

# Perceived Influence of School Principals' Leadership Style on Students' Academic Performance in Senior Secondary Schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State

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**Abstract:** This study examined the perceived influence of Principals' leadership styles on students' academic performance in Public Senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State. The study was guided by five research questions and five hypotheses. The design adopted in the study was a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study was 9,182, which comprised 105 principals, and 9,077 students from 35 public secondary schools in Port Harcourt and Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State. The sample size of the study was 955 respondents (10% of the population) which consisted of 865 students and 90 principals from 30 schools. The instrument for data collection was a self-structured questionnaire titled "Perceived Influence of school principals' leadership style on students' Academic Performance Questionnaire". The instrument was validated by the researcher's supervisor and two experts in Measurement and Evaluation in the Faculty of Education, Rivers State University. The study adopted the test-re-test reliability method. The reliability coefficients were of 0.90 and 0.77 respectively. A total of 955 copies of the question were administered but only 673 copies were valid and used for data analysis. Data collected from the field were decoded, scored, tallied, tabularized and analyzed using Mean Score and Standard Deviation to answer the research questions, while z-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that there is no significant difference between the principals and student on the extent Principals' leadership styles influence students' academic performance in Public Senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State. Based on the findings, it was concluded principals leadership styles influence students' academic performance in senior secondary schools; particularly in Port Harcourt Metropolis. Therefore, it was recommended that principals should ensure that any leadership styles they would want to adopt, should have a direct academic improvement in schools.

**Keywords:** Leadership Style, Academic Performance, Transactional Leadership and Transformation Leadership.

## Introduction

In Nigeria, secondary school management is the responsibility of the school leader, otherwise referred to as the Principal. The Principal is usually an academic staff who grew through the ranks before his/her appointment. As a seasoned academic who must have performed some leadership tasks as class student, subject head, and student adviser, he/she is expected to exhibit good leadership traits that should attract good followership. Studies have proven that the Principal dictates the tune of the school, the school activities revolves around him/her, and thus, he/she can make or mar a school (Abdulrasheed & Bello, 2015). It is therefore advocated that good leadership qualities will enable the Principal achieve success in managing the school. There is the argument also that some secondary school Principals lack leadership Aina 2011 cited in Abdulrasheed and Bello (2015), argued that lack of leadership competencies in some principals result in low quality of instruction, indiscipline among staff and students competencies resulting in low quality

instruction, indiscipline among staff and students. According to Aina cited in Abdulrasheed and Bello (2015), different style of leadership produce different outcome. Principals are responsible to lead their schools effectively. They are expected to plan for the improvement of their schools. In so doing they are expected to coordinate people, programmes and activities. Leaders are expected to lead in such a way that the human resources are adequate for the tasks at hand and that there is sufficient support for the completion of the tasks. Effective budgeting is a main part of managing schools of learning. Proper budgets ensure that resources are being used to maximize school improvement. Funds are usually limited and care must be taken to ensure that the finances are led effectively. School leaders are also expected to be good directors. Their direction is necessary to ensure that organizational tasks are completed in an effective and efficient manner. As directing leaders, they have a responsibility to recruit, train, and place quality staff members. Their duties also include completing reports that demonstrate accountability and that resources are being effectively led. As leaders, schools principals must organize their institutions in such a manner that teaching and learning is maximized (Green, 2010).

The question then is which leadership style influence students' performance negatively or positively? Literature contend that an effective head demonstrates leadership that; creates confidence, inspires others, objectively evaluates the qualities and contributions of staffs and take difficult decisions, (FMEAYD 1993).

The outlined clearly shows that there are styles of leadership that can assist the secondary school Principals to achieve success in the management of the school. Leadership has been described by researchers as; act of influencing the activities of an organized group in its effort towards goal setting and achievement; a curious blending of leading and following; and, a dynamic activity within a group where one person influences other members to voluntarily contribute towards achieving established tasks and goals (Cunningham cited in Koko, 2005).

Researchers have attempted definition of leadership styles according to the school of thought they belong to. For instance, leadership style has been defined as the ingredient of personality embodied in leaders that causes subordinates to follow them, Chandan cited in Jay (2018); it is a process through which Principal influences a student or other groups in the attainment of educational goals, Adeyemi, (2006). Although it is obvious that no two leaders are the same and no two leaders will adopt same way of doing things to achieve results, leadership theorists have identified some leadership styles that can be applied in school leadership. Such styles are autocratic style, participatory style, laissez-faire style, transactional style and contingency style. One of the leadership styles of interest is the transactional style also known as Nomothetic-Idiographic style (Getzels & Guba in Koko, 2009). The Better Schools Management resource book (FME, 1993) recognizes this style as the most effective because it tends to bridge the gap between stressing organizational goals and individual needs of personnel. Accordingly, the head who subscribes to this style appreciates the need to attain organizational goals while ensuring individual needs are also met. In all the secondary schools, principals are the leadership heads. They oversee the day to day activities of the schools alongside with their teachers. Most principals are committed to the improvement of academic performances of their students. The principals ensure that the curriculum and instructional programmes establish clear and specific learning objectives for each of the classes/levels are religiously followed. These principals are the front liners in the organization's action plan. Federal Republic of Nigeria (2014), identified management of curriculum and instruction, monitoring and evaluation of students' progress and

achievement, establishing and supporting continuous staff development and procuring instructional material for teaching and learning, supervision of classroom instruction, promotion and enhancement of learning as some supervisory roles of secondary school principals.

The relationship between principals' leadership style and students' performance has been a subject of controversy by many researchers. The controversy was centered on whether or not the style of leadership of principals influences the level of performance among students. Common observation in the school system shows that the style of leadership of a principal could perhaps have serious impact on students performance.

Fundamentally less has been targeted to the relationship between principal leadership behaviour and academic performance of students. Moreover, there need is to explore the perceptions of principals' about their own leadership behaviour towards its effect on students' academic performance. Accordingly, the perceptions of teachers' about their principals' leadership behaviour and its effect on students' performance is necessary to be investigated. There is a need to evaluate, explore, understand, and describe the principals' leadership style on the students' academic performance. Therefore, it is against this background that the study examined the perceived influence of principals' leadership styles on the students' academic performance with an aim to suggest a model that will at least maintain or enhance students' academic performance in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State.

### **Leadership Styles**

There are many types of leadership styles. They include:

**Transformational leadership style:** Baloch, Ali, and Zaman (2010) defines transformational leadership as the exchange amongst leader and followers a broader view that stimulates the concern of followers, inspire followers to look beyond their own interest to what best benefits the institution and influence teachers towards achievement of the teaching and learning outcomes. This style of leadership instigates his followers purely on strength of charisma, appealing to the employee's emotional needs, motivating followers intellectually to enhance their dedication and organizational benefits.

Astin, et al (2001), affirmed that transformational leadership provides an appropriate and supportive environment in which individual differences and needs are considered thus creates room for better performance. This implies that principals have to be sensitive to the needs of teachers in other to encourage increase commitment and performance. For the teachers to be proactive, the principal have to be emotionally intelligent, energetic and passionate. A study done by Barbuto (2005), on the school leadership and student achievement, it was found that transformation leadership led to enhanced corporation among students as well as the teachers.

Griffith (2004) revealed four scope of transformational leadership to be exhibited by the principals in the school setting. These are: Charismatic leadership, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation.

*Charismatic leadership* reflects on the formulation and articulation of idea, demanding goals and inspiring subordinates to work ahead of their self-interest in order to accomplish common goals. In this case, principals act as role models who are highly admired, honored and trusted by their subordinates. This will increase the level of teachers' participation in the issues as related to teaching and learning in the school system. Individualized consideration refers to principals paying special attention to each person's need for attainment and development as a coach or mentor. Inspirational motivation is the way principals motivate and inspire their subordinates to commit to the idea of the organizational objectives. Principals with inspirational motivation produce a strong team spirit as a means for leading staff members towards achieving desired goals.

**Transactional leadership style:** Transactional leadership involves an exchange process that results in follower compliance with leader request but not likely to generate enthusiasm and commitment to task objective. The leader focuses on having internal actors perform the tasks required for the organization to reach its desired goals (Bello, 2012). The objective of the transactional leader is to ensure that the path to goal attainment is clearly understood by the internal actors, to remove potential barrier within the system, and to motivate the actors to achieve the predetermined goals. Thus, the principals have to display constructive or corrective behaviors in the utilization of this style of leadership quality.

Transactional leadership style focuses more on constructive behavior reflecting on reward as it considers follower expectations and offers recognition when goals are achieved. The clarification of goals and objectives provides for recognition of goals achievement both from individuals and groups expected levels of performance. Thus, the principals always set standards for compliance as well as for what constitutes ineffective performance and may include punishing followers for non-compliance with those standards. This style of leadership implies close monitoring for deviances, mistakes and errors and then taking corrective measure as quickly as possible when they occur.

According to Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2007) transactional leadership style views the relationship between principals and the teachers as a transaction which focuses on the teachers completing required tasks. This scholar emphasizes that principals directs their leadership on encouraging teachers through certain methods to make them work with the assistance of external motivators such as organizational rewards.

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) assert that transactional leaders are not concerned with peoples' personal growth and prefer a principle which is about maintaining the existing situation. Thus, it generates clearly the defined roles. This implies that individuals know what they are required to do and what they will be rewarded for task completion. Therefore, it also engages leaders to offer a great deal of supervision and direction.

A study in Turkey by Castillo and Cano (2004), on the effects of leadership servant on teachers' organizational commitment in primary schools revealed that transactional leadership style was one of the most appropriate styles as it allowed the head teachers and other school leaders to realize the need of teachers within their schools and reward them to satisfy those needs in exchange of certain level of commitment. It relies on improving the efficiency of established regulations and procedures, thus, increases the commitment of teachers to their job as each teacher would strive to practice the set practices and routine. However, according to Ajayi, et al (2001), transactional leadership may lead to poor performance among teachers. The two argue that in circumstances where head teachers make it a priority that performance must always be associated with a reward, the withdrawal or delay of the reward will lead to a deteriorated performance hence must be done with care and limit.

### **Leadership style and their influence on students' performance**

This section discusses the influence of leadership styles on students' academic performance.

#### **Influence of Transformational leadership style on students' academic performance**

A review of the literature on some of the leadership styles that breed success within educational organizations discovered that transformational leadership was more effective than transactional leadership. Ross & Gray (2006) defines transformational leadership as the multidimensional construct that involves three clusters: charisma (identifying and sustaining a vision of the

organization), intellectual stimulation of members, and individual consideration. Transformational leadership enhances an organization by raising the values of members, motivating them to go beyond self-interest to embrace organizational goals, and redefining their needs to align with organizational preferences.

Theorists and researchers believe transformational leadership is essential for organizations to improve academic performance. Ross & Gray (2006) discovers principals are often perceived as accountable for student achievement, but most researchers found that principals have very little direct impact on achievement. The researchers hypothesized that principals indirectly contributed to student achievement through teacher commitment and beliefs about their collective capacity.

### **Influence of Transactional leadership style on students' academic performance**

Leadership occurs when mutual interactions exist between leader and their followers in which the leader can affect followers through behaviors such as contingent reward, contracts exchange of rewards for effort, promises rewards for good performance, recognizes accomplishments, Management-by-Exception (active), watches and searches for deviations from rules and standards, takes corrective action and management-by-Exception (passive): Intervenes only if standards are not met Bass & Avolio (1993).

Transactional leadership focuses on monitoring and controlling subordinates (Bass, 1985). It also involves contingent rewards based on the behaviors of subordinate. Transactional leadership encompasses positive exchange of expected performance and rewards between subordinates and leaders (Bono & Judge, 2004). Transactional and transformational are two competing leadership paradigms. Transactional leadership has shown to be effective in achieving short term goals, but transformational leadership is more effective in achieving long term goals (Hautala, 2005).

Transactional leadership Bass (1985) is as a result of an exchange of relationship between leader and followers. Transactional leadership is grounded in the social exchange theories, which recognize the reciprocal nature of leadership. The transactional leadership process builds upon exchange whereby the leader offers rewards (or threatens punishments) for the performance of desired behaviors and the completion of certain tasks (Bass & Avolio, 1997). The attraction of combinative aspects of leadership behavior lies in its simplicity and its apparent effectiveness in improving followers' satisfaction of the leader. However, much more research is needed to further explore this domain of leadership behavior.

However, these leadership behaviors provide motivation and support to enable the staff to develop their achievement (Nguyen & Mohamed, 2011). In the context of Higher Education Institutions, there seems to be a lack of empirical studies that link leadership behavior of the university leaders to achieve performance (Nordin, 2011).

According to Burns, (1978) Karen Seashore Louis, Kenneth Leithwood, Kyla L. Wahlstrom, Stephen, et al. (2010) asserts that leadership must be aligned with a collective purpose and effective leaders must be judged by their ability to make social changes. He suggests that the role of the leader and follower be united conceptually and that the process of leadership is the interplay of conflict and power. Burns delineates two basic types of leadership: transactional and transformational. Transactional leaders approach followers with the intent to exchange one thing for another, for example, the leaders may reward the hardworking teacher with an increase in budget allowance. On the other hand, the transforming leader looks for potential motives in followers, seeks to satisfy higher needs, and engages the full person of the follower. The result of this leadership is a mutual relationship that converts followers to leaders and leaders into moral agents.

The concept of moral leadership is proposed as a means for leaders to take responsibility for their leadership and to aspire to satisfy the needs of the followers. Burns' position is that leaders are neither born nor made; instead, leaders evolve from a structure of motivation, values, and goals. Transformational leadership encompasses a change to benefit both the relationship and the resources of those involved. The result is a change in the level of commitment and the increased capacity for achieving the mutual purposes.

### **Influence of Participatory leadership style on students' academic performance**

Many studies on leadership styles in schools have continuously advocated for the participatory style of leadership as it has been seen to improve students' academic performance of the schools (Nsubuga, 2008). So, it is through this style of leadership that students can be involved in the maintenance of good academic achievement through their involvement in the organizations' leadership. The principal should therefore encourage and recognize the contribution of the members for the school to be successful. In support of this assertion, Dury and Levin (1994) observed that participatory/participation leadership or management style has a potential of improving the student performance.

Democracy is therefore a type of leadership where orders are given after consultation, policies are worked out after discussion, plans are given before asking people to act and there is participation of group in decision making. The outcome of this leadership is better quality of work, members become constructive and work well together and they own up the decisions made. Schools are seen to be humanistic organizations hence to achieve any meaningful success all human components must be involved. Schools are also regarded as social systems whose components are the headteacher, teachers, students, parents, Board of Management, government officers, sponsors and communities. Therefore, among the three main styles of leadership, participatory styles fit squarely in the school set up as it advocates for inclusion of all players in pursuing the organizational goals. Many studies on leadership styles in schools have continuously advocated for the participatory style of leadership as it has been seen to improve the performance of the schools (Nsubuga, 2008). Participatory leadership style in secondary school set up is characterized by many attributes. First formation of groups such as students' body, PTA and BOM which should work together on the basis of solidarity, cooperation, integrity and acceptance of legitimate authority to achieve the schools goals, (Hoy, 1986). Secondly, the members of the organization should be motivated to participate and exposed and sensitized on their needs and rights in the participation (Shaeffer, 1992). Thirdly, participation should lead to decision making. The decisions made are normally qualitative as they are made by a group.

However, the principal still has the final authority of approving the decision (Powers, 1984). Fourthly, increased communication among the members Fifth; shared responsibility and authority, Sixth; participation should be voluntary (Stine, 1993). This means students and other members should not be coerced to participate. Lastly clarification of the legal status of the students, teachers and parents in school management.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The ultimate goal of secondary education is to develop the individuals' mental capacity and character for higher education and useful living within the society. There is a growing concern about the realization of secondary school objectives due to the believe that principals are given little attention to supervision of instructional activities and due to lack of competence leading to

poor effectiveness and efficiency. Students' results in external examination have been marred with irregularities emanating from the poor leadership styles exhibited by secondary schools principals in Rivers State, such that students had to register for Senior School Certificate Examination and General Certificate Examination over and over in order for them to have at least 5 credits.

Despite the fact that public secondary schools in Rivers State have qualified school principals using various management styles in their respective schools, the students' academic performance in these schools have persistently been below average over the last five years, Brown and Amie-Ogan (2019). The performance index had steadily remained below the conventionally perceived average mean of 6.000 points (grade C) over the last 5 years, averaging 5.340 (grade C-) for the years 2007 – 2011 period. Port Harcourt Metropolis would have been expected to perform better given that nearly all its secondary school teachers were either Bachelor of Education graduates or holders of Diploma in Education and that the schools were reported to have adequate educational and educational support resources having passed the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria examination which is a pre-requisite for teaching in Rivers State.

Though performance is determined by many factors, leadership style plays a very significant role in its quality. The studies by scholars and researchers such as Ibrahim and Orodho (2014) have established that principals' leadership styles have a significant input on student academic performance in national examinations. Nonetheless, some of these studies done on the effect of leadership styles on students' senior Secondary Certificate (SSCE) performance give differing results and very few are in agreement on their findings. This study was concerned about the possible effects of principals' leadership styles on students' academic performance in Port Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State, Nigeria, against the backdrop of the perennial dismal performance over the years. The poor performances of students could be attributed to ineffective principals leadership style in secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State. The problem of the present study is to investigate the influence of principals' leadership styles on students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State and to provide remedy.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to examine the influence of principals' leadership styles on students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State. The study specifically intends to:

1. Examine the extent principals' transactional leadership style influences students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State.
2. Examine the extent principals' transformational leadership style influences students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State.

## **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent does principals' transactional leadership style influences students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State?
2. To what extent does principals' transformational leadership style influences students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State?

## **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

1. There is no significant difference between the mean scores of principals and students on the extent principals' transactional leadership style influence students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State.
2. There is no significant difference between the mean scores of principals and students on the extent principals' transformational leadership style influence students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State.

## **Methodology**

The design adopted in the study was a descriptive survey research design. Descriptive survey design was appropriate for this study because it helped the researcher to access information concerning the current situation in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State as regards to the influence of school principals' leadership style on academic performance (Akpomi, Kayii, & Nwile, 2021). The population of the study was Twenty-five thousand, one hundred and two (25,182), which comprised one hundred and five (105) principals, and twenty-five thousand, seventy-seven (25,077) students from the entire thirty-five (35) public secondary schools in Port Harcourt and Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State. The one hundred and five (105) principals consisted of one (1) main or general principal, one (1) vice principal for administration, and one (1) vice principal for academic. The sample size of the study was six hundred (690) respondents which consisted of six-hundred (600) students and ninety (90) principals. The ninety (90) principals consisted of one (1) main or general principal, one (1) vice principal for administration, and one (1) vice principal for academic from 30 schools. The study adopted the stratified random sampling techniques. The stratified random sampling technique was adopted to select fifteen (15) schools from each of the two (2) Local Government Area in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State, making a total of thirty (30) of Thirty-Five (35) Public senior Secondary Schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis. Furthermore, the stratified random sampling technique was adopted to choose Twenty (20) students and three (3) principals from each of the twenty (20) selected Public Senior Secondary schools. A self-structured questionnaire designed in a four point rating scale of (VHE) = 5 points, high extent (HE) =4 points, Moderate Extent (3) low extent (LE) = 2 points and very low extent (VLE) = 1point respectively. To validate the instrument, the



questionnaire was given to three experts who extensively carried out face and content validity relating to the appropriateness of the content of the questionnaire used for the study. A reliability index of 0.73, 0.69 and 0.75 respectively, were obtained through the Cronbach Alpha method of its measure stability. Descriptive statistics were used to answer each of the research questions, and the most suitable statistical tool; Independent samples t-Test was applied in testing each of the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

**Research Question 1:** To what extent does principals’ transactional leadership style influences students’ academic performance in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State?

**Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Respondents on the extent principals’ transactional leadership style influences students’ academic performance**

S/N	Statement	Principals (N=90)		Decision	Students (N=583)		Decision
		Mean	SD		Mean	SD	
1	There is exchange of process that result students compliance with principal’s order and demand in job performance	3.28	.85	High Extent	3.17	.91	High Extent
2	The principal is very flexible in his decision on students and this has helped the students to improve their performance	2.75	1.13	Low Extent	2.73	1.16	Low Extent
3	The principal appreciates the inputs of the students in decision making	3.18	.93	High Extent	3.05	.96	High Extent
4	The level of compliance on academic disciplinary strategies by students is very high which leads good performance from the students.	3.22	.86	High Extent	3.15	.94	High Extent
5	The principal make the students to understand what to do in order to achieve their academic goals which leads to high academic performance.	3.08	.92	High Extent	2.97	.95	Low Extent
6	There is high level of cooperation between the principal and the students and this has led to high academic performance from the students.	3.10	.87	High Extent	3.08	.89	High Extent
	<b>Grand mean</b>	<b>3.09</b>	<b>0.93</b>	High Extent	<b>3.02</b>	<b>0.97</b>	High Extent

**Source:** Research Data, 2021 (SPSS Output, Version 23.0)

Table 1 show the extent principals’ transactional leadership style influences students’ academic performance in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State. The result on Table 1 shows that principals’ transactional leadership style influences students’ academic performance in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State with the mean

scores 3.28/.847 for male and 3.17/.905 for female, , 2.75/1.127 for male and 2.73/1.163 for female, 3.18/.931 for male and 3.05/.964 for female, 3.22/.862 for male and 3.15/.936 for female, 3.08/.917 for male and 2.97/.956 for female respectively for questionnaire items 1-6. This implies that, to a high extent, principals’ transactional leadership style influences students’ academic performance in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State.

**Research Question 2:** To what extent does principals’ transformational leadership style influences students’ academic performance in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State?

**Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Respondents on the extent principals’ transformational leadership style influences students’ academic performance in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State**

S/N	Statement	Principals (N=90)		Decision	Students (N=583)		Decision
		Mean	SD		Mean	SD	
1	Exchange of ideas on how to study and pass examinations between principal and students enhance students’ performance academic-wise	3.10	.90	High Extent	3.08	.96	High Extent
2	Most students are inspired and motivated to perform better by the visionary leadership of the principal.	3.23	1.05	High Extent	3.12	1.07	High Extent
3	The students most often have learnt from the principals’ Intellectual Stimulation which has help them to their studies serious	3.33	.73	High Extent	3.22	.80	High Extent
4	The principal is gives individual consideration on the performance of each of the students and provide avenue for teaching and learning which leads to efficient performance by students.	2.75	.81	Low Extent	2.82	.81	Low Extent
5	In the school, the principals ensures that students learning are giving priority which influence academic performance.	3.48	.72	High Extent	3.32	.81	High Extent
6	Supportive leadership for teaching from the principal influence students’ academic performance	3.23	.72	High Extent	3.12	.86	High Extent
<b>Grand mean</b>		<b>3.18</b>	<b>0.82</b>	High Extent	<b>3.63</b>	<b>0.87</b>	High Extent

**Source:** Research Data, 2021 (SPSS Output, Version 23.0)

Table 2 above shows the extent principals’ transformational leadership style influences students’ academic performance in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State. The result shows that extent, principals’ transformational leadership style influences students’ academic performance in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State with mean scores 3.10/.900 for male and 3.08/.962 for female, 3.23/1.050 for male 3.12/1.075 for female, 3.33/.730 for male and 3.22/.804 for female, 2.75/.809 for male and 2.82/.813 for female, and 3.48/.716 for male and 3.32/.813 for female respectively for questionnaire items 1-6. This implies that, to a high extent, principals’ transformational leadership style influences students’ academic performance in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State.

### B. Test of Hypotheses

This section of the study showed the results of the five hypotheses stated in the chapter one of the study. The hypotheses were tested using z-test statistical tool.

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant difference between the scores of principals and students on the extent principals’ transactional leadership style influence students’ academic performance in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State.

**Table 3: z-Test Analysis on significant difference between the scores of principals and students on the extent principals’ transactional leadership style influence students’ academic performance in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State**

Variable	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Df	z-calc	z-crit.	LS	Decision
Principals	90	3.09	0.93	671	0.912	±1.96	0.05	Not
Students	583	3.02	0.97					Rejected

**Source:** Research Data, 2021 (SPSS Output, Version 23.0)

The result on the Table 3 above showed the z-Test Analysis on the significant difference between the scores of principals and students on the extent principals’ transactional leadership style influence students’ academic performance in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State. The result showed that there is no significant difference between the scores of principals and students on the extent principals’ transactional leadership style influence students’ academic performance in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State with a z-calculated value of 0.912 which was less than the z-critical value of ±1.96 at 0.05 level of significance, with a degree of freedom of 671 Therefore, the alternative hypothesis is rejected and the null hypotheses accepted. Therefore, it is concluded that there is no significant difference between the scores of principals and students on the extent principals’ transactional leadership style influence students’ academic performance in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant difference between the scores of principals and students on the extent principals’ transformational leadership style influence students’ academic performance in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State.

**Table 4: z-Test Analysis on the significant difference between the scores of principals and students on the extent principals’ transformational leadership style influence students’ academic performance in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State**

Variable	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Df	z-calc	z-crit.	LS	Decision
Principals	90	3.18	0.82	671	1.11	1.96	0.05	Not
Students	583	3.63	0.87					Rejected

**Source:** Research Data, 2021 (SPSS Output, Version 23.0)

The result on the Table 4 above showed the z-Test Analysis on the significant difference between the scores of principals and students on the extent principals’ transformational leadership style influence students’ academic performance in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State. The result showed that there is no significant difference between the scores of principals and students on the extent principals’ transformational leadership style influence students’ academic performance in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State with a z-calculated value of 1.11 which was less than the z-critical value of ±1.96 at 0.05 level of significance, with a degree of freedom of 671 Therefore, the alternative hypothesis is rejected and the null hypotheses accepted. Therefore, it is concluded that there is no significant difference between the scores of principals and students on the extent principals’ transformational

leadership style influence students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State.

## **Discussion of Findings**

### **Extent to which principals' transactional leadership style influences students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State**

With respect to the extent to which principals' transactional leadership style influences students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State, the result on Table 1 showed that principals' transactional leadership style influences students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State. The result showed that, to a high extent, principals' transactional leadership style influences students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State.

From the result above, it is clear that transactional leadership involves an exchange process that results in follower compliance with leader request but not likely to generate enthusiasm and commitment to task objective. Abdurashied and Bello (2015) asserted that in the transactional leadership style, the leader focuses on having internal actors perform the tasks required for the organization to reach its desired goals. The objective of the transactional leader is to ensure that the path to goal attainment is clearly understood by the internal actors, to remove potential barrier within the system, and to motivate the actors to achieve the predetermined goals. Thus, the principals have to display constructive or corrective behaviors in the utilization of this style of leadership quality.

Transactional leadership style focuses more on constructive behavior reflecting on reward as it considers follower expectations and offers recognition when goals are achieved. The clarification of goals and objectives provides for recognition of goals achievement both from individuals and groups expected levels of performance. Thus, the principals always set standards for compliance as well as for what constitutes ineffective performance and may include punishing followers for non-compliance with those standards. This style of leadership implies close monitoring for deviances, mistakes and errors and then taking corrective measure as quickly as possible when they occur.

According to Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2007) transactional leadership style views the relationship between principals and the teachers as a transaction which focuses on the teachers completing required tasks. This scholar emphasizes that principals directs their leadership on encouraging teachers through certain methods to make them work with the assistance of external motivators such as organizational rewards.

Correspondingly, hypothesis 1 result on the Table 3 above showed the z-Test Analysis on the significant difference between the scores of principals and students on the extent principals'

transactional leadership style influence students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State. The result showed that there is no significant difference between the scores of principals and students on the extent principals' transactional leadership style influence students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State with a z-calculated value of 0.912 which was less than the z-critical value of  $\pm 1.96$  at 0.05 level of significance, with a degree of freedom of 671. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis is rejected and the null hypotheses accepted. Therefore, it is concluded that there is no significant difference between the scores of principals and students on the extent principals' transactional leadership style influence students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State.

In line with the result above, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) assert that transactional leaders are not concerned with peoples' personal growth and prefer a principle which is about maintaining the existing situation. Thus, it generates clearly the defined roles. This implies that individuals know what they are required to do and what they will be rewarded for task completion. Therefore, it also engages leaders to offer a great deal of supervision and direction.

Also, Castillo and Cano (2004) who ascertained effects of transactional leadership style on students' commitment in primary schools revealed that transactional leadership style was one of the most appropriate styles as it allowed the head teachers and other school leaders to realize the need of teachers within their schools and reward them to satisfy those needs in exchange of certain level of commitment. However, on the contrary Ajayi, et al (2001), revealed that transactional leadership may lead to poor performance among teachers. The two argue that in circumstances where head teachers make it a priority that performance must always be associated with a reward, the withdrawal or delay of the reward will lead to a deteriorated performance hence must be done with care and limit.

### **Extent principals' transformational leadership style influences students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State**

With respect to the extent to which principals' transformational leadership style influences students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State, the result on Table 2 above showed that, principals' transformational leadership style influences students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State. The result showed that to a high extent, principals' transformational leadership style influences students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State. This showed that transformational leadership as the exchange amongst leader and followers stimulates the concern of followers, inspire followers (students) to look beyond their own interest to what best benefits the institution and influence teachers towards achievement of the teaching and learning outcomes. This style of leadership instigates his followers purely on strength of charisma, appealing to the employee's emotional needs, motivating followers intellectually to enhance their dedication and organizational benefits (Baloch, Ali, & Zaman (2010).

In the same vein, Astin, et al (2001), affirmed that transformational leadership provides an appropriate and supportive environment in which individual differences and needs are considered

thus creates room for better performance. This implies that principals have to be sensitive to the needs of teachers in order to encourage increase commitment and performance. For the teachers to be proactive, the principal have to be emotionally intelligent, energetic and passionate. A study done by Barbuto (2005), on the school leadership and student achievement, it was found that transformation leadership led to enhanced corporation among students as well as the teachers. Finally, the corresponding result for hypothesis on the Table 4 above showed that there is no significant difference between the scores of principals and students on the extent principals' transformational leadership style influence students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State with a z-calculated value of 1.11 which was less than the z-critical value of  $\pm 1.96$  at 0.05 level of significance, with a degree of freedom of 671. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis is rejected and the null hypotheses accepted. Therefore, it is concluded that there is no significant difference between the scores of principals and students on the extent principals' transformational leadership style influence students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State.

In support of the findings of this study, Tareq (2016) who studied the Impact of Transformational Leadership Style on Organizational Performance: Evidence from Jordan. The results indicate that while transformational leadership and three of its components—inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration—did contribute to 81.6 percent of the variance in organizational performance; idealized influence was not a significant factor contributing to this outcome. Leaders may need to focus on these elements of transformational leadership to improve outcomes for organizational performance.

Tareq Ghaleb Abu Orabi (2016). Transformational leadership has garnered considerable attention in the literature because of its potential implications for the performance of the organization. Research indicates that this type of leadership can collectively impact employee behavior and commitment leading to improvements in the work climate and knowledge sharing.

### **Conclusion**

From the results obtained from the findings of the study, it was concluded that there was no significant difference between the scores of principals and students on the extent principals' autocratic leadership style influence students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State. The study concluded that there is no significant difference between the scores of principals and students on the extent principals' transactional leadership style influence students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State. The finally concluded that there is no significant difference between the scores of principals and students on the extent principals' transformational leadership style influence students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State.

### **Recommendations**

It is recommended that:

School principals should imbibe a mixture of autocratic and participatory styles of leadership in order to enhance better students' academic performance.

1. School principals should adopt a mixture of leadership styles of leadership in their school leadership in order to enhance better academic performance of students. They should be autocratic in certain situations, participatory in some and laissez-faire when circumstances demand so.
2. The Rivers State Ministry of Education should organize regular inspection of schools to monitor the leadership style used by principals that could enhance better performance among students. This is necessary in order to achieve the objectives of Public Senior Secondary education as entrenched in the National Policy on Education.
3. It is also recommended that the authorities responsible for making educational policies and design to provide training and development programmes to head of schools to serve as reference policy decision on leadership.

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