Principals Leadership Styles and Gender Influence on Teachers Morale in Public Secondary Schools

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Abstract
The study investigated the perception of teachers on the influence of principals' leadership styles and gender on teacher morale. Four research questions and four research hypotheses guided the study. An ex-post facto research design was adopted in the study. Through the simple random sampling technique a total of 72 principals and 2,506 in 72 public secondary schools were drawn from the three education zones of Delta State. Two standardized research instruments namely the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire and the Purdue Teacher Opinionnaire were adapted and used to obtain information on principals' leadership styles and teacher morale respectively. Teacher morale was measured with regard to five teacher morale factors which are teacher rapport with principal, rapport amongst teachers, satisfaction with teaching, teacher status and teacher load. Answers to the research questions were analyzed using the simple descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation while the t-test was the statistical tool used to address the research hypotheses at .05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed leadership styles of principals and gender jointly influenced teacher morale. However, the transformational leadership style and male principals had a greater influence on teacher morale. The major findings of the study were discussed, implications highlighted while recommendations were made.
Keywords: Leadership styles, teacher morale, gender, principals, teachers, secondary schools.

1. Introduction
Leadership is a major concern to organizations and the focus of several researches for its significant role in determining the success of an organization. The leader has the responsibility to direct the efforts of subordinates to achieve organizational goals and objectives. Educational institutions are not exempted from this leadership influence. Male and female teachers alike assume leadership roles as principals in secondary schools. Principals perform a vital function in secondary school administration as the head of school administration. This is undoubtedly because of the far-reaching influence leadership has in the accomplishment of school programmes and the attainment of educational goals and objectives (Peretomode, 1991). More so, secondary school goals and objectives can hardly achieved if effective leadership is not provided by the principal (Adegbesan, 2013). In support of this view, Okafor (1991) notes that the success or failure in secondary school administration depends largely on the influence principals imparts on teachers morale.

2.1 Teacher Morale
Teacher morale is critical to the success of any educational system. Teacher morale is defined by Bentley & Rempel (1980) as the professional interest and enthusiasm teachers display towards the achievement of individual and group goals in a given job situation. Teachers are described as the greatest asset of a school, the catalyst that make things happen in a school for the execution of teaching and learning (Mgbodile, 2004). Acknowledging the role of teachers, the National Policy in Education states that no educational system can rise above the quality of its teachers (FME, 2004). Ukeje (1983) supporting this view states also that no educational system can be better than its teachers as teachers are the hub of the educational system. More so since education is an instrument the nation relies upon to bring about rapid social and economic development therefore it cannot afford to neglect its teachers (FME, 2004). It is important that teachers are greatly motivated to possess a high morale if the nation is to realize the purpose of education in national development. In other words, principals occupy a vantage position to influence teachers' behaviour such that quality instructional delivery is carried out in the teaching and learning process in secondary schools.

2.2 Principals and Leadership Styles
The principal as the school head sets the tone for the school through varied leadership styles or behaviours displayed as leadership functions are carried out (Kootz, O'Donnell & Weilhrich, 1980). Leadership Styles according to Olagboye (2004) are the various patterns of behaviours leaders adopt in the process of directing the efforts of subordinates towards the achievement of organizational goals. These leadership behaviours are perceived by teachers and determine considerably their mental and emotional attitude towards their job (Mullins, 1999). Invariably, the extent to which principals influence the attainment of school objectives is seemingly dependent on the leadership styles adopted.

2.3 Leadership Style

For a long time now, leadership theory and research has focused on different leadership styles such as the autocratic, democratic, laissez-faire. The challenges confronting modern organizations to meet with higher performance, better job-satisfaction, increased morale and productivity in subordinates has led to the demand for better quality of leadership. Prominent among new leadership models proposed are the transformational and transactional leadership styles (Avolio & Bass, 2004; Burns, 1978), which is the focus of this study. These leadership styles have a broad continuum of behaviours from the most potent-idealized (charismatic) leadership to the least potent – laissez-faire leadership.

2.3.1 Transactional Leadership style

The transactional leader seeks to motivate followers through an exchange process. Transactional leadership style consists of four leadership dimensions (Avolio & Bass, 2004; Bono & Judge, 2004). These include contingent reward which describes leadership behaviour where leaders provide tangible and intangible support and resource in exchange for subordinates' effort and performance. Secondly, management by exception (active) refers to the leaders' use of correction or punishment as a response to unacceptable performance or deviation from accepted standards. The third dimension is management by exception (passive) where the leader takes a passive approach to leadership by intervening only when problems become serious. Finally, the fourth dimension is the laissez-faire leadership behaviour which is regarded as a non- leadership behaviour. The laissez-faire leader shows an indifferent attitude towards subordinate welfare and task.

2.3.2 Transformational Leadership style

Transformational leadership style on the other hand emphasizes that leaders and subordinates unite together to pursue higher order common goals such that both leaders and followers are able to raise each other to higher levels of motivation (Burns, 1978). This implies that the leader and subordinate purposes become one fused, united and collective purpose (Barker, 1990). Transformational leadership has four basic leadership dimensions too (Avolio & Bass, 2004). These include idealised influence, which is the behaviour of the leader that reflects the charisma of the leader and the pride, respect, faith and admiration the leader instils in subordinates. Secondly, inspirational motivation is emphasized in the leadership behaviour where the leader articulates a clear, appealing and inspiring vision for the subordinates. Thirdly, intellectual stimulation is that leadership behaviour where the leader solicits new and novel approaches for the performance of task and creative solutions from subordinates for problem solving while lastly, individualized consideration emphasizes leaders' respect for each subordinate and gives special concern to their growth, support and developmental needs.

2.4 Statement of the Problem

The main purpose of existence in all modern organizations of which educational organizations are not exempted is goal attainment. There is a growing interest to determine which leadership style is capable of enhancing teacher morale such that secondary school goals and objectives are optimally achieved. This is of utmost importance in a situation where most teachers seem to have lost the passion and commitment for the teaching profession. A clear picture of the demoralized condition of teachers in Delta State is identified as a major constraint militating against the growth of the education Industry in the State. The crucial role teacher morale imparts on meaningful teaching and learning and the possible influence of principals' leadership styles in improving the morale of teachers led to the conception of this study. This study seeks therefore to examine the influence of principals' leadership styles and gender on teacher morale in secondary schools in Delta State.

2.5 Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to examine the influence of principal's leadership style and gender on teacher morale in public secondary schools in Delta State. Specifically, the study sought to investigate two leadership styles used by principals (the transactional and transformational leadership style) and how they influence teacher's morale. The study also examined if there is any statistical significant difference on the influence of principal's leadership styles in relation to teacher's morale and also between male and female principals in public secondary schools in Delta State, Nigeria.

2.6 Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:
1. Do teachers perceive their principals as transactional leaders or as transformational leaders?
2. What is the influence of principal's transactional leadership style on teacher morale?
3. What is the influence of principal's transformational leadership style on teacher morale?
4. How does principals' gender influence teacher morale?

2.7 Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses will be tested at .05 level of significance guided the study:

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HO 1 There is no significant difference between male and female transactional principals.
HO 2 There is no significant difference between male and female transformational principals.
HO 3 There is no significant difference between the influences of principal's gender on teacher morale.
HO 4 There is no significant difference between the influence of transactional leadership style and transformational leadership style on teacher morale.

3. Methodology

The design adopted for the study is the ex-post facto design. The study was carried out in Delta State which comprises of three senatorial districts namely Delta North, Delta Central and Delta South with twenty-five (25) Local Government Areas. The population of the study consists of three hundred and sixty-seven principals (367) and eleven thousand, four hundred and two (11,402) teachers in three hundred and sixty-seven (367) public secondary schools in the three senatorial districts in Delta State. Using the simple random sampling technique, seventy-two (72) principals and two thousand, five hundred and six (2,506) teachers in seventy-two (72) public secondary schools were selected as the sample of the study. The seventy-two (72) principals comprised of forty-one (41) female and thirty-one (31) male principals. Two standardized research instruments namely the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) and the Purdue Teacher Opinionnaire (PTO) were used to collect the data for the study. The MLQ instrument was adapted from Avolio and Bass (1997) to measure transactional and transformational leadership styles. The adapted MLQ questionnaire is a 26 item questionnaire that measures four dimensions of transactional leadership (Contingent Reward, Management by Exception (Active), Management by Exception (Passive) and Laissez-Faire) and four dimensions leadership dimensions of transformational leadership (Idealized Influence, Inspirational motivation, Intellectual Stimulation and Individualized Consideration). The response format for all items in the MLQ ranged from Very Frequently Occurs (VFO), Frequently Occurs (FO), Less Frequently Occurs (LFO) and Rarely Occurs (RO) which are rated 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. The Purdue Teacher Opininnaire (PTO) is a 32 item questionnaire made up of five clusters namely teacher rapport with principal, Rapport amongst teachers, Satisfaction with teaching, Teacher status and Teacher Load. The response formats for all the items in the questionnaire was Disagree, Probably Disagree, Probably Agree and Agree which were rated 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 respectively. Research experts in the Department of Educational Foundations and two experts in the Department of Measurement and Evaluation in the University of Nigeria, Nsukka validated the research instruments. The Cronbach –Alpha method was used to determine the reliability of the instruments used in the study. The overall reliability coefficient obtained for the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) was 0.84 and 0.88 for the Purdue Teacher Opinionnaire (PTO). Out of one thousand five hundred questionnaires administered, only nine hundred and forty (940) of them were useful for the study. The simple descriptive statistics of mean, standard deviation and percentage were used to answer the research questions while the t-test was the statistical tool used to address the research hypotheses at 0.05 levels of significance. To determine the type of principal's leadership style, any principal that scored above the cluster mean of 2.5 for transactional leadership items was considered a transactional leader while any principal that scored above the criterion mean of 2.5 for transformational leadership style items was considered a transformational principal. The following guidelines were used to interpret the mean scores of teacher morale factors in accordance with Bentley and Rempel (1980):

Table 3.1

Mean Score of Teacher Morale	*Interpretation*
1.00 -1.25	Very low Teacher Morale
1.26-1.99	Moderately low Teacher Morale
2.00-2.75	Moderate Teacher Morale
2.76-3.49	Moderately High Teacher Morale
3.50-4.00	High Teacher Morale

4. Results

Research Question One

Do teachers perceive their principals as transactional or transformational leaders?

Table 4.1a: Mean and Standard Deviation of Principals Transactional Leadership Style

S/NO.	Transactional Leadership Style N=37	Mean	SD
1.	Contingent Reward	3.11	0.31
2.	Management by exception-active	2.83	0.35
3.	Management by exception-passive	2.33	0.65
4.	Laissez-faire	2.41	0.73
	Cluster Mean	**2.67**	**0.51**

The result in table 4.1a shows that 37 principals displayed the transactional leadership style and

therefore are transactional leaders. The contingent reward and Management by exception-active dimensions of the transactional leadership style were the predominant transactional behaviour of these principals which had cluster mean scores of 3.11 and 2.83 respectively which are above the criterion mean of 2.5 and standard deviation of 0.31 and 0.35. However, the Management by exception-passive and Laissez-faire dimensions had cluster mean scores of 2.33 and 2.41 respectively which are below the criterion mean of 2.5 with standard deviation of 0.65 and 0.73 as can be seen in the table 4.1a.

Table 4.1b: Mean and Standard Deviation of Principals Transformational Leadership Style

S/NO.	Transformational Leadership Style N=35	Mean	SD
1.	Idealized Influence	3.25	0.29
2.	Intellectual Stimulation	3.17	0.40
3.	Inspirational Motivation	3.28	0.24
4.	Individualized Consideration	2.98	0.28
	Cluster Mean	**3.17**	**0.30**

The result in table 4.1b shows that 35 principals displayed the transformational leadership style and therefore are transformational leaders. Idealized Influence dimension of the transformational leadership style had a cluster mean of 3.25 with a standard deviation of 0.29 while intellectual stimulation dimension had a mean score of 3.17 with a standard deviation of 0.40. These dimensions both have a mean above the criterion mean of 2.5 implying that teachers in these schools perceived their principals as leaders whose behaviour portrayed charisma and a clear, appealing and inspiring vision that instilled in their subordinates pride, respect, faith and admiration for the leader. However, the inspirational motivation and individualized consideration had mean scores of 3.28 and 2.98 with standard deviation of 0.24 and 0.28 respectively. The mean of these dimensions are above the criterion mean of 2.5 as can be seen in the table 4.1b. This leadership behaviour where the leader seeks out new and novel approaches for the performance of task and creative solutions from subordinates for problem solving and emphasizes leaders' respect for each subordinate as a person by giving special concern for their growth, support and developmental needs.

Research Question 2

What is the influence of Principals' Transactional leadership styles on Teacher morale?

Table 4.2: Mean and Standard Deviation of influence of Principals Transactional Leadership Styles on Teacher Morale Factors.

S/NO.	Teacher Morale Factors	Mean	SD	Decision
1.	Teacher Rapport with Principal	2.29	0.53	Moderate
2.	Rapport Amongst Teachers	2.30	0.56	Moderate
3.	Satisfaction with Teaching	2.31	0.52	Moderate
4.	Teacher Status	2.26	0.42	Moderate
5.	Teacher Load	2.06	0.28	Moderate
	Grand Mean	**2.24**	**0.46**	Moderate

Table 4.2 presents the results of the data on the influence of transactional leadership styles on teacher morale. The first teacher morale factor – teacher rapport with principal gave a cluster mean of 2.29 and standard deviation of 0.52. A mean of 2.39 according to the established rule in table 3.1 indicates a moderate level of teacher morale in schools with this type of leadership. The second teacher morale factor-Rapport amongst teachers had a mean of 2.30 with standard deviation of 0.28 indicating a moderate level of teacher morale. The subsequent three teacher morale factors examined in the study namely Satisfaction with teaching, Teacher status and Teacher Load had mean scores of 2.31, 2.26 and 2.06 with standard deviation of 0.52, 0.42 and 0.28 respectively as can be seen in table 4.2. Their mean scores result indicates a moderate level of teacher morale.

Research Question 3

What is the influence of Principal's Transformational leadership styles on Teacher morale?

Table 4.3: Mean and Standard Deviation of influence of principal's transformational leadership Styles on Teacher Morale factor.

S/NO.	Teacher Morale Factors	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Teacher Rapport with Principal	3.27	0.22	Moderately High
2.	Rapport Amongst Teachers	3.23	0.28	Moderately High
3.	Satisfaction with Teaching	3.23	0.24	Moderately High
4.	Teacher Status	3.01	0.26	Moderately High
5.	Teacher Load	2.90	0.36	Moderately High
	Grand Mean	**3.13**	**0.27**	Moderately High

Table 4.3 presents the results of the data on the influence of transformational leadership style on teacher morale. The first teacher morale factor – teacher rapport with principal has a mean of 3.27 with a

standard deviation of 0.22. The resultant mean score of 3.27 according to the established guideline in table 1 indicates a moderate high level of teacher morale in schools with this type of leadership. The second teacher morale factor-Rapport amongst teachers had a mean score of 3.23 with standard deviation of 0.28 indicating a moderately high level of teacher morale. The subsequent three teacher morale factors examined in the study namely Satisfaction with teaching, Teacher status and Teacher Lad had mean scores of 3.23, 3.01 and 2.90 with standard deviations of 0.24, 0.26 and 0.36 respectively. Their mean scores result indicates a moderately level of teacher morale. The teacher morale factors had an overall mean of 3.13 with standard deviation of 0.27 also indicating a moderately high level of teacher morale in accordance with the established guide in table 3.1.

Research Question 4: How does principals' gender influence teacher morale?

Table 4.4: Mean and Standard Deviation of the Influence of Male and Female Principals on Teacher morale.

S/NO.	Teacher Morale Factors	N=32 Male		N=40 Female	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
1.	Teacher Rapport with Principal	2.93	0.57	2.63	0.63
2.	Rapport Amongst Teachers	2.83	0.56	2.69	0.62
3	Satisfaction with Teaching	2.90	0.54	2.64	0.48
4.	Teacher Status	2.66	0.55	2.45	0.48
5.	Teacher Load	2.59	0.45	2.37	0.57
	Grand Mean	**2.84**	**0.48**	**2.60**	**0.53**

Table 4.4 shows data obtained on influence of principals gender on teacher morale. The cluster mean scores of all dimensions of teacher morale for male principals were 2.93, 2.83, 2.90, 2.66 and 2.59 with standard deviations of 0.57, 0.56, 0.54, 0.55 and 0.45 respectively for teacher rapport with principal, rapport amongst teachers, satisfaction with teaching, teacher status and teacher load respectively and overall mean score of 2.83 indicating a moderately high level of teacher morale. On the other hand for female principals mean scores of 2.63, 2.69, 2.64, 2.45 and 2.37 with standard deviations of 0.63, 0.62, 0.48, 0.48 and 0.57 respectively for the teacher rapport with principal, rapport amongst teachers, satisfaction with teaching, teacher status and teacher load dimensions of teacher morale respectively and overall mean score of 2.60 indicating a moderate level of teacher morale.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference between male and female transactional principals.

Table 4.5: t-test of difference between Male and Female Transactional Principals.

GENDER	MEAN	SD	N	DF	STD ERROR	T	P-VALUE	t- Table value	MEAN DIFF.
MALE	2.17	0.47	32	70	0.082	-1.089	0.280	1.96	-0.143
FEMALE	2.31	0.62	40		0.097				

The result of the t-test analysis in table 4.5 reveals that the observed difference in the mean score of male (2.17) and female (2.31) transactional principals was found not to be significant (p=0.28<0.05) at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the hypothesis that there is no significant difference between male and female transactional leaders was accepted.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference between male and female transformational principals.

Table 4.6: t-test of difference between Male and Female Transformational Principals.

GENDER	MEAN	SD	N	DF	STD ERROR	t	P-VALUE	t- Table value	MEAN DIFF.
MALE	2.88	0.56	32	70	0.099	3.408	0.001	1.96	0.434
FEMALE	2.45	0.51	40		0.081				

Table 4.6 shows that the observed difference in the mean scores of male (2.88) transformational principals and female (2.45) transformational principals in public secondary schools in Delta State is significant (P=0.001< 0.05) at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the hypothesis that there is no significant difference between male and female transformational principals was rejected. Hence, there is a statistically significant difference between male and female transformational leaders.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant difference between the influences of principal's gender on Teachers morale.

Table 4.7: t-test of influence of Principals Gender on Teachers Morale.

GENDER	MEAN	SD	N	DF	STD ERROR	t	P-VALUE	t- Table value	MEAN DIFF.
MALE	2.88	0.56	32	70	0.099	3.08	0.001	1.96	0.434
FEMALE	2.45	0.51	40		0.081				

      The result of the t-test analysis in table 4.7 shows that the observed difference in the mean score of male (2.88) and female (2.45) principals on teachers morale is found to be significant (p=0.001<0.05) at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between male and female principals on teacher's morale was rejected. As a result, there is a statistically significant difference between male and female principals on teacher's morale.

Hypothesis Four: There is no significant difference between the influences of Transactional leadership style and Transformational Leadership Style on Teacher Morale.

Table 4.8: t-test of influence of Transactional and Transformational Leadership Style on Teacher Morale

LEADERSHIP STYLE	MEAN	SD	N	DF	STD ERROR	T	P-VALUE	t- Table value	MEAN DIFF.
Transactional	2.26	0.377	32	70	0.062	-13.89	0.000	1.96	-0.906
Transformational	3.17	0.085	40		0.085				

      Table 4.8 shows that the observed difference in the mean scores of the influence of transactional (2.26) and transformational leadership styles (3.17) on teachers morale is quite significant (P=0.000< 0.05) at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the hypothesis that there is no significant difference between the influence of transactional and transformational leadership style on teachers morale was rejected. Hence, a statistically significant difference exists between the influence of transactional leadership style and transformational leadership style on teacher's morale.

5. Discussion

The transactional leaders displayed predominantly the contingent reward and management by exception (active) leadership dimensions of the transactional leadership style. This explains that teachers perceived their principals provided support and rewards for teacher's effort and performance. In addition, transactional principals were seen to monitor work performance and where necessary utilized corrections or punishment to ensure that an acceptable performance was reached. However, the management by exception (passive) and laissez-affaire dimensions of transactional leadership were rarely displayed by transactional principals. This finding suggests that principals did not take an indifferent approach to leadership, teacher's needs as well as school problems. This is consistent with the view of Barnett, Marsh and Craven (2004) who states that teachers like to be led by a principal who support, encourage and care for them as individuals and not by a principal who avoids taking decisions and absent when important issues arise. On the other hand, the transformational principals were perceived by their teachers as charismatic leaders with a vision that inspired and appealed to them. This type of leadership also welcomed new ideas and innovations from their teachers. In addition, the perception of teachers suggests leadership concern for teacher's growth, support and developmental needs.

      The second finding of the study revealed that the influence of transactional principals on teacher's morale resulted in a moderate level of teacher morale while the influence of transformational principals on teacher's morale resulted in a moderately high level of teacher morale. The overall implication of this finding showed that teachers in secondary schools with transformational principals experienced a higher level of morale than teachers in schools with transactional principals. This finding is supported by Avolio and Bass (1997) who states that transformational leadership produces greater positive response in subordinate behaviour than transactional leadership. This agrees also with Agar (2008) who contends that the greater influence of transformational leadership may be ascribed to the ability of leadership to raise the level of awareness of teachers such that organizational goals and strategies are valued above personal interest. However, this does not imply that transactional leadership is ineffective but obviously greater effort, increased effectiveness and satisfaction is achieved with transformational leadership. Suggestions have therefore been made in view of the leadership challenges facing public secondary schools that transformational leadership style is considered appropriate for secondary school principals (Maccadory, 2004).

      The third finding revealed that there exists a gender difference in the influence of principals on teacher

morale. The influence of male principals on teacher morale gave rise to higher teacher morale than the influence of female principals on teacher morale. Further analysis showed that there is a statistically significant difference between male and female transactional leaders. However, this is not consistent with the findings of Eagly and Johnson (1990) whose studies found no gender difference between male and female leadership. Leithwood and Jantzi (1997) suggest that some other contending variables may be able to provide explanations for any observed gender difference in leadership.

The fourth finding showed that there is a statistically significant difference between male and female principals on teacher's morale. This may be attributed to the fact that women are seen to make use of better leadership practices than men though male leadership is still preferred (Eagly, 2007). Finally the sixth finding indicates that a statistically significant difference exists between the influence of transactional leadership style and transformational leadership style on teacher's morale. This is consistent with the finding of Herndon (2002) who asserts that gender differences may be observed in the leadership behaviours leaders employs. In support of this finding too, Idogho (2002) suggests the existence of a positive correlation between teacher's perceptions of principal's leadership behaviours on teacher morale and motivation. A number of research studies like that of Randolph-Robinson (2007) reveal that "the teacher's morale is a direct reflection of the teacher's perceptions of the principal's leadership behavior" (p.88). As a result, the level of teacher's morale is based on their perception of their principal's leadership styles.

6. Conclusion

Based on the findings and discussions of the study the following conclusions were drawn. The results of the study vividly present a clear view of the current status of secondary school leadership, gender and teacher morale. Principals were perceived as more transactional in their leadership than transformational. The findings revealed that the leadership styles of principals and gender influenced teacher morale. Specifically, the transformational leadership and male principals had a greater influence on teacher morale yielding a moderately high level of teacher morale. On the other hand, transactional leadership and female principals resulted in only a moderate level of teacher morale. Teacher load had the lowest influence on teacher morale out of the five morale factors considered in the study.

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