

Transformational Leadership Practices as Predictors of Public Secondary School Goals Achievement in Cross River State, Nigeria

¹M. C. Uzoigwe

uzoparadisemike@gmail.com

¹O. Chuktu

onyinyechuktu@gmail.com

¹I. Eton

idorenyingeton@gmail.com

¹Department of Educational Management
Faculty of Education
University of Calabar, Calabar

Abstract

This study investigated transformational leadership practices as predictors of public secondary school goals' achievement in Cross River State, Nigeria. Survey research design was adopted and two research questions with two hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. A total of 264 school administrators were used for the study through census approach. A validated instrument by two experts in Measurement and Evaluation in the University of Calabar titled "Transformational Leadership Practices and Secondary School Goals' Achievement Scale" (TLPSSGAS) was used for data collection. The instrument was administered on 60 school administrators for reliability study. Using Cronbach alpha reliability for analysis, the reliability coefficient of 0.78 was obtained. The data gathered were analysed using simple linear regression statistics. Findings revealed that inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation significantly predicted public secondary schools' goals' achievement. The researchers concluded that inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation were significant predictors of public secondary school goals' achievement in Cross River State. It was recommended that the school administrators should provide an ideal learning environment for integrating transformational leadership practices in order to inspire and motivate teachers/students to work towards the achievement of secondary schools goals in Cross River State of Nigeria.

Keywords: Transformational, leadership, secondary, school, goals, achievement

Introduction

Many educational systems around the world are facing numerous challenges in an attempt to achieve their predetermined goals and objectives. In African countries,

some schools are still experiencing pandemic outbreak, kidnapping, poor admission policies, meager salary, obsolete facilities and fraudulent scholarship schemes. Other schools are fraught with erratic power supply, antiquated libraries and cramped accommodation. Nigeria is not excluded from these challenges because there are many cases of poor implementation of educational policies, staff/student unrest, vandalism and poor leadership practices which have both direct and indirect impact on school goals' achievement. The purpose of this paper therefore is to project transformational leadership practices as the sine qua non for the achievement of public secondary school goals in Nigeria generally and Cross River State in particular.

A goal is a futuristic idea or a desired result envisioned, planned and committed to achieve by a person or a group of people. However, some people endeavour to reach their goals within a finite time by setting deadlines. Others tend to procrastinate or give up in the face of danger. Correspondingly, school leaders are expected to employ their managerial/leadership skills in harnessing educational resources for goals' achievement. This is because educational goals' achievement requires accountability, and cannot be realized in a vacuum. However, through effective curriculum leadership, educational goals at the secondary school level are focused towards preparing individuals for higher education, equipping school leavers with the needed skills, knowledge and values for effective living within the society (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014). Leadership in schools at this level is expected to be at its best and of good quality in order to enhance effective teaching and learning in all subjects. It has to encourage knowledge acquisition, the opportunity for higher education and better learning outcome among the school leavers.

Unfortunately, observation and experience in Cross River State over the years showed that the school goals are hardly achieved in some public secondary schools. Again, it is quite appalling that some students in this state find it difficult to perform well in reading, writing and arithmetic. Some prefer examination malpractice as a short-cut to acquire the needed number of credits to advance to higher institution. Some of the students cannot read, write, spell or pronounce words and sentences correctly. Others flock "miracle centres" for good grades during external examinations. These breed multiple illiterates and result in unemployment, over dependent on parents for stipend rather than making life meaningful for themselves and the society. It is a matter of concern that many students come out of schools and become criminals. Some come out without acquiring employable and life skills. It is expected that during and just before a student leaves secondary school, he or she must have acquired adequate knowledge and skills that will make him or her employable or qualified to be admitted into higher institutions of learning.

Another dimension of secondary school goals' achievement is knowledge acquisition. It is the process of carefully guiding the students by the principal and teachers in absorbing and storing new information in memory, the success of which is often evaluated to ascertain how well the information can later be remembered (retrieved from memory) and utilized. Knowledge acquisition is accomplished by cooperatively building an organized learning experience in line with the background, grade level, age, orientation and culture of the students. Yukl (2016) stipulated that this can be done effectively by inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation of the school leader. It enhances learning outcome and can also be influenced by how the learning experiences are sequentially structured in the school system. Buttrussing this fact, Bass (2015) avers that the process of storing and retrieving information depends heavily on the representation and organization of the information by a transformational leader.

Transformational leadership is a theory of leadership where a leader works with teams to identify needed change, creating a vision to guide the change through inspiration, and executing the change in tandem with committed members of a group. Transformational leadership occurs when one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to a higher level of motivation, performance and morality. Transformational leaders have been described in prior literatures as highly interactive, passionate, empowering, visionary, and creative (Hackman & Johnson, 2014). Bass (2015) further expanded Burn's theory by conceptualizing transformational leadership behaviours into four categories: idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, and inspirational motivation.

One of the categories of transformational leadership is inspirational motivation. It is the process of providing followers with challenges and meaning for engaging in shared goals. It is the leader's ability to communicate his or her vision in a way that inspires followers (staff and students) to take action in an effort to fulfill the vision, which is goals' achievement. Inspirational motivation enables school leaders to remain focused on the vision of the school despite any obstacles that may arise. Yukl (2016) described inspirational motivation behaviours as communicating an appealing vision, using symbols to focus subordinate's effort, and modelling appropriate behaviours. Some researchers have related inspirational motivation to concepts of ethics, claiming that when educational leaders show concern for school organizational vision and follower motivation, they are more inclined to make ethical decisions.

Boonla and Treputtharat (2013) worked on the relationship between inspirational motivation leadership style and school effectiveness under the office of Secondary Education Area 20. The overall findings were at a high level. Considering each aspect, it was found that inspirational motivation leadership style had the highest mean score

with knowledge acquisition and learning outcome. Konsolas, Anastasiou and Loukeri (2014) explored the impact of inspirational leadership on school goals' achievement. Findings revealed that the involvement of educational leaders in the teacher's educational processes is a predictor of school goals' achievement. In the same vein, Martin, Olga and Olga (2016) examined the effects of transformational leadership practices on teachers' data use for school goals' attainment. Results of structural equation modelling indicated that inspirational leadership has a highly significant positive effect on teachers' various methods of using data for school goals' attainment.

Septi, Nila and Muhammad (2018) found that transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on the achievement of learning outcome at SMK Negeri in Palembang. It was also found that inspirational motivation has a positive and significant effect on knowledge acquisition at SMK Negeri in Palembang. Griffiths (2014) found that principals' inspirational leadership style was not associated directly with either school staff turnover or school-aggregated student achievement progress. Rather, principal inspirational leadership showed an indirect effect, through staff job satisfaction, on school staff turnover (negative) and on school-aggregated student achievement progress (positive).

Intellectual stimulation is another aspect of transformational leadership style that involves getting followers to question the tried and true methods of solving problems by encouraging them to improve upon those methods. Intellectual stimulation encourages followers to challenge leader decisions and group processes, thus encouraging innovative thinking among staff and students. Brown and Posner (2011) advocate intellectual stimulation as a component of organizational learning and change by appealing to follower needs for achievement and growth in ways that the follower finds attractive. Brown and Posner (2011) found that the intellectual stimulation component of transformational leadership plays a healthy and beneficial role in organizational learning outcome because leaders place value in learning for both themselves and their followers. Nkang (2011) found that the mean score of intellectual stimulation leadership behaviour of male primary school principals was average but the level of school goal's achievement was quite high. Also, the result showed that there is strong, positive correlation between the overall intellectual stimulation leadership and school goal's achievement. Abdul and Muhammad (2016) found that the practice of intellectual stimulation leadership by school principals in the district of Kinta Selatan, Perak was moderate and the school goals' achievement was below satisfaction.

Jovanovic and Ciric (2016) found that intellectual stimulation leadership style is the most suitable for guiding the students within the school conditions. Richard (2015) found that Leithwood's model of intellectual stimulation leadership is positively

related to the academic optimism of the school. Mendez-Keegan (2019) found that the higher the transformational leadership score of administrators, the greater the students' academic achievement level. Tara (2018) found that administrators in the district believe that school leaders have made the school successful by setting high expectations for the students.

Hypotheses

These hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

Ho1: Inspirational motivation does not significantly predict public secondary school goals' achievement.

Ho2: Intellectual stimulation does not significantly predict public secondary school goals' achievement.

Methodology

This research was carried out in Cross River State, Nigeria. It is one of the 36 states in Nigeria located in south eastern end of the country bordering Cameroon. The state is located on Latitude $5^{\circ} 45^1$ North of the Equator and Longitude $8^{\circ} 30^1$ East of the Greenwich Meridian. The research design adopted for this study was survey design because the study involved the use of a representative sample from a population and the drawing of inferences based on analysis of available data. The population of the study comprised all the principals in 246 public secondary schools in the study area. Census method was used for the study because the population was not large. An instrument titled "Transformational Leadership Practices and Secondary School Goals Achievement Scale" (TLPSSGAS) was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by two experts in Measurement and Evaluation from the University of Calabar. In order to determine the reliability of the research instrument, a trial test was carried out. The instrument was administered on 60 Vice principals who were not part of the study sample. Cronbach alpha reliability estimate of the test instrument was done in order to determine the internal consistency of the instrument. The result of the Cronbach Alpha reliability estimate gave a reliability coefficient of 0.78. This value was high enough to be considered good for the research instrument. The instrument was a 4-point modified Likert scale. The sub-variables of transformational leadership practices were inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation. Secondary school goals had three sub-variables namely higher education opportunity, knowledge acquisition and learning outcome. Each of these sub-variables was measured using 6 items which gave a total of 30 items. Each item had four response options ranging from Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE) to Low Extent (LE) and Very Low Extent (VLE). The items in the instrument were scored as follows: Very High Extent (VHE) =4points; High Extent (HE) =3points; Low Extent (LE) =2points and Very Low Extent (VLE) =1points, for all positively worded items. A reversed score was assigned to all the negatively worded items. The respondents were required to tick one

of the four response options against each item to indicate the extent of their agreement or disagreement with the item. The copies of the questionnaire were administered personally by the researchers with the help of three trained research assistants. At the end of the exercise, out of two hundred and forty-six (246) copies of questionnaire administered, two hundred and ten (210) copies were successfully completed and retrieved from the respondents and used for data analysis. The gathered data was analysed using simple regression.

Presentation of results

Ho1: Inspirational motivation does not significantly predict public secondary school goals’ achievement.

The first hypothesis states that inspirational motivation does not significantly predict public secondary school goals’ achievement in terms of higher education opportunity, knowledge acquisition and learning outcome. The independent variable is inspirational motivation while the dependent variable is public secondary school goals’ attainment assessed from three perspectives (higher education opportunity, knowledge acquisition and learning outcomes). The variables were measured continuously. To test this hypothesis, simple linear regression was applied to the data. The result is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of simple linear regression analysis on the prediction of public secondary school goals’ achievement by inspirational motivation

Secondary school goals Variables	Source of variation	Sum of Square	df	Mean square	F-ratio	p	r
Opportunity for higher edu.	Regression	2.050	1	2.050	.329	.026*	.001
	Residual	1518.946	262	6.225			
	Total	1520.996	263				
Knowledge acquisition	Regression	285.454	1	285.454	44.780	.000*	.155
	Residual	1555.396	262	6.375			
	Total	1840.850	263				
Learning outcomes	Regression	16.009	1	16.009	1.181	.002*	.005
	Residual	3307.584	262	13.556			
	Total	3323.593	263				

Table 1 showed that the analysis of variance in the regression output produced an F-ratio of .329 for opportunity for higher education, 44.780 for knowledge acquisition, and 1.181 for learning outcomes. These F-ratios were all statistically significant at .05 probability level. On the basis of this result, the first null hypothesis was rejected. This means that inspirational motivation significantly predicts public secondary school goals' achievement in terms of opportunity for higher education, knowledge acquisition and learning outcome. A further analysis indicates coefficients of determination (r^2) of .000001 for higher education opportunity, .024 for knowledge acquisition, and .00005 for learning outcomes. This implies that, 0.0001%, 2.4%, and 0.0025% of the variance in opportunity for higher education, knowledge acquisition, and learning outcomes respectively was accounted for by inspirational motivation. Thus, 99.9999%, 97.5975% and 99.9975% of the variance in opportunity for higher education opportunity, knowledge acquisition, and learning outcomes respectively may be attributed to the effect of other variables extraneous to the study.

Ho2: Intellectual stimulation does not significantly predict public secondary school goals' achievement.

The independent variable is intellectual stimulation while the dependent variable is public secondary school goals' achievement assessed from three perspectives (higher education opportunity, knowledge acquisition and learning outcomes). The variables were measured continuously. To test this hypothesis, simple linear regression was applied to the data. The result is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Summary of simple linear regression analysis on the prediction of public secondary school goals' achievement by intellectual stimulation

Secondary school goals Variables	Source of variation	Sum of Square	df	Mean square	F-ratio	p	r
Opportunity for higher edu.	Regression	59.456	1	59.456	9.926	.002*	.039
	Residual	1461.540	262	5.926			
	Total	1520.996	263				
Knowledge acquisition	Regression	135.214	1	135.214	19.343	.000*	.073
	Residual	1705.635	262	6.990			
	Total	1840.850	263				
Learning outcomes	Regression	93.380	1	93.380	7.054	.008*	.028
	Residual	3230.214	262	13.239			
	Total	3323.593	263				

Table 2 showed that the analysis of variance in the regression output produced an F-ratio of 9.926 for opportunity for higher education, 19.343 for knowledge acquisition, and 7.054 for learning outcomes. These F-ratios were all statistically significant at .05 probability level. On the basis of this result, the second null hypothesis was rejected ($p < .05$). This means that, intellectual stimulation significantly predicts public secondary school goals' achievement in terms of opportunity for higher education, knowledge acquisition and learning outcomes. The result also indicates coefficients of determination (r^2) of .0015 for opportunity for higher education, .0053 for knowledge acquisition and .000784 for learning outcomes. This implies that, 0.1521%, 0.5329%, and 0.0784% of the variance in opportunity for higher education, knowledge acquisition and learning outcomes respectively was accounted for by intellectual stimulation. Thus, 99.8479%, 92.4671% and 99.9216% of the variance in opportunity for higher education, knowledge acquisition, and learning outcomes respectively may be attributed to the effect of other variables extraneous to the study.

Discussion of findings

One of the findings of this study revealed that inspirational motivation significantly predicts public secondary school goals' achievement in terms of opportunity for higher education, knowledge acquisition and learning outcome. The positive nature of these correlation coefficients indicates that inspirational motivation enables school leaders to articulate and practice a vision of how schools should seek to prepare students for the changing world of the 21st century. The implication of this finding is that, the higher the level of utilizing inspirational motivation in school leadership, the higher the achievement of public secondary schools goals could be ensured, while the lower the level of inspirational motivation utilization, the lower the achievement of public secondary schools goals could be ensured in terms of opportunity for higher education, knowledge acquisition and learning outcome. The finding of this study is in tandem with that of Boonla and Treputtharat (2013) and Martin, Olga and Olga (2016) who found that the involvement of educational leaders in the instructional process is a predictor of school goals' achievement. The finding also corroborates Konsolas, Anastasiou and Loukeri (2014) whose results of structural equation modelling also indicated that inspirational leadership style did have a highly significant positive effect on teachers' various uses of data for school goals' attainment. The rationale behind this finding is that inspirational motivation enables the school executive to communicate his or her vision (educational goals) in a way that inspires followers (staff and students) to take action in an effort to fulfill the vision (educational goals). This encourages the staff, students and the leaders to remain focused on the vision of the school despite any obstacles that may arise.

Another finding of this study revealed that intellectual stimulation significantly predicts public secondary school goals' achievement in terms of opportunity for higher

education, knowledge acquisition and learning outcome. The positive nature of these correlation coefficients indicates that the use of intellectual stimulation by the school leaders encourages followers to challenge leader's decisions and group processes, thus promoting innovative thinking towards school goals' attainment. The implication of this finding is that, the higher the level of utilizing intellectual stimulation in the educational processes, the higher the achievement of public secondary schools goals could be ensured, while the lower the level of intellectual stimulation utilization, the lower the achievement of public secondary schools could be ensured in terms of opportunity for higher education, knowledge acquisition and learning outcome. The present finding of this study corroborates that of Mendez-Keegan (2019), among others, whose results revealed that intellectual stimulation leadership style is the most suitable for guiding the students within the school system. It also confirms Richard (2015) result who reported that the correlation testing of intellectual stimulation leadership was positively related to the academic optimism of the school. It was further found that the higher the transformational leadership score of administrators, the greater the students' academic achievement level. The logic behind this finding is that intellectual stimulation enables principals to develop the knowledge, skills and dispositions needed to be a visible and accessible effective school leader who contributes to school performance, students' learning, and the achievement of collective goals.

Conclusion

Premised on the findings of this study, it was concluded that transformational leadership practices significantly predict public secondary school goals' achievement in Cross River State of Nigeria. Simply put, students' acquisition of requisite knowledge with better learning outcome and gaining opportunity for higher education is a function of inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation from the school administrators.

Recommendations

- 1) Principals should always inspire and motivate teachers in solving problems related to knowledge acquisition and learning outcome of students for school goals' achievement.
- 2) Principals should also promote school goals' achievement by stimulating teachers intellectually for effective curriculum implementation in the school system.

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