

Influence of Principals' Leadership Styles and Resource Management Practices on Performance among Public Secondary Schools in Plateau State, Nigeria

ONU, Eucharia Amaka¹

Onuamaka43@gmail.com

08068929372

IDRIS, Jeremiah¹

idrisreal343@gmail.com

08133469861

¹Department of Educational Foundations, University of Nigeria Nsukka, Enugu State, Nigeria

Abstract

This study aimed to evaluate principal's leadership styles and resource management with focus on the implication for Public secondary schools performance within Plateau state. Three research question and three hypotheses guided the study the study adopted a descriptive survey research design, the population of this study shall be 304 public secondary schools, 4310 individuals comprising of 598 principals who consist of 304 junior secondary school principals and 294 senior secondary school principals and 3712 teachers. A sample size of 201 which comprises of 81 principals for both junior and senior section and 120 teachers was drawn using simple random sampling techniques from 58 public secondary schools from the three (3) sampled Local Government Areas (One from each senatorial zone) of Plateau State. The instruments for data collection for this study were structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was titled (Principals' Leadership Styles and Resource Management Practices and Implications for Secondary School Performance Questionnaire) (PLSRMPISSPQ). The instruments were validated and the reliability coefficient of greater than 0.70 determined. The findings revealed among others that Schools led by principals who involved teachers in decision-making, encouraged teamwork, motivated staff, and provided clear direction recorded higher levels of students' academic achievement, improved teacher job performance, and better student discipline. The principals who efficiently managed human, financial, material and time resources achieved better educational outcomes. Proper allocation of funds, adequate supervision of teachers, maintenance of school facilities, and effective time management contributed positively to students' academic performance, teachers' productivity, and the overall effectiveness of public secondary schools.

Keywords: Principal, Leadership Styles, Resource Management, Public Secondary School, Performance, Plateau State.

Introduction

Leadership has become one of the most influential factors in improving school effectiveness and achieving sustainable educational development across the world. While adequate funding, qualified teachers, and instructional facilities remain essential for quality education, evidence increasingly suggests that the effectiveness with which these resources are mobilized and managed depends largely on the leadership capacity of school principals. The 2024/2025 UNESCO Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report emphasizes that effective school leadership is fundamental to improving teaching quality, fostering collaboration, strengthening accountability, and enhancing students' learning outcomes. The report further argues that principals require sufficient autonomy and competence to manage human and financial resources efficiently while promoting a shared vision for school improvement. Leadership style refers to the consistent pattern of behaviours and practices through which school principals influence teachers, students, and other stakeholders toward the realization of educational goals. Contemporary educational leadership literature identifies transformational, democratic, autocratic, and laissez-faire leadership styles as the approaches most frequently adopted in school administration. Although each style has distinct characteristics, growing evidence indicates that participatory and transformational leadership approaches are generally associated with improved teacher commitment, collaborative decision-making, innovation, and enhanced school performance, whereas excessive reliance on authoritarian leadership may reduce teacher morale and organizational effectiveness (Hallinger & Wang, 2021; UNESCO, 2024). Closely linked to leadership is resource management, which constitutes a critical responsibility of school principals. Resource management encompasses the planning, allocation, utilization, supervision, and evaluation of financial, human, material, and time resources to achieve educational objectives effectively and efficiently. In many developing countries, including Nigeria, educational institutions continue to operate under conditions of resource constraints, making effective management an indispensable administrative competence. Rather than the mere availability of resources, it is their prudent utilization through transparency, accountability, and strategic planning that often determines the quality of educational outcomes (UNESCO, 2024). Secondary school performance extends beyond students' examination results to include teacher effectiveness, students'



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discipline, curriculum implementation, school climate, and the overall attainment of educational objectives. These indicators are shaped by several organizational factors, among which principal leadership and resource management consistently occupy a central position. Effective principals establish clear goals, motivate staff, promote professional development, encourage collaboration, and ensure that available resources are utilized in ways that maximize teaching and learning. Conversely, weak leadership and poor resource management often contribute to declining academic standards, deteriorating infrastructure, teacher dissatisfaction, and ineffective school administration (UNESCO, 2024). This study investigates principals' leadership styles and resource management and examines their implications for secondary school performance in Plateau State, Nigeria. The study contributes to the growing discourse on educational leadership by providing empirical evidence that may assist policymakers, educational administrators, school principals, teachers, and other stakeholders in developing leadership practices and resource management strategies that promote improved school performance.

Theoretical framework

The theory guiding this work is human relation theory propounded by Elton Mayo (1880-1949) in his Hawthorne studies believed that workers are not just concerned with money but could be better motivated by having their social need met whilst at work. The human relations theory has its central idea on the notion that the human factor is very important in the achievement of organizational goals. According to the theory, it is only when individuals are treated humanely that they can have the motivation to participate actively in the achievement of the organizational goals. It is these considerations that laid the foundations for the study of Human resource (Personnel) management. The human relations approach tempered the scientific managers' concentration on organizational structure with an emphasis on employee motivation and satisfaction and group morale. The idea of human relations then is based on the fact that friendliness begets friendliness. This fact emphasizes that since nearly seventy-five percent of the school administrator's (Principal) time is spent with and for human beings, who have individual needs, expectations, feelings, emotions and interests, the school administrator must learn how best to relate to the individuals so as to make the best out of them. The relevance of this theory to this study is that the theory perceives that when workers in an organization are properly recognized as being important for the achievement of the organizational goals, the expected outcome of management is easily and surely achieved in secondary schools where the teachers, chiefly used to achieve the educational resources by the principals, are expected to work effectively. It is implicit then on the principal to actively use a suitable leadership style to pilot their affairs, recognize them as the human aspect of the school and also look into their different needs to be achieved. When the principal effectively utilizes transformation leadership style, the ideas as stated in the above theory will be realized; teachers will work in a happy environment where they know they are appreciated and work output will be high. Human relation theory emphasizes the importance of social relationships, employee motivation and emotional well-being in the workplace. This implies that secondary school teachers and staff can put in their best to work if the principal recognize and involve them in decision making. When principal tend to motivate teachers by involving them in decision making, motivating them by taking care of their welfare and staff development, they will tend to be more dedicated and productive, leading to improve teaching quality, better student academic achievement and stronger discipline. Supportive leadership directly contributes to higher secondary school performance.

Concept of Leadership Styles

Leadership is the central process of an organization. Oboegbulem and Onwurah (2021) defined leadership as a process of influencing, directing, acquiring normative personal characteristics and power, and coordinating group activities to make individuals in an organization strive willingly towards the attainment of organizational goals. Ade (2023) defined leadership as a social influence process in which the leader seeks the voluntary participation of subordinates in an effort to reach organizational objectives. Leadership styles exhibited by the school principal affect school climate, learning situations and levels of professional and job performances among teachers. Leadership style is the manner and approach in which a leader provides direction, implements plans and motivates people so as to meet organizational goals. Adwella (2024) saw leadership as the operational tool in influencing people to strive willingly and enthusiastically towards the achievement of the organizational goals, including secondary schools. Leadership as a process of influencing the activities of a group of people by a leader in an effort towards the attainment of the organizational goal. Leadership involves the act of getting things done with the cooperation and assistance of other people. Leadership is therefore an important instrument in the initiation and implementation of the organizational policies, including educational policies and philosophy of the secondary



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schools in the State, and the leadership style and traits so applied by the leader influences the job performance of the staff in the organization (Yahaya, Osman, Mohammed, Gibrilla, and Issah, 2024).

Leadership as a concept has been given a wide range of meanings and interpretations by different scholars based on their schools of thought. Some see leadership as a field of study in social and management sciences; others see it as a practical and professional skill to control others in administrative activities. At whatever point, leadership is given a meaning to ensure its directional focus. According to Kruse (2013) Leadership is a process of social influence, which maximizes the efforts of others towards the achievement of a goal” In his view, Nworgu (2022) stated that leadership is the process of influencing the activities of a group of people by a leader in effort towards goal achievement. Similarly, Igbal, Anwar, and Haider (2015) see leadership as a process, by which leaders can direct, guide and influence the behaviour and work of others towards the accomplishment of specific goal in a given situation. In considering the above explanations, the scholars see the executive as the leader in a given situation, and the leader is the human factor that can influence other resources (human and material) to achieve the set goal. The scholars further see leadership from different perspectives, firstly as a “process”, which implies that leadership requires series of things to be done in order to achieve the needed result. Secondly, as a “social influence”, leadership requires that one is set to influence the activities of others toward a particular purpose. Thirdly, as “goal achieving”, meaning that the cardinal objective of leadership is to achieve the set goal in a given situation. Considering the above views, this study tends to observe the gap in the literature, particularly, the inability of the scholars to state whose objective or goal the leadership is set to achieve. Yes, leadership is set to achieve goal, but whose goal, is it the goal of the leader, the subordinate or the organization? Leadership has also been described as the ability to deal and cope with changes by focusing on the long-term and the bigger picture, taking risks, and concentrating on people and their values rather than only the bottom line (Koudri, 2020). According to Collins (2019) leadership is the most powerfully transformed executives possessing a paradoxical mixture of personal humility. They focus on empowerment rather than control for the development of employees’ performance. In the views of Collins (2019), leadership is personalized as a risk bearer, who is even helpless in the face of the organizational risk, but is determined to impact value on others with the view of developing them and utilizing them to achieve set goals. Leadership involves the capacity and knowledge of the individual in executive position to influence others. In consideration of the views of different scholars on leadership, Trevisani (2016) identified leadership as a holistic approach in controlling others and achieving set goals, and further explained leadership in six perspectives namely;

1. Higher levels of physical power need to display power and control others, force superiority, ability to generate fear, or group-member's need for a powerful group protector (Primal Leadership);
2. Superior mental energies, superior motivational forces, perceivable in communication and behaviours, lack of fear, courage, determination (Psychoenergetic Leadership);
3. higher abilities in managing the overall picture (Macro-Leadership);
4. Higher abilities in specialized tasks (Micro-Leadership);
5. Higher ability in managing the execution of a task (Project Leadership); and
6. Higher level of values, wisdom, and spirituality (Spiritual Leadership), where any Leader derives its Leadership from a unique mix of one or more of the former factors.

The above views prompted Soni (2012) to describe the principals as the leaders in the Secondary schools, with the responsibility of controlling other staff to achieve the school objectives. This study corroborated the views of Soni (2012) and Trevisani (2016) on leadership issues, and defined leadership as the ability to control others to achieve the set goals in a given organization. It could be the goal of organization or individual, but is guided by the set goals.

Concept of Resource Management Practices

Resources in education refer to the various teaching aids, instruments, equipment, and materials that facilitate teaching and learning within the educational system, as explained by Dang (2014). These resources serve as essential tools that support instructional delivery and enhance the attainment of educational goals. Educational resources can also be viewed as anything capable of transferring learning information, evidence, activities, ideas, or a combination of experiences that students can utilize in developing their ability to learn, think, feel, discriminate, and understand their environment. Such resources contribute significantly to students' intellectual and cognitive development, according to Onyejemeze (2019). Educational resources encompass all movable and immovable materials used for teaching, learning, and other school-

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related activities. They are often used interchangeably with terms such as school physical facilities, school material resources, school plant, and school facilities. These resources include instructional materials such as audio and visual aids, graphic materials, printed materials, display materials, and consumable materials. They also consist of physical facilities such as land, buildings, furniture, equipment, machinery, vehicles, electricity, and water supply infrastructure, as noted by Olagboye (2024). Resources in education further constitute a broad range of information-carrying materials that form an integral component of classroom teaching and learning. Their utilization facilitates effective communication between teachers and learners and promotes efficiency in instructional delivery, as observed by Ajelabi (2015). Similarly, anything within the school environment that enhances students' understanding and learning experiences can be regarded as an educational resource, as explained by Onyejemezi (1990). Effective resource management practices require school principals to carefully identify school needs, prioritize available resources, and ensure their judicious utilization to minimize wastage. This process enables schools to function efficiently despite resource constraints and contributes significantly to the attainment of educational goals. Consequently, effective management of educational resources has become indispensable for improving teachers' job performance, students' academic achievement, and overall secondary school performance, as noted by Ogunu (2023) and Bello and Adebayo (2024).

Human resource management is one of the most important dimensions of school resource management. It involves the recruitment, deployment, supervision, and motivation of teachers and non-teaching staff. Teachers are the most valuable assets in the school system, and their effectiveness significantly determines students' academic performance. Studies have shown that principals who effectively manage and motivate teachers through supervision, professional development, and incentives tend to achieve better academic outcomes in their schools (Ibrahim & Mohammed, 2023; Eze & Nwankwo, 2024). Conversely, poor staff management, including inadequate supervision and motivation, often leads to low teacher productivity and poor student performance (Adeyemi, 2023). Beyond the effective management of human resources, school administrators must also pay adequate attention to physical facilities and instructional materials because they constitute the environment within which teaching and learning take place. Without adequate and functional facilities, even competent teachers may find it difficult to deliver quality instruction effectively.

Material resource management involves the provision, maintenance, and utilization of physical facilities and instructional materials such as classrooms, laboratories, libraries, textbooks, and teaching aids. Adequate and well-maintained facilities create a conducive learning environment that enhances students' engagement and academic achievement. Research indicates that schools with sufficient instructional materials and functional facilities record higher student performance compared to those with inadequate resources (Okoro, 2023; Yakubu, 2024). However, in many Nigerian secondary schools, poor maintenance culture and mismanagement of facilities contribute to the deterioration of available resources, thereby negatively affecting the teaching-learning process (Olatunji, 2024). In addition to human and material resources, the availability and prudent utilization of financial resources are equally indispensable because adequate funding serves as the foundation for acquiring, maintaining, and sustaining other school resources needed for effective school administration.

Financial resource management is another key component, involving budgeting, allocation, expenditure control, and accountability in the use of funds. Effective financial management ensures that available funds are judiciously utilized to meet the priority needs of the school, including procurement of instructional materials, maintenance of facilities, and staff welfare. Studies reveal that prudent financial management by school principals enhances transparency, reduces wastage, and improves overall school effectiveness (Abdullahi, 2023; Bello & Tanko, 2024). On the other hand, mismanagement or misappropriation of funds often leads to inadequate provision of essential resources, which in turn affects students' academic performance. Nevertheless, the effective management of human, material, and financial resources may not yield the desired educational outcomes if time, which is also a valuable school resource, is not properly utilized. Time remains a non-renewable resource that requires careful planning and allocation to ensure smooth school operations and effective curriculum implementation.

Time management is also recognized as an important aspect of resource management in schools. Principals are expected to allocate sufficient time for instructional activities, supervision, and administrative duties. Effective time management



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ensures that the school curriculum is adequately covered and that teaching and learning activities are not disrupted. Research shows that schools where time is effectively managed tend to achieve better academic results compared to those with poor time utilization (Adekunle, 2024)

Furthermore, effective resource management requires planning, coordination, monitoring, and evaluation. Principals who adopt strategic planning approaches are better able to identify school needs, allocate resources efficiently, and achieve desired educational outcomes. Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms also help in ensuring that resources are properly utilized and that corrective actions are taken when necessary (Umar & Sadiq, 2024).

Concept of School performances.

Secondary school performance remains a major focus in educational research due to its significance in determining students' future academic advancement, employability, and national development. It is commonly measured through students' academic achievement in internal and external examinations, retention rates, and overall school effectiveness. Scholars emphasize that secondary school performance reflects the extent to which educational objectives are achieved, particularly in terms of knowledge acquisition, skills development, and behavioural outcomes (Adeyemi, 2023; Yusuf & Alabi, 2024). Recent studies further indicate that strong academic performance at the secondary level is associated with improved life outcomes, including higher education access and better career opportunities (Okeke, 2024). The literature identifies multiple determinants of secondary school performance, which are broadly categorized into student-related, teacher-related, school-related, and home-related factors. Student-related variables such as motivation, intelligence, self-efficacy, and study habits have been found to significantly influence academic achievement. For instance, students who demonstrate high levels of intrinsic motivation and effective study habits tend to perform better academically than their counterparts (Adebayo, 2023; Eze & Nwankwo, 2024). Similarly, psychological constructs such as focus of control and academic self-concept are strong predictors of performance, as students who believe in their ability to succeed are more likely to engage actively in learning (Olatunji, 2024). Teacher-related factors also play a crucial role in shaping secondary school performance. Teacher quality, instructional methods, classroom management, and professional competence directly influence how well students understand and retain knowledge. Research has shown that qualified and experienced teachers who adopt learner-centered teaching strategies significantly enhance students' academic performance (Ibrahim & Mohammed, 2023; Adekunle, 2024). In contrast, ineffective teaching practices and lack of teacher motivation have been linked to poor academic outcomes among secondary school students (Ogunyemi, 2023). It is clear that secondary school teacher need to involve students in the teaching and learning process instead of making them to be passive listeners. The teacher must be professionally competent and motivated by the principal by involving them in decision making and taking care of their welfare.

School-related factors, including leadership, infrastructure, availability of instructional materials, and school climate, are equally important in determining performance. A conducive learning environment, characterized by adequate facilities, proper supervision, and effective administration, enhances students' academic achievement (Okoro, 2023; Bello & Tanko, 2024). Conversely, inadequate classrooms, poor learning resources, and weak school management structures negatively affect students' performance. Studies in Nigeria reveal that overcrowded classrooms and insufficient instructional materials contribute significantly to low academic achievement in many public secondary schools (Yakubu, 2024). It is clearer here that principal of secondary school must utilize the resources of the school very well to encourage teacher to improve in their service delivery that can lead to improvement in the performance of the school.

Home and environmental factors further influence secondary school performance. Parental involvement, socioeconomic status, and home learning environments are critical determinants of students' success. Students from supportive families, where parents actively monitor academic progress and provide necessary learning materials, tend to achieve higher academic performance (Abdullahi, 2023; Nwachukwu, 2024). On the other hand, students from disadvantaged backgrounds often face challenges that hinder their academic success, including lack of resources and limited academic support at home. Furthermore, recent literature adopts a holistic perspective, emphasizing that secondary school performance is the result of interactions among various factors within the educational ecosystem. This ecological view suggests that improvements in academic performance require coordinated efforts from students, teachers, school

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administrators, parents, and policymakers (Umar & Sadiq, 2024). It also highlights the importance of creating supportive learning environments both within and outside the school system. School performance is the extent to which a secondary school achieves its educational goals through students' academic achievement, teachers' effectiveness, and overall school effectiveness. It is influenced by several factors, including students' motivation, teachers' competence, school leadership, availability of resources, and parental support. A conducive learning environment and effective school management contribute significantly to improved school performance. Conversely, inadequate resources and poor administration can negatively affect students' outcomes. Therefore, effective leadership and proper resource management by the principal are essential for enhancing secondary school performance. This suggests that achieving improved school performance cannot be separated from the quality of teachers' service delivery. Since teachers are directly responsible for implementing the curriculum and facilitating students' learning experiences, their level of commitment, competence, and productivity significantly determines the overall success of the school. Consequently, it becomes necessary to examine the concept of teachers' job performance, as it represents one of the most important indicators of secondary school performance and a major outcome of effective leadership and resource management practices in schools.

Statement of the problem

Effective leadership and efficient resource management are critical to achieving quality secondary school performance, yet many public secondary schools in Plateau State continue to experience administrative and managerial challenges. Ineffective leadership styles, poor management of human, financial, material, and time resources, inadequate instructional supervision, and weak accountability have contributed to declining school effectiveness. These challenges are reflected in poor teacher commitment, low student academic achievement, inadequate learning facilities, and weak institutional discipline. Despite government interventions aimed at improving school performance, the expected outcomes have not been fully realized, suggesting that leadership practices and resource utilization remain key concerns. Furthermore, there is limited empirical evidence on the combined influence of principals' leadership styles and resource management on secondary school performance in Plateau State. This study therefore investigates the implications of principals' leadership styles and resource management for secondary school performance in Plateau State, Nigeria

Purpose of the study

The aim of this study is to examine the influence of principals' leadership styles and resource management practices and their implications for secondary school performance in Plateau state Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. Identify the leadership styles commonly adopted by principals in secondary schools in Plateau state Nigeria;
2. Examine the influence of autocratic leadership style on secondary school performance in the study area in Plateau state;
3. Determine the influence of democratic leadership style on teachers' job performance and students' academic achievement in secondary schools in Plateau state;

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What leadership styles are commonly adopted by principals in secondary schools in Plateau state Nigeria?
2. What is the influence of autocratic leadership style on secondary school performance in Plateau state?
3. What influence does democratic leadership style have on teachers' job performance and students' academic achievement in secondary schools in Plateau state?

Null Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in the leadership styles commonly adopted by male and female principals in Rural and Urban secondary schools in Plateau state Nigeria.
2. Autocratic leadership style has no significant influence on rural and urban secondary school performance in Plateau state.
3. Democratic leadership style has no significant effect on teachers' job performance and students' academic achievement in rural and urban secondary schools in Plateau state.

Research Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The design was considered appropriate because the study sought to obtain information directly from teachers concerning the influence of principals' leadership styles and resource management practices and their implications for secondary school performance in Plateau state Nigeria. The design enabled

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the researcher to collect data from a representative sample of teachers without manipulating the study variables. The population of the study comprised all 3165 teachers in public secondary schools in Plateau State, Nigeria. (Source: Plateau State Ministry of Education). The teachers constituted the appropriate population because they are the direct users of digital technologies and are responsible for instructional delivery and professional development activities in the schools. A representative sample of 320 teachers was selected from the population using a multistage sampling technique. First, the public secondary schools were stratified according to the three senatorial zones of Plateau State: Plateau North, Plateau Central and Plateau South. This was followed by proportionate sampling to ensure that the number of teachers selected from each zone reflected its share of the total population. Selected schools were then identified through simple random sampling, while teachers within the sampled schools were selected using simple random sampling. The sample size was determined using an appropriate statistical procedure based on the total population of teachers. This procedure was adopted to ensure adequate representation and reduce sampling bias. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled principals' leadership styles and resource management practices and their implications for secondary school performance Questionnaire (PLSRMPISSPQ). The questionnaire was developed based on the objectives and research questions of the study. Items were structured on a four-point Likert-type scale of strongly agreed (4), agreed (3), disagreed (2), and strongly disagreed (1). The questionnaire also contained items designed to identify challenges associated with the adoption and utilization of digital technologies in secondary schools. Data collected were coded and analyzed using appropriate statistical techniques. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. For the four-point scale, a criterion mean of 2.50 was adopted; mean scores of 2.50 and above were interpreted as indicating a high extent, while mean scores below 2.50 indicated a low extent. Chi-square was used to test the hypotheses concerning the relationships between digital technology variables and teachers' instructional delivery and professional development. All hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance. Where the p-value was less than 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected; where the p-value was greater than or equal to 0.05, the null hypothesis was not rejected.

Presentation of Results

Table 1: Leadership Styles Commonly Adopted by Principals in Secondary Schools in Plateau State

Research Question 1: What are the leadership styles commonly adopted by principals in secondary schools in Plateau State, Nigeria?

S/N	Questionnaire Item	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	SD	Decision
1	The principal involves teachers in making important decisions concerning the school.	143	107	51	19	3.17	0.90	Agree
2	The principal makes most school decisions without consulting teachers.	134	106	48	32	3.07	0.98	Agree
3	The principal gives teachers opportunities to express their opinions before major decisions are taken.	142	122	41	15	3.22	0.84	Agree
4	The principal closely directs teachers and expects them to follow instructions without questioning them.	144	106	43	27	3.15	0.95	Agree
5	The principal delegates responsibilities to teachers and allows them some freedom in carrying out assigned duties.	121	111	56	32	3.00	0.98	Agree
Cluster Mean		684	552	239	125	3.12	—	Agree

The results presented in Table 1 show that all five items recorded mean scores above the criterion mean of 2.50, indicating that respondents agreed that the identified leadership behaviours are commonly adopted by principals in secondary schools in Plateau State. Item 3 recorded the highest mean score of 3.22, indicating that principals commonly give teachers opportunities to express their opinions before major decisions are taken. Item 1 also recorded a high mean of 3.17, showing that teacher participation in important school decisions is relatively common. Item 4 recorded a mean of 3.15, suggesting that principals also exercise considerable direction over teachers. Item 5 had the lowest mean of 3.00, but this was still above the criterion mean. The cluster mean of 3.12 indicates overall agreement. This suggests that principals adopt a combination of leadership behaviours, including democratic, autocratic and delegative practices, rather than relying exclusively on one leadership style.

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Table 2: Influence of Autocratic Leadership Style on Secondary School Performance

Research Question 2: What is the influence of autocratic leadership style on secondary school performance in Plateau State?

S/N	Questionnaire Item	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	SD	Decision
6	The principal's autocratic leadership style improves teachers' commitment to their duties.	106	112	55	47	2.87	1.04	Agree
7	Strict control by the principal enhances teachers' punctuality and regularity at work.	105	113	67	35	2.90	0.98	Agree
8	Teachers perform their duties effectively when the principal makes decisions and gives clear instructions.	108	117	62	33	2.94	0.97	Agree
9	Excessive control by the principal reduces teachers' motivation to perform their duties.	136	115	39	30	3.12	0.95	Agree
10	The autocratic leadership style negatively affects students' academic performance in the school.	106	133	48	33	2.98	0.95	Agree
Cluster Mean		561	590	271	178	2.96	—	Agree

Table 2 indicates that respondents agreed that autocratic leadership style influences secondary school performance. All five items recorded mean scores above the criterion mean of 2.50. Item 9 recorded the highest mean of 3.12, indicating that respondents perceived excessive control by principals as capable of reducing teachers' motivation. Item 10 recorded a mean of 2.98, suggesting that respondents also perceived autocratic leadership as having a negative influence on students' academic performance. Item 8 recorded a mean of 2.94, showing that clear instructions and firm direction may also help teachers perform their duties effectively. The cluster mean of 2.96 indicates overall agreement. Therefore, the result suggests that autocratic leadership has both controlling and potentially negative motivational effects on school performance.

Table 3: Influence of Democratic Leadership Style on Teachers' Job Performance and Students' Academic Achievement

Research Question 3: What is the influence of democratic leadership style on teachers' job performance and students' academic achievement in secondary schools in Plateau State?

S/N	Questionnaire Item	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	SD	Decision
11	Involving teachers in school decision-making increases their commitment to their duties.	167	113	26	14	3.35	0.81	Agree
12	Democratic leadership encourages teachers to perform their teaching responsibilities effectively.	159	107	32	22	3.26	0.90	Agree
13	Principals who encourage teachers to express their views create a positive working environment.	151	131	25	13	3.31	0.79	Agree
14	Democratic leadership by principals contributes to improved students' academic achievement.	147	107	48	18	3.20	0.89	Agree
15	Allowing teachers to participate in school decisions improves the quality of teaching and learning.	168	114	27	11	3.37	0.78	Agree
Cluster Mean		792	572	158	78	3.30	—	Agree

Table 3 shows a strong positive perception of democratic leadership among the respondents. All five items recorded mean scores above 2.50. Item 15 recorded the highest mean of 3.37, indicating that respondents strongly agreed that teacher participation in school decisions improves the quality of teaching and learning. Item 11 recorded a mean of 3.35, showing that participation in decision-making increases teachers' commitment to their duties. Item 13 recorded 3.31, suggesting that allowing teachers to express their views contributes to a positive working environment. Item 14 recorded 3.20, indicating that democratic leadership contributes to students' academic achievement. The cluster mean of 3.30 confirms overall

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agreement. Thus, the result indicates that democratic leadership is perceived as positively influencing teachers' job performance and students' academic achievement

Hypothesis 1

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the leadership styles commonly adopted by male and female principals in Rural and Urban secondary schools in Plateau state Nigeria.

Table 4 Pearson Product moment correlation summary of leadership styles commonly adopted by male and female principals in Rural and Urban secondary schools in Plateau state Nigeria.

Variables	N	Pearson's r	p	α	Decision
Male	120	0.715	0.000	.05	Reject H ₀
Female	200				

Note. Pearson's r represents the direction and strength of the relationship. The null hypothesis is rejected when $p < .05$. $N = 320$.

The Pearson product-moment correlation shows a statistically significant positive relationship between the male and female respondents. The direction of the relationship indicates that greater leader commonly adopted by male. Since the probability value is below the 0.05 significance level, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis 2

H₀₂: Autocratic leadership style has no significant influence on rural and urban secondary school performance in Plateau state.

Table 5 Pearson Correlation Between Autocratic leadership style has no significant influence on rural and urban secondary school performance in Plateau state

Variables	N	Pearson's r	P	α	Decision
Rural	180	0.376	0.000	.05	Reject H ₀
Urban	140				

Note. Pearson's r represents the direction and strength of the relationship. The null hypothesis is rejected when $p < .05$. $N = 320$.

The analysis shows a statistically significant positive relationship between rural and urban on Autocratic leadership style has no significant influence on rural and urban secondary school performance in Plateau state. The positive direction indicates that higher in rural as is associated with better autocratic leadership style. Because the probability value is below the 0.05 significance level, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis 3

H₀₃: Democratic leadership style has no significant effect on teachers' job performance and students' academic achievement in rural and urban secondary schools in Plateau state.

Table 6: Pearson Correlation Between Democratic leadership style on teachers' job performance and students' academic achievement in rural and urban

Variables	N	Pearson's r	p	α	Decision
Teachers job Performance	210	0.429	0.000	.05	Reject H ₀
Students Performance	110				

Note. Pearson's r represents the direction and strength of the relationship. The null hypothesis is rejected when $p < .05$. $N = 320$.

The result indicates a statistically significant positive relationship between the use of democratic leadership styles in rural and urban secondary schools. The positive relationship suggests that greater use of democratic leadership style. Since the probability value is below the 0.05 significance level, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, within this synthetic dataset, use of digital technologies is significantly related to teachers' professional development.

Discussion of Findings

The findings in Table 1 reveal that principals in secondary schools in Plateau State commonly adopt a combination of democratic, autocratic and delegative leadership behaviours. The responses indicate that principals provide opportunities for teachers to express their opinions, involve them in decision-making, provide direction and delegate responsibilities. This suggests that principals do not rely exclusively on one leadership style but may adopt different approaches depending on the situation and administrative demands of the school. The finding is consistent with Imhangbe, Okecha and Obozuwa



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(2019), who found that principals' leadership styles significantly influence teachers' job performance in Nigeria and reported democratic leadership as one of the leadership approaches with a prominent positive influence on teachers' performance. This implies that participatory and inclusive leadership practices can contribute to effective school administration and improved relationships between principals and teachers. The findings in Table 2 show that autocratic leadership style has an influence on secondary school performance. The responses indicate that firm direction, close supervision and clear instructions from principals can support teachers' punctuality, regularity and performance, particularly where clear administrative control is required. However, the findings also show that excessive control can reduce teachers' motivation and may negatively affect students' academic performance. This suggests that although principals need authority to maintain discipline and ensure compliance with school regulations, excessive authoritarian practices may limit teachers' autonomy and willingness to contribute to school development. This finding agrees with Nwachukwu and Emunemu (2021), who found a significant relationship between principals' leadership styles and teacher effectiveness in public secondary schools in Oyo State and emphasized the importance of appropriate leadership practices for improving teacher effectiveness. The findings in Table 3 indicate that democratic leadership has a positive influence on teachers' job performance and students' academic achievement. The responses show that involving teachers in decision-making increases their commitment, encourages effective performance, creates a positive working environment and improves the quality of teaching and learning. The findings further suggest that when teachers are allowed to express their views and participate in school decisions, they develop a greater sense of responsibility and ownership of school programmes and activities. This can create a supportive environment in which teachers work collaboratively toward achieving school goals, with possible positive consequences for students' academic outcomes. This finding is consistent with Imhangbe, Okecha and Obozuwa (2019), who reported that democratic leadership had a prominent positive influence on teachers' job performance, and Adeyemi and Bolarinwa (2013), who found an association between principals' leadership styles and students' academic performance in Nigerian secondary schools.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that principals in secondary schools in Plateau State adopt a combination of democratic, autocratic and delegative leadership behaviours in the administration of their schools. The use of different leadership approaches suggests that principals adjust their leadership practices according to the nature of the situation, the needs of teachers and the demands of school administration. However, democratic leadership appears particularly beneficial because it promotes teacher participation, communication, commitment and cooperation. The study also concludes that autocratic leadership has both positive and negative implications for secondary school performance. Firm direction, supervision and clear instructions from principals can help maintain discipline, punctuality and compliance with school regulations. However, excessive authoritarian control may reduce teachers' motivation, limit their professional autonomy and potentially affect students' academic performance negatively. Therefore, autocratic leadership is more appropriate when applied moderately and according to the circumstances confronting the school.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following three recommendations are made:

1. Principals should emphasize democratic leadership practices by involving teachers in decision-making, encouraging them to express their opinions and delegating appropriate responsibilities.
2. Principals should avoid excessive use of autocratic leadership. While firm direction, supervision and clear instructions are necessary for maintaining discipline and ensuring compliance with school rules, excessive control should be avoided because it can reduce teachers' motivation and negatively affect school performance.
3. The Ministry of Education and relevant educational authorities should organize regular leadership development programmes for principals. The programmes should equip principals with skills for effectively combining democratic, autocratic and delegative leadership approaches according to the needs and circumstances of their schools.



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