

Original Article

**Relationship between the leadership style adopted by heads of schools and teachers' job satisfaction: Empirical evidence from Onitsha Education Zone in Anambra State Nigeria**

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**ABSTRACT**

The study looked at the relationship between the leadership style adopted by heads of schools and teachers' job satisfaction. The study was conducted using a survey research approach. The study was led by five research questions and hypotheses. The total number of instructors in the 56 public secondary schools in Onitsha Education Zone was 1304 (31 principals and 1,273 teachers). A standardized questionnaire titled "impact of principal's leadership style on teachers' work satisfaction" was used to collect data. Two professionals validated the questionnaire. The reliability coefficient of the equipment used to analyze the data was determined using the test-retest approach. For data analysis, the study used Mean (X) and Standard Deviation as tools. The research questions were analyzed using the mean (X). The questionnaire employed a five-point Likert scale. The findings demonstrate that using a democratic leadership style by a principal improves teacher job satisfaction in the Onitsha Zone. It was also revealed that, among other things, there is no significant evidence that the deployment of an authoritarian leadership style by a principal improves teacher job satisfaction in the Onitsha Education Zone. Finally, the principal's leadership style remains an important aspect in ensuring that instructors are content with their teaching assignments. As a result, the principal must be willing to blend several leadership styles in order to meet the diverse needs of teachers and so increase their performance.

**Keywords:** Principal, leadership style, teacher, job satisfaction,

**INTRODUCTION**

Leadership is a form of duty that entails using existing resources (human and material) to achieve certain goals while maintaining a cohesive and coherent organization (Ololube, 2013). Researchers have advocated a variety of leadership styles over time since no single style of leadership can be deemed universal. A good or successful leader inspires, encourages, and leads actions

to help accomplish group or organizational goals, despite the many different types of leadership. Ineffective leadership, on the other hand, does not contribute to corporate success and can even hinder achievement of organizational goals (Purwanto, Bernarto, Asbari, Wijayanti, L. & Hyun, 2020). A visionary, passionate, creative, flexible, inspirational, innovative, daring, imaginative, experimental, and change-initiating leader

must be visionary, passionate, creative, flexible, inspiring, innovative, courageous, imaginative, experimental, and change-initiating.

A leader's leadership style is critical to the success of any business. It has a tremendous influence on subordinates' performance and pleasure. Leaders with certain leadership styles have more control over interpersonal and material incentives and punishments, which influence instructors' performance, motivation, and attitude (Robert & Vandenberghe, 2022). Leaders' leadership styles can have a beneficial or bad impact on the success of their organizations. Positively, a stimulating work environment is created by a leadership style that is helpful, fair, and encouraging. A leader's leadership style can have an impact on organizational performance by establishing an environment of tension and anxiety, or by being unsupportive and critical. According to management experts, there are a variety of leadership styles (Lundmark, Richter & Tafvelin, 2022). For instance, an autocratic leadership style focuses on the boss, who believes he or she is educated enough to make judgments and take actions that will guarantee company goals are met. Subordinates are involved in decision-making in a democratic leadership style. It's all about bringing about change in companies, groups, oneself, and others using transformational leadership. Teachers have more power under laissez-faire leadership. Transactional leadership is characterized by an exchange process in which followers receive immediate, tangible incentives for following the leader's directions (Purwanto, Wijayanti, Hyun & Asbari, 2019).

Job satisfaction is a significant aspect that influences leadership effectiveness. Job satisfaction is described as a happy or positive emotional state that results from a positive evaluation of one's job or work

experience. Job satisfaction, like leadership styles, is critical to an organization's success (Wulandari, Hertati, Antasari & Nazarudin, 2021; Elrayah, 2022). Human resources, it should be remembered, are one of the most precious assets and a key role in achieving corporate goals. When teachers are devoted and hardworking, the school system may succeed; this is feasible when they are happy in their employment. Absenteeism and false excuses become less common if the instructor is not happy. As a result, work satisfaction is a means of attracting and retaining the finest employees in a company, and particularly in a school.

Job satisfaction is important because it motivates instructors, particularly if the principal's leadership style is regarded humanistic. Job satisfaction leads to increased morale and the attainment of objectives. When instructors are satisfied, absenteeism and excuses are likely to reduce (Du, Li & Luo, 2020). Teachers who are satisfied stay in the organization for a long time, and the organization benefits from the return on investment. As a result, there is no denying that happy teachers remain in the organization longer and are more productive. Although there are a variety of other elements that might influence teachers' work happiness, it is critical to underline that the importance of the principal's leadership style in ensuring that instructors feel at ease cannot be overstated. This is partly because leadership is an invaluable determinant of success and/or failure of every organization (Belias, Rossidis, Papademetriou & Mantas, 2022). Thus, the thrust of this study is to examine the influence of principal's leadership style on teachers' job satisfaction in Onitsha Education Zone in Nigeria.

Teachers in Nigeria's Anambra State are certified and competent. Some people have a second

degree and many years of experience, which should normally equate to high levels of performance. There is, however, no comparable performance. One probable cause of low performance should be a lack of job happiness. Teachers that are happy in their positions appear to be more motivated and hardworking, which helps the school system achieve its goals. Absenteeism and false excuses become less common if the instructor is not happy. Job satisfaction has been highlighted as a means of attracting and retaining the finest employees in a company, and particularly in a school.

Principals' leadership styles may either improve or degrade the effectiveness of secondary school instructors. Obviously, certain leadership styles can cause friction between teachers and principals, lead to low lesson attendance, promote truancy during school hours when students are absent for no good reason, and some instructors have a habit of drinking alcohol during work hours. All of this may be traced back to the principal's management style. Many individuals have worked on this in other areas of the world, but none in the Onitsha education zone. The study's goal is to close the knowledge gap in the Onitsha education zone.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent does principal's use of democratic leadership style influence of job satisfaction of teachers in Onitsha Education Zone?
2. To what extent does principal's use of autocratic leadership style influence of job satisfaction of teachers in Onitsha Education Zone?
3. To what extent does principal's use of transformational leadership style influence of job satisfaction of teachers in Onitsha Education Zone?
4. To what extent does principal's use of laissez-faire leadership style influence of job satisfaction of teachers in Onitsha Education Zone?
5. To what extent does principal's use of transactional leadership style influence of job satisfaction of teachers in Onitsha Education Zone?

### **METHOD**

The research was conducted using a survey design. A research design is a strategy for resolving problems that are being investigated. In light of the fact that survey design allows a researcher to obtain data by interviewing or administering a questionnaire to a representative sample of the target population. For this investigation, this research design was deemed suitable. Questionnaires were given to a sample of respondents, including principals and teachers from a few government senior secondary schools, in order to elicit feedback on the principal's leadership style and teacher work satisfaction in the Onitsha Education Zone.

Onitsha North, Onitsha South, and Ogbaru are the local government areas that make up the Onitsha Education Zone. Onitsha is situated between the Greenwich Meridians at 6o47'E/6o783'E and the equator at 6o10'N/6o167'N. Nkwelle Ezunaka in the north, Oba in the south, Nkpor in the east, and the River Niger / Asaba in the west define the Onitsha Education Zone. The majority of the residents in the Onitsha Education Zone are Igbo-speaking businessmen and women. Civil employees, teachers, bankers, physicians, ICT professionals, performers, and more are there.

The population of this study consisted of one thousand three hundred and four (1304) respondents consisting of one thousand two hundred and seventy three (1,273) teachers which comprises thirty three (33) males and one thousand and seventy one (1,071) females

and thirty one (31) Principals in the 56 public secondary schools in Onitsha Education Zone, (Source: Statistics Unit, Post Primary School Commission P.P.S.C Anambra State, January 2013). The choice of teachers and Principals was based on the fact that the variables under investigation are directly related to them in the discharge of their duties in the school and no other category of respondents would provide better information than they.

The population sample therefore consisted of 1304 (31 Principals and 1,273 teachers) in the 56 public secondary schools in Onitsha Education Zone, of Anambra State. The fifty Six (56) secondary schools within the study area were accessible to a large extent making it less difficult to cover within the time of the study. The tool for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled 'Principal's Leadership Style and Teachers Job Satisfaction Questionnaire (PLSTJSQ)'. A questionnaire is a research tool that collects data from a big group of people. In the meanwhile, questionnaires are great for survey research and are frequently used in education to acquire information on present circumstances and practices, as well as to make rapid and precise inquiries about attitudes and opinions. The respondents—teachers and principals from various schools—were polled using questionnaires to collect information and data. There were two components to the surveys for principals and teachers. Section A dealt with the respondents' demographic information, whereas Section B dealt with leadership styles and work satisfaction. A five-point likert-type rating scale was used as the response pattern.

The questionnaire was verified by two specialists, one from Nnamdi Azikiwe University's Department of Educational Foundations (Measurement

and Evaluation) in Awka and the other from Nwafor Orizu College of Education's Department of Educational Psychology/Guidance and Counseling in Nsugbe. They were given the instrument as well as information on the study's objective, scope, research questions, and hypotheses. They were asked to evaluate the instrument in terms of topic relevancy and intelligibility. Their ideas and adjustments aided the researcher in the finalization of the instrument copies.

The reliability coefficient of the equipment used to analyze the data was determined using the test-retest approach. The goal of pre-testing was to determine the clarity and relevance of the instrument items so that those determined to be insufficient for measuring variables could be eliminated, while others could be adjusted to improve the research instruments' quality. This guaranteed that the device recorded all of the necessary information. The questionnaire was distributed to twenty respondents from schools in the Idemili Local Government Area who live near the sampled schools, and their replies were gathered. However, after a week, the same questionnaire was given to the same respondents, and their replies were gathered and analyzed using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Method ( $r$ ). The dependability coefficient was found to be 0.88, which was regarded excellent for the research. This suggests that real variance accounted for 88% of the variation in the two scores, while chance factor or error variance accounted for 12%.

The questionnaire was conducted by the researcher with the help of experienced research assistants. The questionnaire was administered and retrieved over the course of one month. Principals and teachers were given five days to examine the questionnaire and answer. Following that, the researcher

gathered their replies, which were then used in data analysis. Meanwhile, the completed and fully retrieved questionnaire was completed when the time limit was reached. The data was examined using mean and standard deviation statistics, with any item with a mean score of 3.00 or more being considered Agreed, and any item with a mean score of less than 3.00 being considered Disagreed. The reliability coefficient of the

equipment used to analyze the data was determined using the test re-test approach. The study adopted mean and standard deviation for data analysis.

## **RESULTS**

**Research Question One:** To what extent does the Principal's use of democratic leadership style influence of job satisfaction of teachers in Onitsha Zone?

**Table 1: Mean ratings of perception and responses of teachers in respect to how the Principal's use of democratic leadership style influences job satisfaction of teachers in Onitsha Zone.**

S/N	Questionnaire items	Mean	S.D	Decision
1	Encourages staff members to openly express their feelings	3.25	1.10	Accepted
2	Expresses confidence in staff members regardless disagreeing with them	3.81	1.24	Accepted
3	Friendly, good listener and easy to dialogue with by teachers	4.20	0.86	Accepted
4	Shows understanding of teachers viewpoints though holding divergent view point with them	4.33	0.94	Accepted
5	He is patient and encourages staff to frankly and express fully view points	4.13	0.92	Accepted

From table 1, it is observed that the mean of all the questionnaire items are above 3.00 which interprets that teachers in Onitsha Education Zone have preference for democratic leadership style of principals.

**Research Question Two:** To what extent does the Principal's use of autocratic leadership style influence of job satisfaction of teachers in Onitsha Zone?

**Table 2: Mean ratings of perception and responses of teachers in respect to how the Principal's use of autocratic leadership style influences job satisfaction of teachers in Onitsha Zone.**

S/N	Questionnaire items	Mean	S.D	Decision
1	Blames failure or mistakes for low performance on teachers	2.33	1.29	Rejected
2	Expects perfection in task from members of staff regardless of challenging issues	2.06	0.89	Rejected
3	Threatens staff members with queries and severe sanctions	2.11	1.19	Rejected
4	Has high and harsh opinion over what each staff does	2.21	1.33	Rejected
5	Suppresses new ideas from members of staff or teachers	2.62	1.49	Rejected

From table 2, it is observed that the mean of all the questionnaire items are below 3.00 which interprets that teachers in Onitsha Education Zone do not have preference for autocratic leadership style of principals.

**Research Question Three:** To what extent does the Principal's use of transformational leadership style influence of job satisfaction of teachers in Onitsha Zone?

*Table 3: Mean ratings of perception and responses of teachers in respect to how the Principal's use of transformational leadership style influences job satisfaction of teachers in Onitsha Zone.*

S/N	Questionnaire items	Mean	S.D	Decision
1	He is a risk taker and tried new adventurous ideas in dealing with situations that will improve the school	4.38	0.79	Accepted
2	He is patient with progress being made by the staff towards goal attainment	4.03	0.87	Accepted
3	Insists that staff members work through divergent point of views with non-suppression of them.	4.55	0.75	Accepted
4	Gives encouragement to members of staff to initiate new and creative ideas to benefit school and the rest of staff members.	4.51	0.67	Accepted
5	Welcomes staff to question matters related to school affairs	4.14	0.08	Accepted

From table 3, it is observed that the mean of all the questionnaire items are above 3.00 which interprets that teachers in Onitsha Education Zone have preference for transformational leadership style of principals.

**Research Question Four:** To what extent does the Principal's use of laissez-faire leadership style influence of job satisfaction of teachers in Onitsha Zone?

*Table 4: Mean ratings of perception and responses of teachers in respect to how the Principal's use of laissez-faire leadership style influences job satisfaction of teachers in Onitsha Zone.*

S/N	Questionnaire items	Mean	S.D	Decision
1	Has no belief in self and others attaining quality performance towards attainment of school goals	2.14	1.20	Rejected
2	Does not supervise teachers in the teaching/learning assignments	1.43	1.27	Rejected
3	He is less concerned about group performance towards attainment of school goals	4.08	1.09	Accepted
4	He is unconcerned with staff welfare	2.11	1.16	Rejected
5	Governs the group through non-intervention in what they are doing	4.34	0.13	Accepted

From table 4, it is observed that the mean of 3 out of 5 of the questionnaire items are below 3.00 whereas the remaining 2 items are above 3.00. In essence, there is divided perception among teachers regarding principals' use of laissez-faire leadership style and teachers' job satisfaction.

**Research Question Five:** To what extent does the Principal's use of transactional leadership style influence of job satisfaction of teachers in Onitsha Zone?

*Table 5: Mean ratings of perception and responses of teachers regarding how the Principal's use of transactional leadership style influences job satisfaction of teachers in Onitsha Zone.*

S/N	Questionnaire items	Mean	S.D	Decision
1	Rewards followers immediately targeted goals/objectives are met	4.13	1.11	Accepted
2	Balances needs of the people as well as expectation or needs of the school	4.21	0.70	Accepted
3	Being clear, focusing on expectations, giving feedback for adjustments so as to help the staff reach goal	3.71	1.29	Accepted
4	Frequently communicates with their subordinates or staff	4.00	1.11	Accepted
5	Calls for integration of the need of workers or followers with the expectation or need of the organization or leaders.	4.27	0.86	Accepted

From table 5, it is observed that the mean of all the questionnaire items are above 3.00 which interprets that teachers in Onitsha Education Zone have preference for transactional leadership style of principals.

### **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

Teachers perceive the principal's democratic leadership style to improve their job satisfaction because he/she encourages staff members to openly express their feelings, expresses confidence in staff members regardless of disagreements, is friendly, good listener, and easy to dialogue with, shows understanding of teachers viewpoints despite holding divergent viewpoints with them, and exercises patience and encourages staff. This is in line with the findings of Ajuoga (2000), who found that democratic leadership leads to better levels of work satisfaction. Also Belias, Rossidis, Papademetriou and Mantas (2022) confirmed that democratic leadership style has a stronger positive influence on job satisfaction than other leadership style. A participative and democratic management style helps to improve the opportunity to access job satisfaction which improves teachers satisfaction through the development of self-efficacy, engagement, and stress control (Elrayah, 2022).

Teachers' work satisfaction is harmed by the principal's authoritarian leadership style, according to the research. Job satisfaction will not be realized if the principal blames failure or mistakes on teachers, expects

perfection in task completion from members of staff regardless of challenging issues, threatens staff members with questions and severe sanctions, has a high and harsh opinion of what each staff member does, and suppresses new ideas from members of staff or teachers. Purwanto, Wijayanti, Hyun and Asbari (2019) found that principal's authoritarian leadership style may cause some teachers to rebel, impair the morale of the teachers and creates moments of insecurity within the leadership. Similarly, Du, Li and Luo (2020) observed a negative relationship between authoritarian leadership and employees' active support for organizational change.

Teachers believe the principal's transformative leadership approach improves their work happiness, according to the data. If the principal is a risk taker who has tried new adventurous ideas in dealing with situations that will improve the school, exercise patience with staff progress toward goal attainment, insists that staff members work through divergent points of view with non-suppression of them, encourages staff members to initiate new and creative ideas that will benefit the school and the rest of the staff members, and welcomes staff to ask questions about school matters, This is in line with the findings of Nguni et al. (2006), who

identified a link between the school principal's transformational leadership style and teacher job satisfaction. Also, Wulandari, Hertati, Antasari and Nazarudin (2021) believed that transformational leaders establishes strong relationships, helps bring enthusiasm and motivation among the teachers.

The findings revealed that teachers believe the principal's laissez-faire leadership style reduces their work happiness. For example, it has little faith in self and others achieving quality performance toward achieving school goals, does not supervise teachers in teaching/learning assignments, is less concerned about group performance toward achieving school goals, is unconcerned about staff welfare, and governs the group through non-intervention in what they are doing, making teachers feel unguided and uncared for. According to this research, there is no indication that the implementation of a laissez-faire leadership style by principals improves teacher job satisfaction in the Onitsha Education Zone. On the contrary, this suggests that principals rarely use a laissez-faire leadership style because they are concerned about group performance, govern the group through intervention, and supervise teachers in their teaching/learning assignments, despite the fact that they occasionally avoid interfering with the group's work at all costs because it reduces teachers' efficiency (Korkmaz, 2007). Recent studies has shown that laissez-faire leadership style is unpopular because of its associated lack of role clarity (Lundmark, Richter & Tafvelin, 2022) and poor involvement with the group (Robert & Vandenberghe, 2022).

Teachers believe the principal's transactional leadership style improves their work happiness, according to the data. If the principal rewards followers immediately after targeted goals/objectives are met, balances people's

needs with the school's expectations or needs, is clear, focuses on expectations, gives feedback for adjustments to help the staff reach the goal, communicates frequently with their subordinates or staff, and calls for integration of workers' or followers' needs with the organization's or leaders' expectations or needs, In line with the aforementioned, Bass and Riggio (2006) discovered that transactional leadership entails the leader compensating followers when their performance meets expectations. Similarly, Purwanto, Bernarto, Asbari, Wijayanti and Hyun (2020) observed that transactional leadership style creates a sense of fairness. With short-term planning as part of this leadership style, management ensures that its visions for the organization will be realized.

### **Educational Implications of the Study**

Based on the findings of the study, the following implications were being drawn:

Teachers in the Onitsha Education Zone have expressed their support for democratic leadership, citing it as a factor that improves their job happiness. This means that administrators, educational policymakers, and curriculum developers should continue to encourage democratic leadership in order for teachers to better serve the school. Because data suggests that principals' use of autocratic leadership style is unpopular with teachers, who believe it is harmful to their work happiness, it implies that principals have not used this strategy effectively. As a result, principals are being urged to receive further training on how to leverage the benefits of autocracy in attaining school objectives.

Teachers in the Onitsha Education Zone have expressed their support for transformational leadership, seeing it as a component that improves their job happiness. This means that administrators, educational policymakers, and curriculum developers should continue to promote



transformational leadership so that teachers may provide greater service to the school. Because data suggests that principals' employment of a laissez-faire leadership style is unpopular with teachers, who believe it is harmful to their work happiness, it implies that principals have not used this strategy effectively. As a result, administrators are urged to receive further training on how to utilize the benefits of laissez-faire in attaining school objectives.

Teachers in the Onitsha Education Zone have shown their support for transactional leadership, seeing it as a component that improves their job happiness. This means that administrators, educational policymakers, and curriculum developers should continue to encourage transactional leadership so that teachers may provide greater service to the school.

### **CONCLUSION**

According to the findings, principals exhibited a high level of democratic leadership, which improves teacher job satisfaction. The administrators were good listeners to the group, showed understanding of the instructors' perspectives, were patient, and encouraged employees to be honest and voice their opinions. They also encouraged staff to openly express their thoughts. In terms of autocratic leadership, the study found that some principals are autocratic, particularly when it comes to directing staff goals, suppressing new ideas from members of staff, and occasionally blaming failure or mistakes for poor performance on staff, all of which have a negative impact on teacher job satisfaction.

Principals seldom use a laissez-faire leadership style because they are worried about group performance, manage the group through intervention, and oversee instructors in their teaching/learning assignments, even if they try to avoid interfering with the group's work as much as possible. This has a detrimental impact on

teacher work satisfaction. Principals exercise transformational leadership to a large extent by encouraging members of staff to launch new and creative ideas that benefit the school and the rest of the workforce, and they are risk takers (try new adventurous ideas in dealing with situations). This has a favorable impact on teacher work satisfaction.

On job satisfaction, the working circumstances are not excellent, despite the fact that there was no consensus on the level of unhappiness, with a large percentage of people confessing to being unsatisfied. Teachers were dissatisfied with their pay and benefits, and a large proportion of them were dissatisfied with recognition and advancement prospects. Because of its emphasis on reward and explicit direction of the teacher/staff member on how to best attain a set objective, transactional leadership remains a major motivational method. In all implications, the principal's leadership style remains an essential aspect in ensuring that instructors are pleased with their teaching assignments.

### **Recommendations**

According to the study's conclusions, components of promotion such as advancement chances, in-service training opportunities, and prospects for growth can be improved. It is necessary for school management to devise methods for enhancing work satisfaction in order to improve teacher satisfaction. To improve teachers' work happiness, principals should improve their supervisory assistance. Some parts of the incentive system, such as fringe benefits, school administration recognition, and prizes for good work, could be improved at the school. To be competitive and fair, the principals should actively enhance communication, provide fast feedback on inquiries, and improve job assessment methods. The principal should learn to be

patient with the staff's progress toward achieving their objectives. The administrator has to recognize that instructors are human beings who, like him, may make errors.

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