Influence of Leadership and Teamwork on Students’ Academic Achievement in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Obio/Akpor, Rivers State

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ABSTRACT
The study investigated the Influence of Leadership and Teamwork on Students’ Academic Achievement in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Obio/Akpor, Rivers State. An analytic descriptive survey design was adopted. Two research questions corresponding with two hypotheses were postulated. The population consisted of 1,364 (20 principals and 1,344 teachers) in public senior secondary schools in Obio/Akpor, Rivers State. The sample size for the study consisted of 382 (20 principals and 362 teachers), balloting 28% of the population size. The census and stratified sampling technique was used. A researcher-designed structured questionnaire titled “Leadership Teamwork - Student Academic Achievement Questionnaire (LT-SAPQ)” was used for data collection. A validated instrument of 4-point rating scales was adopted. A test-retest method of reliability was adopted in this study. The pre-test and post-test scores were correlated using Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation analysis and a reliability coefficient of 0.81 was obtained. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while the Z-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Findings showed that principals and teachers of public senior secondary schools in Obio/Akpor, Rivers State are in a consensus that leadership and teamwork influence students’ academic achievement to a “High Extent” whereas it was recommended that; management should be fully committed to actualize high students’ academic achievement by constantly emphasizing the well defined academic goals and objectives of the school; teamwork and co-operation within the school community, management, staff and students are highly recommended. It gives students opportunities to work on their academic efficiencies in an environment void of strife. The harmony in the work environment produces the desire to perform maximally and teachers/staff motivation should be made plays vital role to focus on students’ educational need. Motivated teachers can perform better than non-motivated ones. Students learning capability often vary from one student to another. As part of the continuous improvement, students’ performance must be consistently measured and satisfied. Therefore, education institutions should establish a reliable and fast customer feedback system.

Keywords: Influence, Leadership, Teamwork and Academic Achievement.

INTRODUCTION
Secondary school performance and students achievement particularly among the public sector in Rivers State over the years has not been encouraging because of leadership styles deficiency in teamwork from political, apex board in the ministry of education couple with mineral or inadequate funds and poor implementation in the education sector. The principles of good education are found to align with academic performance of students, and as Osokoya (2012) argued, leadership and teamwork is built on a foundation of integrity and trust; also its key components enhance academic performance of students (Onuka and Adeyemi, 2013). Leadership and teamwork fosters openness, fairness and sincerity and thus
allows full involvement of everyone in school and other administrations. Osokoya (2012) further emphasised that leadership and teamwork is a key to unlocking the ultimate potential of all those involved in its proper implementation. These two key elements in the senior secondary section require everyone to work individually, collectively, within and without the school system (Akaranta, 2014). Leadership and teamwork provide more continuous improvements in different processes and operations in the school system. Traditional management approaches, entail that each department needs to take care of its own affairs and problems (Ho, 2011) that will on the long run enhance the whole school system. In education, it is believed that group or peer learning is more likely to enhance creative learning and academic performance of students than working in isolation (Education Corner, 2017). In the classroom setting team learning, they feel more comfortable sharing and finding solutions to problems related to their course of study. Leaders in team learning also help develop mutual trust among team members including the students. Thus, to build an effective academic culture, leadership, teamwork and cooperation should be extended throughout the school. One of the most prominent features of leadership and teamwork concern the restructuring of the school into semi-autonomous or self-directed work teams that communicate laterally while remaining connected to internal and external stakeholders (Lycke, 2003).

School management ensures that the leaders responsible for the quality of the operation of the school; traditionally, teachers were blamed for the problems in the institution. But it is observed that majority of quality problems are caused by management and not the teachers and students. According to Reid and Sanders (2007), 85% of quality problems are due to system problems caused by failed leadership in teamwork, whereas only 15% of the problems can be attributed to the low performance of teachers and students deficiency. Leaders must provide clear standards for work, methods to achieve them, and stress free working environment to the teachers’ even security wise and lead the team effectively through clear vision, goals, measurable objectives and assessment techniques.

Amaewhule, Abraham and Asodike (2017) gave teachers the status of managers of the students. So the teachers must play the role of leaders, teachers are the leaders of total human beings dealing with the most significant processes of human life: socialization, learning, developing personalities, and coping with the challenges of the changing world. As leaders, teachers must give a fair and respectable treatment to their students, providing them a comfortable and enjoyable environment where their abilities and competencies can be realized. They should stimulate the students to cooperate with each other as a team (Onuma, 2015). Moreover, teachers should also institute leadership among the students. Essential to school performances is strong instructional leadership by the principal. The pivotal, causative feature of virtually every effective school is a principal with vision, energy, and a dedication to leading the staff and learners toward better school attitudes and higher performance levels.

Leadership

In his definition of supportive leadership, Olaleye (2013) recognized that quality school management will not just happen by accident. It is a managed process which involves people, systems and supporting tools and techniques. Lawler (2000) buttressed this point by saying that top management support is necessary to ensure that the right priorities are set and that commitment to the principles of quality management exists throughout the school. The reason for this is because leadership is a culture laid which tries to change the values of the institution with its teachers and the behaviour of students in different ways. Without dedication from top management, the chances of effective applications of the concept throughout the school are weak, and the necessary change to management and work attitudes would be difficult to achieve.

According to Olaleye (2013), although everyone in the organization (school) is involved in the final product or service to the customer (students), the route to achieving that involvement is through management in appropriate leadership style(s). Leadership plays a significant role in establishing and sustaining quality in any institution. One of the cardinal roles of management in sustaining students’ academic achievement as has been stated earlier is the creation of constancy of purpose. As Ho (2011) reiterated, there must be a full commitment by management to actualize quality goals and used the phrase ‘intelligent singleness of purpose’ to give a clearer meaning to the principle of constancy of purpose. And,
it is only when there is a supportive leadership in place that these can be actualized. It is important to note that supportive leadership results in constancy of purpose in optimum students’ academic achievement. It is easy to motivate teachers and students toward purpose improvement when there is a clear purpose statement of vision of the institution - what it is and where it is going - and a set of principles and values which define its relationship with its customers, suppliers and employee. When there is constancy of purpose in an institution, teachers are encouraged to willingly exert all their knowledge, skills and abilities towards the attainment of well-articulated corporate goals (students’ academic achievement). Osokoya and Nwazota (2013) opined that constancy of purpose requires patience and commitment to actualize quality goals which the students most imbibe and singleness of purpose is actualized when there is a supportive leadership in place.

**Teamwork**

Onuka and Durowoju (2012) defined teamwork as that which allows one’s employee to be compensated with his or her strengths for another employee’s weakness. In other words, teamwork enables school members to view work as a corporate enterprise that requires collaboration and co-operation. That explains the close-fit between individuals, units and departments in the school system. Teamwork requires trust and boundary-less cooperation. This kind of expression of trust in the school creates harmony which increases outputs or productivity (students’ academic achievement). Dean and Bowen (1994) viewed teamwork as collaboration between academic, administrative and students, between functions, duties or responsibilities, and between customers and suppliers. It includes identifying the needs of all groups, with solutions which will be beneficial with shared responsibilities and credits. This can be achieved by forming teams (cross-functional problem solving teams) which brings together various units within the institution. Role clarification and feedback are important features of teamwork; Onuka and Durowoju (2012) stated that successful teams will have the attributes of clear objectives and agreed goals in the educational policy (FRN, 2014), openness, support and trust. Three types of teamwork practice as identified by Dean and Bowen (1994) are:

i. Those based on the assumption that non-managerial teachers can make reasonable improvement or contributions to the organization when they have the power and necessary operations.
ii. Those functions based on the notion that institutions are system focused.
iii. Those with customers (students) and suppliers (government) based on perceived benefits of partnership.

**Academic Achievement**

Academic achievement can best be appreciated when discussed in relation to such phenomena as academic failure, under achievement and poor academic performance. Academic failure according to Olowuo and Asodike (2016) referred to the performance that falls below a specified standard. In a similar vein, Education Corner (2017) described under-achievement as that which occurs when a student’s grade or test scores are markedly below measured or demonstrated aptitude for academic achievement. An under-achiever is therefore one that falls short of his measured Intelligence Quotient. This is similar to a poor academic performer as this also describes one who falls below a desired academic standard Education Corner (2017).

**Statement of the Problem**

School administrators are expected to be efficient and effective in order to achieve pre-determined students’ educational objectives, but this becomes an illusion where good leadership and teamwork are insufficient. Inadequate provision of funds, learning materials, qualified teachers, basic infrastructure such as school buildings, sporting equipment, electricity, sick bay and good source of drinking water in secondary schools, contribute to poor teaching-learning conditions, poor performance of learners and ineffective management (leadership and teamwork) of secondary schools. Although prior studies such as Alabi (1999), Momani (2007) and Sharayri (2009) cited in Aigbomian (2012) claimed that the existence of a relationship between school leadership and teamwork in schools have cost effective learning on the part of the students as an old say reads, when two elephants (ill-leadership and ill-teamwork) fight the grasses (the students) suffer.
Based on the above, this study has contributed to the process of solving the problem by examining the influence of indifferent leadership and lack of teamwork in public senior secondary school on students’ academic achievement in Obio/Akpor, Rivers State.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to determine the influence of leadership and teamwork on students’ academic achievement in public senior secondary school in Obio/Akpor, Rivers State. Specifically, the objectives of the study are to:

1. Find out the extent influence of leadership on the academic achievement of students in public senior secondary schools in Obio/Akpor, Rivers State.
2. Determine the extent influence of teamwork on the academic achievement of students in public senior secondary schools in Obio/Akpor, Rivers State.

**Research Questions**

This study provided answers to the following research questions:

1. To what extent does leadership influence the academic achievement of students of public senior secondary schools in Obio/Akpor, Rivers State?
2. To what extent does teamwork influence the academic achievement of students of public senior secondary schools in Obio/Akpor, Rivers State?

**Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study and were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. Principals and teachers of public senior secondary schools in Obio/Akpor, Rivers State do not significantly differ in their mean rating of the influence of leadership on the academic achievement of students.
2. Principals and teachers of public senior secondary schools in Obio/Akpor, Rivers State do not significantly differ in their mean rating of the influence of teamwork on the academic achievement of students.

**METHODOLOGY**

This study adopted an analytic descriptive survey design. The population consisted of 1,364 (20 principals and 1,344 teachers) in public senior secondary schools in Obio/Akpor, Rivers State. Source: Rivers State Senior Secondary Schools Board, 2019). The sample size for the study consisted of 382 (20 principals and 362 teachers), balloting 28% of the sample size. The census and stratified sampling technique was used. A researcher-designed structured questionnaire titled “Leadership Teamwork - Student Academic Achievement Questionnaire (LT-SAPQ)” was used for data collection. A validated instrument of 4-point rating scales was adopted.

A test-retest method of reliability was adopted in this study. The pre-test and post-test scores were correlated using Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation analysis and a reliability coefficient of 0.81 was obtained which indicated that the instrument was reliable enough to carry out the study. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while the Z-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.
**Research Question 1:** To what extent does leadership influence the academic achievement of students of public senior secondary schools in Obio/Akpor, Rivers State?

Table 1: Descriptive analysis of data on the influence of leadership on academic achievement of students of public senior secondary schools in Obio/Akpor, Rivers State (N = 382).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/No.</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Principals ( \bar{X}_1 )</th>
<th>SD ( \sigma_1 )</th>
<th>Decision</th>
<th>Teachers ( \bar{X}_2 )</th>
<th>SD ( \sigma_2 )</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Staff members are trusted and encouraged to carry out their duties with optimum supervision/minimal external interference.</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>HE</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Members of staff contribute to the development of work schedule; academic achievement of students will be enhanced.</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>The school administration holds staff and students in high esteem and accord them due respect. When there is a high degree of trust among management and staff, service quality and students' academic performance improve.</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>HE</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>HE</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>HE</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Table 1: the principals and teachers have respectively total means of 3.28 and 3.19, and standard deviations of 0.84 and 0.76 on their rating of the extent of influence of leadership on academic achievement of students of public senior secondary schools in Obio/Akpor, Rivers State. Both the principals and teachers have very low standard deviations indicating close cluster of the scores about the mean, and total means that lie between 2.5 – 3.5 implying high extent influence of leadership on academic achievement of students of public senior secondary schools in Obio/Akpor, Rivers State. This implies that leadership influences the academic achievement of students of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State to a high extent.

**Research Question 2:** To what extent does teamwork influence the academic achievement of students of public senior secondary schools in Obio/Akpor, Rivers State?

Table 2: Descriptive analysis of data on the influence of teamwork on academic achievement of students of public senior secondary schools in Obio/Akpor, Rivers State (N = 382).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/No.</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Principals ( \bar{X}_1 )</th>
<th>SD ( \sigma_1 )</th>
<th>Decision</th>
<th>Teachers ( \bar{X}_2 )</th>
<th>SD ( \sigma_2 )</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Teamwork and interdepartmental cooperation are the hallmarks of staff relationships in the school and enhanced students’ performance.</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>HE</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Workers within the same department are strongly bonded and work harmoniously for improved service delivery and students’ academic performance.</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>HE</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Teachers encourage students to undertake assignments in groups.</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>HE</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>When teachers and students see themselves as part of the same community, their performances look up.</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>HE</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>HE</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The information in Table 2 presents that principals have a total mean of 3.29, and standard deviation of 0.85, while teachers have total mean of 3.24 and standard deviation of 0.70 on their rating of the extent of
influence of teamwork on academic achievement of students of public senior secondary schools in Obio/Akpor, Rivers State. Both the principals and teachers have very low standard deviations indicating close cluster of the scores about the mean, and total means that lie between 2.5–3.5 implying high extent of teamwork on academic achievement of students of public senior secondary schools in Obio/Akpor, Rivers State. Thus, teamwork influences to a high extent, the academic achievement of students of public senior secondary schools in Obio/Akpor, Rivers State.

Hypothesis 1: The principals and teachers of public senior secondary schools in Obio/Akpor, Rivers State do not significantly differ in their mean rating of the influence of leadership on the academic achievement of students.

Table 3: Z-test analysis of the influence of leadership on academic achievement of students of public senior secondary schools in Obio/Akpor, Rivers State.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>S²</th>
<th>Z_cal</th>
<th>α</th>
<th>Z_crit</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principals</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>Retain H₀: Z_cal &lt; Z_crit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>362</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The information in Table 3: presents that 20 principals and 268 teachers respectively have mean rating of 3.28 and 3.21; standard deviations of 0.82 and 0.76; and variances of 0.67 and 0.58 on the influence of leadership on the academic achievement of students of public senior secondary schools in Obio/Akpor, Rivers State. The calculated z-value is 1.02, chosen alpha is 0.05 for a two-tailed test, and the critical z-value is 1.96. Since the calculated z-value (1.02) is less than the critical z-value (1.96), the hypothesis of “no significant difference in the mean rating of principals and teachers on the influence of leadership on the academic achievement of students of public senior secondary schools in Obio/Akpor, Rivers State” is retained. Thus, principals and teachers of public senior secondary schools in Obio/Akpor, Rivers State are in a consensus that leadership influences students’ academic achievement to a “High Extent”.

Hypothesis 2: The principals and teachers of public senior secondary schools in Obio/Akpor, Rivers State do not significantly differ in their mean rating of the influence of teamwork on the academic achievement of students.

Table 4: Z-test analysis of the influence of teamwork on academic achievement of students of public senior secondary schools in Obio/Akpor, Rivers State.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>S²</th>
<th>Z_cal</th>
<th>α</th>
<th>Z_crit</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principals</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>Retain H₀: Z_cal &lt; Z_crit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>362</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The calculated z-value is 1.14, chosen alpha is 0.05 for a two-tailed test, and the critical z-value is 1.96. Since the calculated z-value (1.14) is less than the critical z-value (1.96), the hypothesis of “no significant difference in the mean rating of principals and teachers on the influence of teamwork on the academic achievement of students of public senior secondary schools in Obio/Akpor, Rivers State” is not rejected. In other words, principals and teachers of public senior secondary schools in Obio/Akpor, Rivers State agrees that training influences students’ academic achievement to a “High Extent”.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Result in research question 1 shows that leadership influences students’ academic achievement to a high extent. The study supports Ameawhule et al. (2017) findings that leadership is important in keeping the school headed in the right direction. He also stated that the pivotal, causative feature of virtually every effective school head is a principal with vision, energy, and a dedication to leading the
staff and learners towards better school attitudes and higher performance levels of the students. Because leadership plays a significant role in establishing and sustaining the school system; Agada (2007) portrayed that top management support is necessary to ensure that the right priorities are set and that commitment all staff for maximum students’ academic achievement. The result in research question 2 shows that principals and teachers of public secondary schools in Obio/Akpor, Rivers State is in harmony that teamwork influences students’ academic achievement to a high extent. The result is in line with the statement of Akaranta (2014) that teamwork required trust and boundary-less cooperation. He stated further that this kind of expression of trust in the school system creates harmony which increases outputs or productivity. The result of the analysis also supports the view of Olaleye (2013) that successful teams have the attributes of clear objectives, agreed goals, openness, support and trust in the school.

CONCLUSION
Students will perform high when management constantly emphasizes the well defined goals and objectives of the school, with the belief that such goals and objectives will be achieved. Furthermore, as hard working staffs are rewarded, the environment becomes enabling for high academic productivity which successes come with a corresponding leadership support.

Furthermore, the analyzed data established that students’ academic performance is greatly dependent on the level of teamwork and cooperation among staff members both within and across department. When staff members are strongly bonded and work together harmoniously, teachers encourage students to undertake practical assignments in teams or groups and both teachers and students see themselves as part of the same community, team strength rather than individual weaknesses are emphasized. For the students, such teams provide opportunities for working on their deficiencies, and that kind of expression of trust creates harmony which increases academic output.

RECOMMENDATIONS
Based on the findings, the following were recommended;
1.) Management should be fully committed to actualize high students’ academic achievement by constantly emphasizing the well defined academic goals and objectives of the school.
2.) Teamwork and co-operation within the school community, management, staff and students are highly recommended. It gives students opportunities to work on their academic efficiencies in an environment void of strife. The harmony in the work environment produces the desire to perform maximally.
3.) Teachers/staff motivation should be made plays vital role to focus on students’ educational need. Motivated teachers can perform better than non-motivated ones. Students learning capability often vary from one student to another. As part of the continuous improvement, students’ performance must be consistently measured and satisfied. Therefore, education institutions should establish a reliable and fast customer feedback system.

REFERENCES