

# The Impact of Leadership Style and Sense of Competence on the Performance of Post-Primary School Teachers in Oyo State, Nigeria

Babajide S. Adeokin, Oguntinyinbo O. Kazeem

**Abstract**—The not so pleasing state of the nation's quality of education has been a major area of research. Many researchers have looked into various aspects of the educational system and organizational structure in relation to the quality of service delivery of the staff members. However, there is paucity of research in areas relating to the sense of competence and commitment in relation to leadership styles. Against this backdrop, this study investigated the impact of leadership style and sense of competence on the performance of post-primary school teachers in Oyo state Nigeria. Data were generated across public secondary schools in the city using survey design method. Ibadan as a metropolis has eleven local government areas contained in it. A systematic random sampling technique of the eleven local government areas in Ibadan was done and five local government areas were selected. The selected local government areas are Akinyele, Ibadan North, Ibadan North-East, Ibadan South and Ibadan South-West. Data were obtained from a range of two – three public secondary schools selected in each of the local government areas mentioned above. Also, these secondary schools are a representation of the variations in the constructs under consideration across the Ibadan metropolis. Categorically, all secondary school teachers in Ibadan were clustered into selected schools in those found across the five local government areas. In all, a total of 272 questionnaires were administered to public secondary school teachers, while 241 were returned. Findings revealed that transformational leadership style makes room for job commitment when compared with transactional and laissez-faire leadership styles. Teachers with a high sense of competence are more likely to demonstrate more commitment to their job than others with low sense of competence. We recommend that, it is important an assessment is made of the leadership styles employed by principals and school administrators. This guides administrators and principals in to having a clear, comprehensive knowledge of the style they currently adopt in the management of the staff and the school as a whole; and know where to begin the adjustment process from. Also to make an impact on student achievement, being attentive to teachers' levels of commitment may be an important aspect of leadership for school principals.

**Keywords**—Leadership style, sense of competence, teachers, public secondary schools, Ibadan.

## I. INTRODUCTION

UNDER development in sub-Saharan Africa is multi sectorial. The overriding effect on the educational sector is alarmingly ridiculous and has over the years informed series of research. Nigeria as one of such countries in sub Saharan Africa is considered the most populous black nation with a not so enticing and abysmal educational system. While one may

be quick to conclude that lack of government commitment towards education in the country is the main culprit, leadership styles of agencies within the structures may pose a better explanation for the falling standard of education in the country. This is so because quality leadership plays a pivotal role in the success of any organization as a result of its overriding effects on employees' performance. It is known that human beings are the most important input of any organization. Although the organization has organic, physical, and economic conditions for effectiveness, the creative performance of the organization may not be promising unless the human beings who are responsible for creativity in an organization have attached importance or his/her needs and expectations are taken into consideration. Human beings are, of course, much more important in the educational organizations than in other organizations. Because they participate at any position of the input-process-output circle of the educational organizations, "input" is students, "process" is teachers and "output" is a qualified work [1].

As such, to create satisfactory conditions and atmosphere for shaping the attitudes of students as well as meeting the pre-requisite for ensuring that they imbibe the needed skills and ability is the most paramount and crucial task. By so doing, the personnel and in this case, the teachers saddled with the responsibility of putting such tasks in place are expected to be resourceful and efficient. More importantly, there is also the need for the existence of motivating factors necessary for positive reinforcement to make teachers find pleasure in what they do, because only a motivated teacher can deliver excellently. Therefore the discharge of duties effectively is contingent on the quality of working conditions.

The concept of working conditions include organizational effectiveness, environment, climate, organizational ideology, ecological field and with organizational information [2]. Teachers' sense of working conditions is effective on their working habits. It is a major determinant of the quality of efforts put into teaching and tutoring. Therefore, where working condition is poor or not at par with expected standard, the resultant effect is a sickly attitude towards work. One of the aspects that constitute the source of working condition includes the attitudes and commitment towards the goal of the organization. Organizational commitment consists of the factors such as the employee's belief and acceptance of the organization's goals and values, the employee willingness to exert effort on behalf of the organization, and a strong desire to keep up membership in the organization.

Babajide Adeokin is with the University of Ibadan, Nigeria (e-mail: awkeenbabajide@gmail.com).

The effectiveness of a school, of course, depends on many details; one of the most important details is the administrator's interaction (leadership style adopted by the principal), teachers, and students who are the permanent items of learning and teaching process. Within this interaction, the school principal is the director of school; the teacher on the converse directs and manages the classroom. By so doing, teachers owe the school the responsibility of loyalty and commitment to their organizations or schools, the objects of production i.e. students, routine activities and colleagues; invariably, the effectiveness of the school and the realization of the set objectives is a direct of result of the attitudes of the teachers and the relationship that exist between the teachers and the principal [3]. On the other hand, the external rewards (salary, position etc.) that the organization supplies and the internal rewards that are supplied from the working environment are the most important points for encouraging employees in the concept of professional performance. These external and internal rewards are as important as the long term goals of the organization/school because it is what determines the growth and continuous existence of the organization. As such, if an organization such as school must continue to exist, the problem of how to provide teachers commitment must be adequately catered for.

Lower commitment not only creates the dilemmas that both badly affect the effectiveness of schools, researches have also revealed that it also accounts for failure of teachers' professional performance. Teachers who are less motivated and committed create clogs in the wheel of progress of the school through constant disregard for the goals, aims and objectives of the school. Higher commitment ensures otherwise as the teachers' genuine interest in the students beyond school work will have been reciprocated. The focus on job commitment emphasizes two dimensions; commitment to teaching work and commitment to teaching occupation [4]. The job commitment under consideration is equivalent to Blau and Lunz's work commitment [5], [6], where two sub-commitments were stated: Organizational and professional commitments.

Organizational commitment was defined by [4] as "the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization". Most of the organizational commitment literature is based upon this definition [7]. Organizational commitment is seen as the "process by which the goals of the organization and those of the individual become increasingly integrated and congruent" [8].

In the workplace, organizational commitment reflects commitment to the employing organization; in the case of a teacher, commitment to the school. Professional commitment however was defined by Blau as "one's attitude towards one's profession or vocation" [9]. Blau's widely used Career Commitment Scale conceptualizes professional commitment as the extent to which the individual identifies with and values their profession, and the level of effort they expend toward acquiring knowledge relevant to it.

Organizational commitment and professional commitment

are different, but related concepts [10], while organizational commitment focuses on commitment to a particular organization (a school, a company, etc.); professional commitment is concerned with commitment to one's occupation, career, or profession. Organizational commitment is defined as having three components: (a) a strong belief in and acceptance of organizational goals and values, (b) a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization, and (c) a desire to maintain membership in the organization [4]. Professional commitment, in contrast, has been defined by [9] as "one's attitude, including affection, belief, and behavioral intention toward his/her occupation". Others have conceptualized it as "one's motivation to work at a chosen vocation" [11]. There are various prototypes of career decision making as well as preservation in literatures that fit in measures of both job satisfaction and a professional commitment.

From the foregoing, the worrisome state of the nation's educational sector has proven to be a bane in her development. This of course could be viewed on a macro level with focus on governmental policies but also largely has a micro tone to it. The focus on infrastructural and human components is one that thoroughly reveals the true state of the sector especially as it concerns the performance of students. These human components comprise of the teachers (who also serve as administrators), non-academic staff and the students. The effectiveness of the whole system is adjudged fundamentally by the performance of the students using examinations as a form of assessment of the stated components; the most vital is the human component and perhaps, the most crucial of all still remains the teachers. While the transfer of knowledge is the core of the institution, teachers have also proven to be models that students learn a thing or two from in their developmental process. This is exactly what proves to be quite troubling. If the most pivotal component of the unit who is responsible for the education and enlightenment of the students, the very crux of the whole setting, decides to loaf as opposed to being committed to the job, what will the future hold for those kids?

Victor H. Vroom Expectancy theory has been widely used in the study of employee commitment. It predicts that individuals will engage in behavior that they perceive will eventually lead to desired rewards. Specifically, this theory states that motivation is driven by employee perceptions that effort will lead to successful performance and that successful performance will lead to personally important outcomes.

A teacher will decide to behave or act in a certain way because they are motivated to select a specific behavior over other behaviors due to what they expect the result of that selected behavior will be [12]. Meanwhile, central to the theory is the cognitive process that determines how an individual teacher manages the myriads of factors that motivates him/her. This is done before making the ultimate choice. That is, either to be committed to the job or not.

While job commitment has been empirically proven to be associated with improved job performance and satisfaction, ascertaining which leadership style to adopt within the confines of Nigeria's educational sector to sufficiently drive

the commitment level of teachers is continually proving to be a challenge. Almost equally pertinent is the challenge of recognizing if a teacher's sense of competence or lack of it will be important in determining his/her level of commitment to the teaching job.

The status of a teacher in the civil service hierarchy in terms of grade level may influence the level of job commitment demonstrated by that teacher or probably not. The dilemma of not knowing the extent of influence (if there is any at all) poses a problem. As such, through two thematic objectives, this study seeks to determine if there is a positive relationship between leadership style and job commitment among public secondary school teachers in Ibadan and also examine if sense of competence will significantly influence job commitment among public secondary school teachers in Ibadan.

#### *A. Existing Literature*

##### *1. Leadership Style and Commitment*

Leadership is a thoroughly researched area in organizational studies that has great influence on staff and/or followers commitment both in formal and informal settings. Winning leaders understand what motivates employees and how the employee's strengths and weaknesses influence their decisions, actions, and relationships.

Leadership is considered effective when its influence on the subordinates yields positive organizational performance [3]. Furthermore, leadership is often regarded as the single most critical success factor in the success or failure of an institution [13]. According to Dardin, leadership is undoubtedly the critical determinant of the success of an organization, and thus determines organizational performance in the competitive global market [14].

Literatures revealed that there is a positive correlation between transactional leadership and organizational commitment; and also between transformational leadership and organizational commitment but it was found that transformational leadership has a slightly higher correlation value with organizational commitment than transactional leadership. Results of their research work which involved one hundred and one employees including Academic and Administration staff from the education sector of Pakistan also indicated that inspirational motivation and individual consideration plays a strong role in contribution of transformational leadership towards organizational commitment.

As a conclusion, the leadership styles (transformational and transactional) have positive impact and contribution in the organizational commitment. It has been consistently revealed that transformational leadership has positive correlation with organizational commitment [10]. Transformational and transactional leadership has moderate positive relationship with affective commitment. Other researchers stated that individualized consideration has positive link with both affective commitment and normative commitment. Similarly, positive correlations was found between intellectual stimulation and both affective commitment and normative

commitment [13]. It was revealed that transformational leaders who encourage their followers to think critically and creatively can have positive influence on their followers' commitment. This is further supported by [15] with the notion that transformational leadership has the potential for stimulating motivation as well as commitment often through the provision of creative solutions to problems of the followers. And more often than not, followers tend to display huge commitment when they have self-assurance in their leaders.

One personal and organizational factor that is considered as key antecedent of organizational commitment is leadership [4].

Reference [4] further states that, there is positive relationship between leadership and overall organizational commitment and effectiveness. In other words, organizations attain success through the leader's manner of operation within the organization. He also revealed through his study a positive relationship of leadership style with three components of organizational commitment. Similarly, [15] states that leadership has positive and significant impact on organizational commitment. As [13] itemized two major leadership styles in his work, which are the transformational and transactional leadership style. While the former has over time predicted a positive relationship with organizational commitment the latter does not. [10].

Leaders who exhibit transformational style tend to exude exceptional capacity to command respect and influence commitment, this is often done by promoting the required values necessary for actualizing the goals of the organization first, by giving special importance to the employees efforts and attainment of goals and secondly by engendering a considerable degree of individual staff commitment for the achievement of ultimate common vision, mission and goals of the organization. Transformational leaders inspire and stimulate followers to achieve more by paying more attention to their values and also equip them with guidelines for putting their values in alignment with that of the organization.

Transformational leadership is sub divided into four facets namely charismatic leadership, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized considerations [13]. The four are interrelated and interwoven. Also on the basis of its attribute, transformational leadership is further divided into two, which are charisma and idealized influence [13]. Inspirational motivate followers and influences their commitment as well as allegiance towards the organization through actions directed towards building self-reliance. Idealized influence on the converse ensures that followers are aware of their indispensability to the organization, and importance to productivity. It promotes emotional attachment, keenness to work and commitment toward common goals. Individualized consideration also helps in the area of directing and educating employees. It ensures that employees are motivated and encouraged through intellectual stimulation.

Studies have established that leadership style significantly determines employees' level of commitment in different work settings while putting other factors into consideration. For

instance, research revealed that leadership style and personality type both predicts organizational commitment [16]. The study discovered that employees who exhibit internal locus of control tend to be more committed to the organizations. In the same way, those who follow transformational leaders also tend to be more committed as well. Transformational leadership has a positive relationship with employees' commitment, but when organizational culture operates between, transformational leadership does not positively influence the organizational commitment [16]. Transformational leadership correlated positively with organizational commitment. Research findings by [10] revealed that transformational leadership directly influences the commitment level of employees. The main thrust of transformational leadership is directly on the commitment of employees and members of the organization. Leaders who exhibit such style tend to develop employees and members commitment to achieve set goals thus leading to greater productivity. And even when culture appears to shape or moderate the actions of the individuals, transformational leadership engender positive effect on both their affective and normative commitment [17]. Transformational leadership has also been found to be related with affective commitment [18]. As transformational leadership is the combination of four leadership traits, i.e. idealized influence, individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation and inspirational motivation. Various researchers have found a relationship of these traits with commitment. Transformational leadership in all its behaviors is positively and significantly related to continuance commitment, normative commitment and affective commitment. Three components of transformational leadership, as stated by [19], are said to have positive relationship with normative and affective commitment. These three include intellectual stimulation, idealize influence and inspirational motivation. Affective and normative commitment is positively related with individualize consideration while intellectual stimulation similarly is positively correlated with normative and affective commitment.

Research into organizational behavior in different settings found that transformational leadership has a positive influence on employee performance, and therefore, organizational performance [13]. However, other studies revealed that transformational leadership is an extension of transactional leadership [20]. The difference between these two models is that followers of transformational leadership exhibit performance which is beyond expectations, while transactional leadership, at best, leads to expected performance [20]. Evidence gathered in South African retail and manufacturing sectors, as well in the armed forces of the United States, Canada and Germany, points towards the marginal impact transactional leaders have on the performance of their followers in contrast to the strong, positive effects of transformational leaders.

### B. Methods

This research was carried out to investigate leadership style and sense of competence among post primary school teachers

in Ibadan, the capital city of Oyo state. The study was carried out across public secondary schools in the city using survey design method. A combination of probability sampling techniques was used for the study. The systematic random sampling technique was used to draw the participating local government areas from the population comprising of eleven local government areas in Ibadan. In the same vein, a simple random sampling technique was adopted in selecting schools from each selected local government area. Thereafter, a simple random sampling technique was also used to select participants from each school within the local government area and 272 questionnaires were administered in total while 241 were returned. This churns out a response rate of around 89%.

## II. DATA ANALYSIS

### A. Relationship between leadership style and job commitment

**Hypothesis:** Transformational leadership style will predict job commitment among public secondary school teachers in Ibadan than transactional and laissez-faire leadership styles.

Table I presents the influence of leadership style on job commitment among public secondary school teachers in Ibadan. It was displayed on the table that leadership style had significant influence on job commitment at  $[F(2, 234) = 22.583; P < 0.05]$ . This necessitates further post-hoc analysis, presented in Table II:

TABLE I  
SUMMARY OF ONE-WAY ANOVA SHOWING THE INFLUENCE OF LEADERSHIP STYLE ON JOB COMMITMENT

|                | Job commitment |     |             |        |       |
|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|--------|-------|
|                | Sum of Squares | Df  | Mean Square | F      | Sig.  |
| Between Groups | 23522.694      | 2   | 11761.347   | 22.583 | 0.000 |
| Within Groups  | 121867.820     | 234 | 520.803     |        |       |
| Total          | 145390.515     | 236 |             |        |       |

TABLE II  
SUMMARY OF POST HOC (LSD) SHOWING MEAN COMPARISONS BETWEEN DIFFERENT LEADERSHIP STYLES

| S/N | Level            | 1 | 2      | 3      | X     | SD    | N   |
|-----|------------------|---|--------|--------|-------|-------|-----|
| 1   | Laissez-faire    | - | 8.725* | 25.88* | 46.63 | 11.27 | 104 |
| 2   | Transactional    | - | 17.16* | 55.35  | 23.93 | 80    |     |
| 3   | Transformational | - | -      | 72.51  | 34.95 | 53    |     |

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table II presents that there was significant mean difference between Laissez-faire leadership style and Transactional leadership style ( $MD = 8.725; P < 0.05$ ) and Transformational leadership style ( $MD = 25.88; P < 0.05$ ). Also, there was significant mean difference between Transactional leadership style and Transformational leadership style ( $MD = 17.16; P < 0.05$ ). Further analysis revealed that public teachers who perceived their administrator's as exercising Transformational leadership style reported higher job commitment with higher mean score ( $X = 72.51; SD = 34.95$ ), while those who perceives their administrator's leadership style as Laissez-faire reported lower job commitment ( $X = 46.63; SD = 11.27$ ). This

confirms the stated hypothesis, hence will be retained in this study.

#### *B. Influence of Sense of Competence on Job Commitment*

**Hypothesis 2:** Teachers with a high sense of competence will be more committed to their job than their colleagues with a low sense of competence.

This was tested using t-test for independent samples and the result is presented in Table III.

TABLE III  
SUMMARY OF T-TEST FOR THE INDEPENDENT SAMPLES SHOWING THE  
INFLUENCE OF SENSE OF COMPETENCE ON JOB COMMITMENT

| Sense of competence | N   | Mean  | SD    | df  | T     | P     |
|---------------------|-----|-------|-------|-----|-------|-------|
| High                | 45  | 85.42 | 42.01 | 235 | 11.13 | <0.05 |
| Low                 | 192 | 48.31 | 9.58  |     |       |       |

Table III presents the influence of sense of competence on job commitment among public secondary school teachers in Ibadan. It was presented that sense of competence had a significant influence on job commitment at  $[t(235) = 11.13; P < 0.05]$ . However, teachers with a high sense of competence were found to experience higher level of job commitment ( $X = 85.42$ ;  $SD = 42.01$ ) than those with a low sense of competence ( $X = 48.31$ ;  $SD = 9.58$ ). This confirms the stated hypothesis, hence will be retained in this study.

### III. DISCUSSION

The first hypothesis revealed that transformational leadership is a predictor of job commitment than the other two mentioned. (Transactional and Laissez fair leadership styles). This is in agreement with the literatures that there is a positive correlation between transactional leadership and commitment; and also between transformational leadership and commitment but it was found that transformational leadership has a slightly higher correlation value with commitment than transactional leadership. Studies have also shown that transformational leadership is effective in schools by fostering higher levels of commitment, extra effort and motivation especially when compared to the other leadership styles.

Transformational leadership style was revealed to positively affect organizational commitment of followers [16]. Similar findings by other studies note positive and significant relationship between transformational leadership style and staff or followers commitment. Similarly [10] found out that transformational leadership has a positive correlation with organizational commitment. It was noted that transformational and transactional leadership have moderate positive relationship with affective commitment. Lower level of relationship coefficients between transformational leadership and normative and continuance commitment. Transformational leadership helps to increase trust, commitment and team efficacy. Other researchers stated that individualized consideration has positive link with both affective commitment and normative commitment. Similarly, positive correlations were found between intellectual

stimulation and both affective commitment and normative commitment. Reference [21] noted that transformational leaders who possess great skills in encouraging their subjects to think paradigmatically can positively influence their followers' and provoke great commitment. This is further supported by [19] that transformational leaders can motivate and increase followers' motivational level and organizational commitment by getting involved to solve problems creatively and also understanding their needs. Moreover, employees are far more likely to be committed to the organization if they have confidence in their leaders.

The second hypothesis was also accepted, it was revealed that high sense of competence determines commitment to job. Teachers with low sense of competence were observed to be less committed as against others with high sense of competence. This finding supports the results obtained by [22], which found that efficacy was a strong predictor of commitment to teaching when he keenly worked on the relationship between teachers' sense of efficacy and commitment to teaching. References [23] and [24] also believe that features of school organizations that promote a teacher's sense of efficacy may, in turn, promote that teacher's commitment to the organization and, therefore, to teaching.

Other research also demonstrated that teachers with a high sense of teaching self-efficacy focus more on their academic activities and help students who experience difficulties, providing them with positive feedback and rewards for their successes [25]. However, teachers with a low level of self-efficacy tend to give up if their students do not quickly achieve satisfactory results, and spend part of their time in class in non-academic recreational activities. Other researches have highlighted that teachers with low levels of teaching self-efficacy tend to control their classroom through authoritative and strict rules, and employ a system of rewards and punishments in order to motivate their students in their work. It was noted in previous research that teachers with a low level of efficacy experience problems in their rapport with their students and in managing the class [26]. These teachers complain of students' inappropriate behavior and do not feel that these students can improve; they tend to adopt restrictive and punitive methods for maintaining discipline in the classroom. Furthermore, they place greater importance on the understanding of the subjects taught rather than on students' overall learning and development. They are so unmotivated as to suggest they would change profession if they could. On the contrary, teachers with a strong belief in their teaching efficacy as a means of maintaining control of the class do not resort to coercive and authoritarian tactics. They employ methods of persuasion, encouraging self-reliance and the students' development of knowledge and skills, rather than employing assistive or restrictive strategies. Moreover, teachers with a strong sense of self-efficacy demonstrate greater ability in planning and organizing their academic activities, as well as greater enthusiasm, often dedicating some of their spare time to their work.

Studies on occupational stress have shown that self-efficacy beliefs help to protect teachers from burnout, and also

predetermine subjective wellbeing. Reference [27] defines burnout as an occupational disease specific to human services professionals, emphasizing that it especially affects workers who begin their job with high expectations and great motivation. For Macciocu, Bonarota and Mazzoni, the educational action is filtered by the operator's wellbeing. Therefore, subjectivity and the teaching staff's human and professional potential are key in determining the quality of their service; this occurs by conditioning the organization, the student as a user of the service, the organizational culture, the relationship with the parents as secondary users, and teachers' rapport with their colleagues. Indeed, the causes of burnout can be traced back to individual, socio-cultural and organizational variables.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

This study explored leadership style and sense of competence as predictors of job commitment among public secondary school teachers in Ibadan metropolis. It was revealed that transformational leadership style rather than transactional and laissez-faire leadership styles is a major predictor of job commitment among teachers in secondary schools and that high sense of competence is associated with job commitment.

The practical implication of this is in line with the result of this study is that the study has relevance to and implications for students, teachers, administrators, educational consultants, schools, the government and the society at large. The study is significant as it gives important contributing factors to job commitment among public secondary school teachers. The present study adds to literature on antecedents of teachers' job commitment especially in the public education system by demonstrating linkages to factors like leadership style, sense of competence and organizational status.

First, a close look into the pattern of operation and organization with respect to leadership structure and style utilized by school administrators is pertinent to ensure that leaders in the educational system, particularly in post primary schools, absorb the best practices through the knowledge and understanding of the leadership style they currently adopt and the effects on the subordinates and entire staff and management of the school, in order to know where to make necessary adjustment. As noted in the educational literature, administrative support seems to foster higher levels of teacher commitment. In addition, it will be helpful for educational stakeholders to take into account the spill-over effect of the leadership style adopted by the principal. Literatures noted that there were nine studies examining the effects of transformational leadership on student achievement. One of which found significant positive effects of transformational leadership on math and language achievement in a study using student achievement scores on provincial, state or national tests. Significant indirect relationships were also reported between transformational leadership and end-of-high school examination scores from several subjects using a value-added measure, the reported positive effects on student achievement. This indicates that principals who use the transactional and

laissez-faire leadership styles could be held accountable for their part, no matter how minute, in the student-achievement and performance mix. In lieu of the foregoing, educating school administrators and principals about the effect of their leadership style and interaction with their members of staff is therefore pertinent. For principals and school administrators who use other leadership styles apart from the transformational style, seminars and conferences can be organized for them so as to learn, adopt, inculcate and practice the tenets of transformational leadership so as to engender job commitment among members of staff, specifically the teachers. For their colleagues who currently utilize the transformational style, trainings aimed at improving and honing their leadership skills can also be organized. This enables them to improve significantly in their administrative duties with optimal result as an outcome.

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