

HEAD TEACHERS' LEADERSHIP COMPETENCE AND TEACHERS' JOB PERFORMANCE IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN JOS NORTH LGA PLATEAU STATE

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Abstract

This study is on head teachers' leadership competence and teachers' job performance in primary schools in Jos North LGA Plateau State. It was designed to examine the relationship between head teachers' leadership competence and teachers' instructional practices. It was a descriptive survey and used a cross-sectional survey design. Three research questions and a lone null hypothesis guided the study. The population was all teachers in all public primary schools in the study area. A sample of 200 primary school teachers was conveniently drawn and used for the study. Data were elicited by means of a self-made structured four-point questionnaire tagged Head Teacher leadership competence and teachers job performance questionnaire (HTLCOTEJOPQ). The questionnaire was validated by three professors from the University of Jos. The test-retest reliability index of the questionnaire was 0.87, indicative of high reliability. The direct delivery method was adopted for data collection, while frequency, mean, standard deviation, and Pearson's correlation analysis were used for data analysis. The benchmark mean for the decision about the research questions was 2.50, while the statistical decision about the hypothesis was taken at the 0.05 level of significance. Results indicated, among other things, that most head teachers in Jos North are democratic in their leadership approach. Also, head teachers were found to be effective in their leadership roles. Finally, a significant relationship was found between head teachers leadership competence and their job performance. It was recommended, among other things, that all head teachers should equip themselves with the necessary skills, knowledge, attitudes, and training needed for competence to enhance teacher job performance in the various schools. The study concludes therefore that there is a significant relationship between head teachers' leadership competence and teachers' job performance.

Keywords: Job performance, Leadership style, Leadership competence, Organizational goals, Personnel management.

INTRODUCTION

Education is an important tool for the total emancipation and advancement of people in each nation. It is an equally effective instrument for national development. In Nigeria, the educational goals for achieving personal and national development are clearly spelled out in the National Policy on Education (NPE) (2013). According to this blueprint, educational provision in Nigeria is categorised into two broad categories, namely, the formal and non-formal school systems. In the formal system of education, there are successive levels of learning: primary, secondary, and tertiary. The focus of this study is therefore on the primary school system, a level at which the foundation of further learning is laid, and which is very basic to the lives of the learners.

Suffice it to say that primary education is not only basic but critical. It is imperative to note that the primary level is a determinant of how well the other higher levels of education would fare. The major aim of primary education, as stipulated in the National Policy on Education (NPE), is to inculcate permanent literacy and numeracy and to provide the child with basic tools for further educational advancement, including preparation for the trades and crafts of the locality, among others. However, primary schools will be able to achieve these laudable objectives when the leadership of primary education is effective. At the primary school level, the leadership is with the head teachers, who are at the helm of affairs in primary schools. He or she is saddled with the responsibility of providing leadership and direction that will not only sharpen the focus of the primary school teachers but also invoke their proven abilities, which will make them renowned as classroom teachers.

The competence of the leadership of head teachers is usually the major concern of many educationists, like Aghenta (2020), who says that because primary school education is basic to later learning in life, its leadership operation and teachers' performance are critical to the survival of other higher levels of education. Leadership is the process of influencing the activities of an organised group towards goal setting and goal achievement. To Abama (2016), the word leadership expresses the ability of an individual who oversees others to demonstrate his or her abilities by the manner and style of how he or she relates with the staff. In the context of this study, leadership is the process by which the head teacher influences the activities of teachers (personnel) to ensure that the objectives of primary education are actualized. It then means that how well the head teacher performs his or her leadership roles is a decisive factor for teachers' job performance. Again, how well or effectively the head teacher performs his leadership role is referred to as leadership competence.

Schmidt (2018) affirms that the style of leadership dispensed by the leader determines, to a great extent, how the group's aim can be achieved. In this regard, it implies that the leadership style adopted by a head teacher might be an issue of importance to teachers' job performance. However, the aspect of teachers' performance of interest is their instructional abilities. That is the extent to which primary school teachers teach pupils adequately and with full commitment.

As critical as primary education is, it seems that many head teachers are not aware of the effects of their leadership competence on the performance of teachers in their schools and, as a result, find it difficult to manage their personnel favourably and effectively (Adeyemo, 014). The head teacher, as the man in charge of the school's affairs, is expected to direct and control

all the school's activities, resources, finances, school infrastructure, teaching and learning resources, as well as the human resources (personnel) for the purpose of attaining the school's set goals.

However, the rate at which these activities are effectively carried out depends on the leadership competence of the head teacher. This is the reason why the issue of the leadership competence of the head teacher is very important. The leadership competence of the head teacher is made clear when one considers the fact that the head teacher is central in the day-to-day management of school activities. He or she is the sage on the stage. He is the man at the helm of affairs who directs the activities of other teachers to ensure progress in the school. Ajayi (2022) maintains that a cursory look at some primary schools in Nigeria shows that some of the major problems faced by these schools could be traced to the poor leadership competence of head teachers, which results in poor personnel management. These problems include poor academic performance among learners, poor morale among students, and poor instructional delivery among teachers. At present, it seems there is a controversy as to whether head teachers' leadership competence can influence teachers' job performance in school. It is against this backdrop and in a bid to clear up the controversy that the present study is being conducted to ascertain whether head teachers' leadership competence has any significant influence on teachers' job performance in Jos North LGA.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Primary education is the bedrock of all other levels of education. It is a critical level that paves the way for the smooth running of other levels of education. It then presupposes that when there is a problem with primary education, it might affect the secondary and tertiary levels of education as well. One of the critical and decisive factors in determining success in education is the leadership competence of the leader. The way the leader manages the affairs of the school goes a long way towards determining how well the school functions. In the case of primary schools, the head teacher is the one at the helm of affairs and, as such, takes up all leadership decisions and roles, which include personnel management. The level of leadership competence exhibited by the head teacher can make or mar the success of the school. Teachers in the schools are subject to the authority of the head teacher and, as such, are answerable to him. The extent to which the teachers perform their instructional duties very well may be connected to the leadership competence of the head teacher. Now the problem of the study is embedded in this question: 'What is the influence of head teachers' leadership competence on teachers' performance in primary schools in Jos North LGA of Plateau State?

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

1. To identify the prevalent leadership styles adopted by head teachers in Jos North LGA
2. To examine how effective the head teachers perform their leadership roles in terms of personnel management.
3. Ascertain the ways head teachers' leadership competence influence teachers' job performance (instructional practices)

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study will be guided by the following research questions:

1. What leadership style is practiced by most head teachers in primary schools in Jos North LGA?

2. To what extent are head teachers effective in performing their leadership roles in terms of personnel management in primary schools in Jos North LGA?
3. How does head teacher's leadership competence influence teachers' job performance (instructional practices) in primary schools in Jos North LGA?

HYPOTHESIS

1. There is no significant influence of head teachers' leadership competence on teachers' job performance in primary schools in Jos North LGA, Plateau State.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concepts of Leadership Competence

Leadership competence refers to the knowledge, skills, attributes, and behaviours that enable a head teacher to effectively lead and manage a school. It encompasses a range of abilities and qualities that contribute to successful leadership in the educational context (Ogunyemi, 2015). Leadership competence involves a combination of technical expertise, interpersonal skills, and strategic thinking. A competent head teacher possesses the necessary knowledge and understanding of educational principles, policies, and practices. They have a deep understanding of curriculum development, instructional strategies, assessment methods, and the overall functioning of a school. In addition to technical expertise, leadership competence also includes strong interpersonal and communication skills. A competent head teacher can effectively communicate their vision, goals, and expectations to staff, students, and parents. They actively listen to others, provide feedback, and foster open lines of communication within the school community. They build positive relationships, inspire trust, and motivate others to achieve their best. Strategic thinking is another vital component of leadership competence. A competent head teacher has the ability to think critically, analyse data, and make informed decisions. Adeyemi (2014) noted that they can develop and implement long-term plans and strategies that align with the school's vision and goals. They anticipate challenges, identify opportunities for improvement, and adapt to changing circumstances. They also allocate resources effectively, manage budgets, and ensure the efficient operation of the school.

Furthermore, leadership competence involves the ability to lead and manage people. A competent head teacher understands the strengths, needs, and aspirations of their staff and supports their professional growth and development. They create a positive work environment, delegate responsibilities, and empower others to take initiative. They also handle conflicts and challenges in a fair and constructive manner, promoting teamwork and collaboration among staff members. Ethical conduct and integrity are integral aspects of leadership competence. Akinbobola (2013) submitted that a competent head teacher upholds ethical standards, models professional behaviour, and demonstrates fairness, transparency, and accountability in their actions. They prioritise the well-being and success of students, maintain confidentiality, and make decisions that are in the best interest of the school community. Leadership competence is dynamic and requires continuous learning, growth, and adaptation. A competent head teacher engages in professional development activities, stays up to date with research and best practices, and seeks feedback to improve their leadership skills. They are reflective practitioners who are open to new ideas and feedback, willing to take calculated risks, and constantly strive for personal and professional growth. In summary, the leadership competence of a head teacher encompasses technical expertise,

strong interpersonal skills, strategic thinking, effective management of people and resources, ethical conduct, and continuous learning. A competent head teacher combines these qualities to lead and inspire their school community, promote student achievement, and create a positive and conducive learning environment.

Concept of Teachers' Job Performance

Teacher's job performance refers to the effectiveness and quality of a teacher's work in fulfilling their professional responsibilities and achieving desired outcomes in the classroom. Adu (2013) defined it as encompassing various aspects of a teacher's performance, including instructional delivery, student engagement and learning outcomes, classroom management, professional development, and collaboration with colleagues and parents. Teacher job performance is typically evaluated based on several factors, as documented by Ololube (2013):

- a) **Instructional Delivery:** This refers to the teacher's ability to plan and deliver effective lessons that engage students, facilitate learning, and meet curriculum objectives. It involves selecting appropriate teaching strategies, employing instructional technologies, and providing clear explanations and examples. Effective instructional delivery also considers differentiated instruction to address diverse student needs and learning styles.

- b) **Classroom Management:** This involves creating a positive and structured learning environment where students can focus, participate, and feel safe. A teacher with strong classroom management skills establishes clear expectations, routines, and procedures and effectively manages student behaviour. They promote a respectful and inclusive classroom culture that supports student learning and well-being.

- c) **Student Engagement and Learning Outcomes:** A teacher's job performance is assessed based on the level of student engagement and the extent to which students achieve desired learning outcomes. Engaged students actively participate in learning activities, demonstrate interest and motivation, and show progress in their knowledge and skills. Effective teachers use a variety of instructional strategies, assessments, and feedback mechanisms to monitor and enhance student learning.

- d) **Professional Development:** Continuous professional development is a key aspect of teacher job performance. Effective teachers engage in ongoing learning and professional growth to stay updated with current educational research, practices, and resources. They attend workshops, conferences, and training sessions, participate in collaborative professional learning communities, and seek opportunities to enhance their teaching skills and subject knowledge.

- e) **Collaboration and Communication:** Effective teachers engage in productive collaboration and communication with colleagues, parents, and other stakeholders. They actively participate in professional learning communities, share best practices, and seek and provide feedback to improve their teaching. Collaborative relationships with parents involve regular communication, sharing of student progress, and involving parents in the educational process.

Assessing teacher job performance typically involves a combination of formal evaluations, classroom observations, student assessments, self-reflection, and feedback from peers,

administrators, and students. Salau (2015) equally added that the evaluation process aims to provide constructive feedback, identify areas for improvement, and recognise and reward effective teaching practices. It is important to note that teacher job performance goes beyond mere adherence to a set of criteria or standards. It involves passion for teaching, dedication to student success, and the ability to create a positive and supportive learning environment. Effective teachers continuously reflect on their practice, adapt their instructional approaches, and strive for excellence in their profession.

Leadership Roles of Head Teachers

The head teacher has been conceptualised in a variety of ways, depending on people's perceptions of his diverse functions. Ozigi (2017) affirms that some people call the head teacher 'Director' because he gives orders to ensure that things are done quickly. He may also be seen as a disciplinarian in the school, as he disciplines deviant pupils and members of staff. He could also be viewed as a manager because he manages the various aspects of the school's affairs and resources. Hornby (2006) describes the head teacher as an executive head of school because he makes decisions and implements policies and programmes. The head teacher also coordinates activities for work to proceed smoothly, quickly, and efficiently. He is the representative of the ministry of education, the board of education, and other national matters. All these applications fit the head teacher because of the complex and diverse demands of his office.

The task of the head teacher has become complex and enormous as the expectations of society on him continue to broaden (Achunine, 2017); the implementation of educational policies and innovations, together with the increased size of schools and the spiralling increase in learners Enrolment has caused a radical change in the curriculum, textbooks, teaching and learning materials, as well as the methodology. In the face of all these challenges, the role of the head teacher becomes more intense and complicated as he considers the values, interests, and needs of not only teachers and pupils but also changing societal ethics (Wood, 2019). A few authors have classified the leadership roles of the school manager (head teacher) into several functions (tasks). For example, Akpa (2012) identifies five broad areas of a school manager, such as curriculum, school plant, finance, personnel, and community. Also, Camp Bell, Bridges, and Nystrand (2017) classified all the functions of the school manager into six task areas, which are: curriculum and instruction, pupils' personnel, staff personnel, school community relations, physical facilities, finance, and business management.

Factors influencing head teachers' leadership competence

Several factors interplay to affect the leadership competence of the head teacher. This section will discuss some of these factors. Experience and training are critical factors that can affect the extent to which head teachers perform their leadership roles effectively. Previous experience in educational leadership positions, along with relevant training and professional development, can provide the head teacher with the necessary knowledge, skills, and confidence to effectively lead a school. According to Akinfolarin (2016), continuous learning and staying updated with current educational practices are also important for maintaining leadership competence. In the same manner, the communication and interpersonal skills of the head teacher are equally important. Effective communication and interpersonal skills are vital for a head teacher's leadership competence. The ability to articulate a clear vision, listen to and understand the concerns of staff, parents, and students, and foster positive

relationships within the school community are key aspects of leadership. Good communication skills also help in delegating tasks, resolving conflicts, and providing constructive feedback, all of which contribute to effective leadership.

Also, Adu (2015) averred that the emotional intelligence of the head teacher can make or mar his leadership competence. Emotional intelligence refers to the ability to recognise, understand, and manage one's own emotions and those of others. A head teacher with high emotional intelligence can effectively handle the diverse emotions and dynamics within the school environment. They can empathise with others, handle conflicts diplomatically, and make sound decisions based on both logic and emotional considerations. Emotional intelligence contributes to creating a positive and supportive school climate, which enhances leadership competence. Moreover, a head teacher's ability to establish a clear vision for the school and develop strategic plans to achieve it is crucial for leadership competence (Ogunyemi, 2015). A strong vision provides direction and purpose, and it inspires staff, students, and other stakeholders. Effective strategic planning involves setting goals, formulating action plans, allocating resources, and monitoring progress. Adeyemi (2014) is of the opinion that a head teacher who can effectively communicate, implement, and adapt the school's vision and strategic plans demonstrates strong leadership competence. The above factors, among others, shape a head teacher's leadership competence. It is important to note that leadership competence is a dynamic and ongoing process that requires continuous development and adaptation to the changing needs and challenges of the school and its community.

EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Adeyemi (2014) studied the relationship between head teacher leadership competence and teachers' job performance in a primary school in Ado-Ekiti LGA. The study aimed to investigate the relationship between head teacher leadership competence and teachers' job performance in a primary school setting. All primary school teachers in public primary schools in Ado-Ekiti made up the population, while a sample of 500 primary school teachers was randomly drawn and used for the study.

It was a quantitative survey that used a questionnaire to collect data. Descriptive statistics of mean, standard deviations, frequencies, and correlation analysis were used for data analysis. Results revealed a significant positive correlation between head teacher leadership competence and teachers' job performance. Teachers perceive higher job performance when they perceive their head teacher as competent in areas such as vision setting, professional support, and communication. Based on the findings, schools should enhance head teacher leadership competence through professional development programs, foster effective communication channels, and provide adequate support for teachers. These efforts can positively impact teachers' job performance and overall school effectiveness.

Similarly, Oluebube (2013) studied the perceptions of teachers about the impact of head teacher leadership competence on teachers' job satisfaction in the Awka Zone of Anambra State. The study aimed to explore the perceptions of teachers regarding the impact of head teacher leadership competence on their job satisfaction and commitment in a secondary school context. The population comprises secondary school teachers in a specific district. A purposive sample of 300 secondary school teachers, representing different subject areas and

years of experience, is selected for in-depth interviews. It used a qualitative research approach. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the selected teachers to gather rich and detailed insights into their perceptions of head teacher leadership competence and its influence on job satisfaction and commitment. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the qualitative data obtained from the interviews. The analysis revealed several themes, including the importance of the head teacher's support, trust, communication, and instructional leadership. Teachers perceive that head teachers who demonstrate competence in these areas positively influence their job satisfaction and commitment. It was recommended that head teachers focus on building trust, effective communication, and providing support to enhance teachers' job satisfaction and commitment. Professional development programs can be designed to strengthen head teacher leadership competence in these areas.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Jos, North Plateau State. It was a descriptive survey that used a cross-sectional survey design. The population was all the primary school teachers in the 53 public primary schools in the study area. A sample of 200 primary school teachers was conveniently drawn and used for the study. Data were elicited by means of a researcher-made structured four-point questionnaire tagged Head Teacher leadership competence and teachers job performance questionnaire (HTLCOTEJOPQ). The questionnaire was validated by three professors from the University of Jos. The test-retest reliability index of the questionnaire is 0.87 indicative of high reliability. Direct delivery method was adopted for data collection while frequency, mean, standard deviation and Pearson's correlation analysis were used for data analysis. The benchmark mean for decision about the research questions is 2.50.

RESULTS

Research Question One

What leadership style is practiced by most head teachers in primary schools in Jos North LGA?

Table1: Leadership Style Practiced by Head Teachers In Primary Schools In Jos North

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	ΣFx	N	$\bar{X}$	Std	Remark
1.	Laissez faire	95	80	15	10	604	200	3.02	.425	Agree
2.	Autocratic	90	94	10	06	574	200	2.87	.430	Agree
3.	Transformational	119	78	02	01	628	200	3.14	.432	Agree
4.	Democratic	112	78	07	003	660	200	3.30	.470	Agree
5.	Authoritarian	86	94	17	03	588	200	2.94	.392	Agree

Criterion Mean: 2.50

Cumulative Mean: 3.05

Table 1 shows the prevalent leadership style adopted by head teachers in primary schools in Jos North. Notable among them are democratic leadership style (3.30) and transformational leadership (3.14). It is also clear from Table 1 that all the items are valid as each has a mean above the criterion mean of 2.50. In addition, the cumulative mean of 3.05 is above the criterion mean of 2.50 which is an indication that all the items are valid.

Research Question Two: To what extent are head teachers effective in performing their leadership roles in terms of personnel management in primary schools in Jos North LGA?

Table 2: Extent of Head Teachers Effectiveness in Personnel Management in Jos North

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	$\sum Fx$	N	$\bar{X}$	Std	Remark
6.	He coordinates teachers well for good performance.	97	85	11	07	638	200	3.19	.224	Agree
7.	He provides opportunity for teachers' professional growth.	98	99	01	02	694	400	3.47	.536	Agree
8.	Hediagnoses teachers' strength and weaknesses	105	84	09	02	702	200	3.51	.315	Agree
9.	Fosters good working relationship with teachers.	110	85	03	02	684	200	3.42	.663	Agree
10.	He allows teachers to express their views on issues affecting them.	106	84	05	05	733	200	3.67	.321	Agree

Criterion Mean: 2.50

Cumulative Mean: 3.42

Data in Table 2 shows that all the items have mean responses above the criterion mean of 2.50. Also, the cumulative mean of all the items in Table 2 which is 3.42 (which is more than the criterion mean) is also an indication that the head teachers are effective in their leadership competence.

Research Question Three: How does head teacher's leadership competence influence teachers' job performance (instructional practices) in primary schools in Jos North LGA?

Table 3: Influence of Head Teachers' Leadership Competence on Teachers' Job Performance

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	$\sum Fx$	N	$\bar{X}$	Std	Remark
11.	It helps teachers to align their instructional practices well.	97	88	10	05	624	200	3.12	.302	Agree
12	It empowers teachers to improve on their instructional practices	110	80	06	04	1368	200	3.42	37.6	Agree
13	It inspires teachers to incorporate good instructional strategies	108	73	12	07	626	200	3.13	.428	Agree
14	It helps teachers to refine their	94	80	17	09	682	200	3.40	.453	Agree

	instructional practices.											
15.	It promotes the exchange of best practices and creates a supportive learning environment	127	63	06	04	744	200	3.72	.561	Agree		
Criterion Mean: 2.50						Cumulative Mean: 3.36						

A cursory look at data in Table 3 reveals that each of the items has mean response above the criterion mean of 2.50 meaning that they are all acceptable. The cumulative mean of 3.36 is also another confirmation that the items are valid. It then means that head teachers' leadership competences influence teachers' job performance.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant influence of head teachers' leadership competence on teachers' job performance in primary schools in Jos North LGA Plateau state, Nigeria.

Table 4: Correlation Results on the Influence of Head Teachers' Leadership Competence on Teachers' Job Performance in Jos North LGA

Variables	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	DF	R	P-Value	α	Decision
Head teachers' leadership Competence		3.92	3.64					
	200			198	.754	0.000	0.05	Significant
Teachers' job performance		3.49	3.32					

Data in Table 4 shows that the p-value (0.000) is less than alpha value hence there is sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis and retain the alternative. The study concludes therefore that there is a significant influence of head teachers' leadership competence on teachers' job performance in primary schools in Jos North LGA Plateau state, Nigeria.

DISCUSSION

The study is on head teachers' leadership competence and teachers' job performance. It was designed to examine how the leadership competence of head teachers influences teachers' job performance in Jos North LGA. The results of the study indicate that most head teachers adopt a democratic leadership style. This means that they accommodate others and involve subordinates in their decision-making. Schmidt (2018) affirmed that the leader's style of leadership greatly determines how the group can achieve its aim. In the same manner, the study found that the head teachers studied were effective in their leadership competence. Their democratic leadership style may explain this. A democratic leadership style impacts job performance by ensuring that a leader carries everyone along, which may explain why head teachers receive necessary support from teachers. When the leader aligns with the subordinates, they can collaborate to effectively carry out duties and achieve organisational goals (Adeyemo, 2014).

Results also showed that head teachers leadership competence influences teachers' job performance. This is not surprising because the head teacher, as the leader, sets the rules in schools. He gives direction and dictates what the teachers do or do not do. The extent to which the head teacher is conversant and ready to effectively discharge his role will determine how well teachers function. This agrees with Wood (2019), who stated that the role of the head teacher becomes more intense and complicated as he considers the values, interests, and needs of not only teachers and pupils but also changing societal ethics. It then means that the head teacher has great influence over others. The extent of her worth in discharging her duties will determine the extent to which teachers perform their instructional duties and others effectively.

CONCLUSION

The study is on head teachers' leadership competence and teachers' job performance. The aim was to examine the relationship between head teachers' leadership competence and teachers' job performance in Jos North LGA. The study findings indicate that most head teachers adopt a democratic leadership style. Furthermore, the study revealed that head teachers demonstrated effectiveness in their leadership competence roles. In the same manner, a significant relationship was found between the head teacher's leadership competence and the teacher's job performance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Researchers advised head teachers to explore other leadership styles, such as charismatic, transformational, and authoritarian, to determine if they could achieve greater success.
2. Head teachers studied were found to be effective in their leadership competence roles; therefore, it is imperative that the state ministry of education organise regular workshops, seminars, and refresher courses for head teachers to further improve their leadership skills.
3. The study found a significant relationship between head teacher's leadership competence and teacher job performance hence it is imperative that all head teachers equip themselves with the necessary skills, knowledge, attitudes trains needed for competence so as to enhance teachers, job performance in the various schools.

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