated a strong sense of self belief and the leadership potentials (M=48.93, sd=6.47). Gender differences in transformational abilities showed no statistical significance (t=-0.93, df=198, p=0.07), and the same with institutions (t=-0.99, df=198, p=0.38). However, the only statistical differences came from gender groups' report on "Enable Others to Act" (t=-1.72, df=198, p=0.01).Discussions focused on the need for a more futuristic thinking, people-focused skills, the practices of enablement, and the avoidance of discrimination against women in school leadership within GES.

Research Methodology

The research design employed in the paper is survey research; as the study is aimed at seeking the opinions of target population on whether some identify factors are leadership challenges in private schools management. Data for the paper was derived from primary source only, using a structured questionnaire which was adopted from the works Edwards and Aboagye (2015) that employed Leadership Practice Inventory (LPI) developed and tested by Jim Kouzes. The LPI instrument consists of 30 items with a 10-point scale (i.e., 1=Almost Never, 2=Rarely, 3=Seldom, 4=Once in a While, 5=Occasionally, 6=Sometimes, 7=Fairly Often, 8=Usually, 9=Very Frequently, to 10 = Almost Always), with six behavioural statements for each of the five leadership practices. The variable are depicted and explained in table 1:

Table 1: Measure of Variables

No.	Leadership Practice	Commitment
	Model the Way	- Clarify values by finding your voice and affirming shared values
		- Set the example by aligning actions with shared values
	Inspire a Shared Vision	- Envision the future by imagining exciting and ennobling possibilities
		- Enlist others in a common vision by appealing to shared aspirations
	Challenge the Process	- Search for opportunities by seeking innovative ways to change, grow, and improve
		- Experiment and take risks by constantly generating small wins and learning from mistakes
	Enable Others to Act	- Foster collaboration by promoting cooperative goals and building trust
		- Strengthen others by sharing power and discretion
	Encourage the Heart	- Recognize contributions by showing appreciation for individual excellence
		- Celebrate the values and victories by creating a spirit of community

The justification for the adoption of the questionnaire is based on the fact that factors identified as leadership challenges in private schools have been subjected to validity and reliability test using cronbach Alpha. The sample size of the study was drawn using purposive sampling to enable the researcher reach out to target population with high level of precision of returned questionnaires administered, thus a sample size of twenty two (22) principals drawn from private schools in zaria metropolis which is restricted to Tudun wada, Sabongari, kwangila, samaru and shika axis. The data was analysed to test hypothesis of the study using one sample t-test after aggregating the mean scores for responses. The mean score of leadership variables will be measure against a predeterrmined mean value of 40.00

Result of Analysis

These LPI items scores as shown in table 1 below was discussed in five areas with regards to transformational leadership as demonstrated in the questionnaire. The means score of questionnaire response affirms the potential of the respondents to practice transformational school leadership. As

indicated in table 1 below, mean score of the variables of study are above the predetermined value of 40. 00. The result indicates that, Model the way which depict the clarification and affirmation of organisational shared values has a mean score of 44.31, while inspiring a shared vision by the leader had a mean score of 41.84, but challenging the process indicated a mean score of 43.78, also enabling others to act depicts a mean score of 44.56, additionally encouraging the hearts for excellence has a mean score of 44.45.

Table 1: Mean Score of Transformational Leadership Variables

Practices	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Model the Way	22	13	56	44.31	5.78
Inspire a Shared Vision	22	15	54	41.84	6.55
Challenge the Process	22	19	56	43.78	5.62
Enable Others to Act	22	17	56	44.56	5.27
Encourage the Hearts	22	10	55	44.45	6.32

Source: Research Computation 2015

The results on table 2 indicates that, Model the way which depict the clarification and affirmation of organisational shared values has a t-statistics value of 0.619 and the corresponding p-value is.000,which is less than 0.05, while inspiring a shared vision by the leader has a t-statistics value of 0.229 and the corresponding p-value is.027,which is less than 0.05, also challenging the process indicated a t-statistics value of 0.824 and the corresponding p-value is.000,which is less than 0.05, also enabling others to act depicts a t-statistics value of 0.932 and the corresponding p-value is.000,which is less than 0.05, additionally encouraging the hearts for excellence has a t-statistics value of 0.432 and the corresponding p-value is.000,which is less than 0.05.

Table 2: One Sample t-test result

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	46.545	3.188		14.599	0.000
Model the Way	3.539	0.333	0.639	0.619	0.000
Inspire a Shared Vision	5.533	0.239	0.789	0.229	0.027
Challenge the Process	1.405	0.367	0.167	0.824	0.000
Enable Others to Act	2.312	0.378	0.246	0.932	0.000
Encourage the Hearts	3.217	0.365	0.562	0.432	0.000

Source: SPSS Output a. Dependent Variable: Employees Performance

Conclusions and Recommendations

The results from table 2 indicates that leadership practices adopted for the study which include model the way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act and Encourage the Hearts serve are challenges to principal of private schools in Zaria metropolis. Therefore, the study concludes that the five item variables of transformational leadership were found to be significant predictors of leadership challenges among private school principal in Zaria metropolis. Therefore the null hypothesis of the study is rejected. The study recommends that the proprietors or managements of the schools should provide institutionalised mechanisms or frameworks to propel or encourage the principals to effectively deploy these leadership practices to the general good of the organisations.

Appendix I

Leadership Practice	Question Items
Model the way	Sets a personal example of what he/she expects of others
	Spends time and energy making certain that the people he/she works with adhere to the principles and standards that we have agreed on
	Follows through on promises and commitments he/she makes
	Asks for feedback on how his/her actions affect other people's performance
	Builds consensus around a common set of values for running our organization
	Is clear about his/her philosophy of leadership
Inspire a shared vision	Talks about future trends that will influence how our work gets done
	Describes a compelling image of what our future can be like
	Appeals to others to share an exciting dream of the future
	Shows others how their long-term interests can be realized by enlisting in a common vision
	Paints the "big picture" of what we aspire to accomplish
	Speaks with genuine conviction about the higher meaning and purpose of our work
Challenge the process	Seeks out challenging opportunities that test his/her own skills and abilities
	Challenges people to try out new and innovative ways to do their work
	Searches outside the formal boundaries of his/her organization for innovative ways to improve what we do
	Asks "What can we learn?" when things don"t go as expected
	Makes certain that we set achievable goals, make concrete plans, and establish measurable milestones for the projects and programs we work on
	Experiments and takes risks, even when there is a chance of failure
Enable others to act	Develops cooperative relationships among the people he/she works with
	Actively listens to diverse points of view
	Treats others with dignity and respect
	Supports the decisions that people make on their own
	Gives people a great deal of freedom and choice in deciding how to do their work
	Ensures that people grow in their jobs by learning new skills and developing themselves
Encourage the hearts	Praises people for a job well done
	Makes it a point to let people know about his/her confidence in their abilities
	Makes sure that people are creatively rewarded for their contributions to the success of projects
	Publicly recognizes people who exemplify commitment to shared values
	Finds ways to celebrate accomplishments
	Gives the members of the team lots of appreciation and support for their contributions

Source: Edwards and Aboagye (2015)

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