

LEADING PREDICTOR OF SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS IN NIGER STATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS, NIGERIA

Garba Bagobiri¹, Abubakar Yusuf², Isah Saidu PhD³

^{1,2,3} School of Education, Niger State College of Education, Minna

Email: abubakaryusufdch@gmail.com

Abstract

In educational leadership, management skill, personal skill, social skills and characteristics were classified amongst the leadership attributes determining the effectiveness of secondary schools. Despite their important in the discipline, there was less substantial study regarding to these predictors in Niger state secondary schools. The study is aimed at finding out the leading predictor of school effectiveness among the variables of leadership attributes in the context of Nigeria. Therefore, researcher investigated how the teachers (senior and assistant senior masters) perceived the most predicting variable among the predictors (management skills, personal skills, social skills and characteristics) of school effectiveness in Niger state senior secondary schools, Nigeria. Sample of 272 respondents from the teachers (senior and assistant senior masters), was selected randomly from the total population of 460 in the senior secondary schools of Niger state. A questionnaire was developed by the researcher from the exiting developed instruments; such instruments are School Effectiveness Index (SEI) and Leader. Attributes Inventory (LAI). School Effectiveness Index (SEI) was used to measured school effectiveness while Leader Attributes Inventory (LAI) was used to measure the dimensions of leadership attributes (Predictors of school effectiveness). The analysis of the data revealed that social skills and characteristics is the leading predictor among the predictors of school effectiveness in Niger state secondary schools with ($\beta = .340$, $P = .000$). Therefore, in other to improve on the other predictors (personal skills and management skills) in Niger state secondary schools; it is necessary to develop a standard, organized and sensible package for refining their predicting effects by looking at the items that were measured in the questionnaire, thus may eventually improve the level of school of effectiveness in Niger state secondary schools.

Keywords: Management skills, Personal characteristics, social skills and characteristics, and School effectiveness and Niger state secondary school.

Introduction:

School effectiveness is an acquainted and essential concept in the research of educational leadership, its researches have been concise as a study that focused on resources inputs and quality products in

respect to students which is refers to as outputs (Griffith, 1998). Study in this discipline has mainly concerted on impact of leadership on the effectiveness of schools at all level of educational studies (Tatlah & Iqbal, 2012). The main concerns of school

effectiveness study are the quantity and quality of the outputs regarding to the students. Majority of the global understanding of the school effectiveness is about improving the positions of the school (Scheerens, 2004).

Secondary education is one of the basic aspects of Nigerian education system, it connects the primary and higher institution, it should be strategized in such a way that; is been taking care by well equip leaders possessing the desirable leadership skills, knowledge and characteristics (Leigba, 2000).

Despite the important of secondary education in Nigeria, principals experiences a clear challenges in carrying out the administrative activities to meet up with the mandate of the students academics performance based on the inadequate leadership skills as well as the attributes (Adeyemi, 2010). Majority of secondary schools principals in Nigeria are in the deficient of leadership attributes thus account for the lot of challenges which might resulted to the poor students' academic achievements and thus; serves as one of the dimension of the school effectiveness (Ajayi, Ekundayo, & Osalusi, 2010).

There is a global perception among the educationalists in educational leadership that strong educational leadership is amongst the determinant factor of school effectiveness; it is generally believed that strong principals' leadership leads to the success of secondary school. Researches worldwide indicated that, principals' leadership influences pupil's academic achievement in the schools (Lazaridou & Iordanides, 2011; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006). Studies reveals that the most effective principals is inclined with certain leadership traits that serve as determinants

of school effectiveness (Scheerens, 2004). These features are distinguishing of the cultural background in schools where teachers expresses their respect to their respective principals who are assumed to have strong skills and characteristics of leadership (Zhang, 1994). Leadership plays an indispensable function in the effectiveness of an education environment, right from the goals setting, to its accomplishment. Numerous studies have related the effectiveness of school with the leadership, in the absence of leadership, realization of school and student achievement might be back up with failure (Sharma, 2011).

Literature Review

School effectiveness is all about the institutional culture and structure with the aim of conveying the manners in which plans, policies and practices are in line with the aim of improving the overall school objectives as well as the effectiveness of the teacher within the context of classroom (Hargreaves, 2001). It involves the general achievement of the students in the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of learning (Bolanle, 2013; Ekundayo, 2010). School effectiveness has been viewed as the complete student outcomes without a significant gaps in that very attainment of goals across the major groups of the overall students. School effectiveness is designated on the optimal level of student's expectation, quality leadership and teaching, conducive school setting and in conclusion with the recurrent monitoring of student goals accomplishment (Lezotte & Snyder, 2011). The expectation to confirm on the secondary school's effectiveness in most of the developing and underdeveloped countries today is control by the Leadership Attributes of schools principals, which involved the three dimensions of leadership

attributes namely; management skills, personal skills and social skills and characteristics. The findings of the existing secondary schools empirical facts with the adequate exploration on the supportive literature on the Leadership and success of the schools in Nigeria, explored that principals' leadership attributes contributed to large extent towards the effectiveness of schools (Garba, Asimiran, & Basri, 2013).

Leadership in the Educational context, has been detected among the variable predicting the effectiveness of school (Kythreotis, Pashiardis, & Kyriakides, 2010). Success in the secondary schools is determined by the leadership attributes of the principals being the educational leader of their respective secondary schools. Attributes, skills and knowledge in leadership of the school principals, it ensures the facilitation of the use of the educational resources in the secondary schools, thus enhance the realizations of anticipated schools objectives (Piaw, Hee, Ismail, & Ying, 2014). School principals involved in supervisions of all the activities involved in the smooth movement of the schools towards the effectiveness of the schools. Knowledge, Skill and characteristics in leadership are needed to be infused in the leadership developmental training. This is because; they are among the common factors that assist the leaders to overcome the demands of a particular task being bestowed. Henceforth, ensure the effective achievement of the schools goals and objectives (Russell & Gregory Stone, 2002).

Educational policies and reforms in developed countries have concentrated on the importance of the leadership tasks, attributes and skills of the principal for the schools to prosper to the yearning

expectation of the nations (Sergiovanni, 1994). Despite the existing facts, very little or no study have been done on the attributes, skills and knowledge possessed by the principals being the secondary schools' leaders in Nigeria and how it relates with the secondary school's effectiveness. Leadership attributes is more holistic than leadership skills and styles as it comprises of both the leadership skills, styles and characteristics (as cited in Moss and Liang, 1990).

However, this paper shall focus on the leadership attributes in relationship to the effectiveness of secondary schools in Niger State. The initial notable research regarding to the trait theories was carried out in 1930 and 1950 respectively (Bono & Judge, 2004). At that time, researchers assumed that leaders needed to have special traits for effective leadership, Stogdill and Mann were among the earliest scholars that made publications on trait theorists in 1948 and 1959 (Northouse, 2012).

This paper employed trait theory to provide a theoretical foundation for the predictors of school effectiveness in Niger state secondary schools (management skills, personal characteristics, social skills and characteristics). Leadership attributes considers the trait theory as the most vital theory to be used in the study among the available theories explained in the literature. According to the trait theory, the leaders are individual who possesses certain attributes, act in way, or both. Some of the initial research on leadership, tried to identify certain characteristics or attributes makes leaders to be different from the subordinates members (Northouse, 2012). Early on leadership research, theorists believed that leaders possessed specific characteristics called traits (Jensrud, 1995).

These traits were thought to be stable properties that individuals either possessed or did not possess at birth. Those who had these traits were considered as leaders. Moss and Liang (1991) developed a model called Leader Attributes Factor (LAF); the model expatiated on the traits and characteristics needed by a leader. Such traits and characteristics are management skills, personal characteristics and social skills and characteristics. In this study, these dimensions of leadership attributes are referred to as the predictors of school effectiveness. Researcher also uses this model of 'Leader Attribute Factors' being that, it captured all the predictors of school effectiveness used in this study. It was revealed that, such predictors enhance the school principals to be competent through modifying their behaviors towards the effectiveness of the secondary schools. This is because; principals are regarded as the leaders of their respective secondary schools (Bell, Bolam, & Cubillo, 2003). This model considers the situation of school leadership has never been easier to handle without effective leadership attributes.

In this paper, school effectiveness is also supported with general model of school effectiveness to explain the school effectiveness. The model developed by Judith Ferguson and Hoy k. Wayne (1985); it was developed after examination of the two-competing framework of the organizational effectiveness. The multidimensional perspective was extensively studied with data obtained from the schools (Hoy & Ferguson, 1985). Finally the model rooted it's based from Mott's point of view on how organizational effectiveness is measured (Cyntheia, 1998).schools (Hoy & Ferguson, 1985). Finally the model rooted it's based from Mott's point of view on how organizational effectiveness is measured (Cyntheia, 1998).

He argued that, effective organization are the ones which produce high excellence output and respond to the external and internal challenges more effectively (Scheerens, Bosker, & Creemers, 2001).

Approach of analyzing the effectiveness of an organization been established above was reconnoitered with the data from schools. A number of school settings have been sought, nonetheless it remained important to certify the required data for all indicators of the school effectiveness model (Scheerens et al., 2001). Effectiveness of schools was determined by Index of Perceived Organizational effectiveness Index (IPOE). The IPOE is derivatives of Mott's Index of Organizational Effectiveness that was refined by Miskel and his associate to suit the school context (Reynolds, 2006). IPOE forms the basis for the School Effectiveness Index (SEI).

Methodology

In this paper, attempts have been made to expose usage and determine the leading predictor of Niger state senior secondary schools' effectiveness. This section dealt with the approaches and measurement used to achieve the research objective. The main focus in this section is on the approach, design as well as the instrumentation. Research design was correlational and survey method. Multiple regression analysis was used to determine the predicting effects of each of the variable (Ary, 2006). Multiple regression analysis was used to measure the extent of prediction of each of the predictor on the effectiveness of the Niger state secondary schools as perceived by the senior and assistant senior masters.

The location of this study is Niger state senior secondary schools, Nigeria. There are about four hundred and seventy-nine (479)

senior secondary schools in the state as at 2021/2022 academic session (Niger State Ministry of Education, 2022). Each school comprises of senior master and assistant senior master. The population of this study was achieved by multiplying the number of the senior secondary schools by two (senior master and assistance senior master of each of the school) '479×2' which consists of 958 senior masters and assistant senior masters, researcher viewed them as most experience among the teaching staff of the senior secondary schools. Therefore, the total population of this study is 958. This cadre of staff have been selected as 'respondent' based on the facts that each staff has more than 5years working experience; which the researcher perceived as an evidence to stand a better chance to give an account of the various predictors use in this study. In determining sample size, researchers have been cautioned and advised to use Cochran formula, especially in research that involved continuous data (Barlett, 2001).

Literatures show that, particularly in survey research there is possibility of encountering some issues in trying to get back the questionnaire been distributed (Bartlett, 2005). This permitted the researchers to add 30% for the percentage unreturned to overcome such issues.30% of the determined sample size shall be added.

Simple random sampling has been utilized by the researchers, based on the facts that, the methods warrant for the equal chance of selection of individual as sample from the given population(Browner, Newman, & Hulley, 2007). In determining the sample size from a given population, is by listing the entire number of the senior secondary schools received from the Niger state ministry of education. Researchers had written all the names of the senior secondary schools in a separate paper, each

paper was folded separately and placed inside a big tin. Researcher dispenses all the papers in big tray and randomly selected about 136 schools, therefore the sample size was obtained by multiplying the number of the selected school by two ($136 \times 2 = 272$). Researcher used 272 as the main sample size; in which the populations of the study were given equal chance of being selected (Browner & etals, 2007).

The instrument used in this study is questionnaire with 5 likert kind of scale, ranging from the lower scale to higher scale (strongly disagree to strongly agree). The questionnaire comprises of three sections; demographic, predictors and school effectiveness. Leader Attributes Inventory (LAI) by Moss, Judith and Liang, (1991) was used to measure the three predictors of school effectiveness (dimensions of leadership attributes). The instrument consists of 47 items, 9 items measured the Management skills, 20 items measured the personal characteristics and, 18 items measured the social skills and characteristics (Moss & Liang, 1990). The instrument is valid and reliable for the study with Cronbach alpha value of (.80 and .94) respectively during the pilot and the final study.

School effectiveness was measured by instrument called School Effectiveness Index (SEI); it was developed by Hoy, (1985), with eight items measuring the degree in which school can be called an effective institution by its ability. The instrument provides a comprehensive, subjective decision about the general effectiveness of a school in accordance with the five dimensions: product's quality and quantity, efficiency, flexibility and adaptability. It was rooted back from the perceived measure of organizational effectiveness by Mott (1972). Initially Mott

scale was modified and put into schools uses by Miskel and his colleagues (1979) and it was said to be a valid and reliable measure of school effectiveness and it has been refined over several times (Hoy, Tarter, & Kottkamp, 1991). Teachers served as the respondents by describing the operation and performance of their school ranging from the scale of 1-5, the greater the score, the higher the effectiveness of the school (DiPaola & Hoy, 2005). Instrument is said to be valid and reliable with Cronbach alpha value of (.77 and .86) respectively.

Researcher was given the permission to use and modified the instrument to suit the context of the study.

Interpretation and Discussion of the Result
To determine the most predicting variable of school effectiveness among the predictors, multiple regression analysis was conducted. The result of the analysis generated three tables namely: ANOVA table, Model summary and Coefficient table. Below is the details explanation of each table.

Table 1: ANOVA Table of the Multiple Regressions

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	86.450	3	28.817	85.673	.000 ^b
Residual	82.408	245	.336		
Total	168.858	248			

a. Dependent Variable: TOT-SE

b. Predictors: (Constant), Management skills, Personal characteristics, social skills & characteristics.

The ANOVA table in the multiple regression analysis is interpreted by the significant 'F'; if the significant is less than the alpha value (.05), thus indicated that the regression models fit the data. Multiple regression analysis involves the three predictors namely; Management skills, Personal

characteristics, social skills & characteristics while the dependent variable is school effectiveness. The result showed that, significant F is (3, 245) = 85.673, $P = .000$. This stand as an evidence that regression model fits the data.

Table 2: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.716 ^a	.512	.506	.57996

a. Predictor: (Constant), Management skills, Personal characteristics, social skills & characteristics

b. Dependent Variable: School effectiveness

Result developed through the multiple regression analysis in table 2, indicated the value of R square and Adjusted R square (.512 and .506) respectively. This indicated that, about 51% of variance in school

effectiveness is explained by the Management skills, personal characteristics and social skills and characteristics. R is explaining the direction and the magnitude of the relationship. R is equal to .716, this

indicated that, there is high relationship between the predicting variables and the school effectiveness.

Table 3: Coefficient

<i>Model</i>	<i>Unstandardized Coefficients</i>		<i>Standardized Coefficients</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
	<i>B</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>	<i>Beta (β)</i>		
(Constant)	.470	.199		2.366	.019
Management skills	.356	.085	.332	4.188	.001
Personal characteristics	.105	.098	.088	1.071	.285
Social skills & characteristics	.394	.113	.340	3.483	.000
Note: R² = 0.512, adjusted R² = 0.506					

Management skills; Personal characteristics and social skills and characteristics were viewed as the predicting factors of school effectiveness in this study. Therefore, to determine the degree of the prediction of each of the variable, coefficient table in the multiple regressions explained the Beta value (β) and the significant-t. The prediction equation is express below:

$$\hat{Y} = b_0 + b_1\chi_1 + b_2\chi_2 + b_3\chi_3 + + e_i \dots\dots\dots (1)$$

$\hat{Y}$ = School Effectiveness;

χ_1 = Management Skills;

Table 3 of the multiple regression indicated that, management skills have positively significantly predicted school effectiveness ($\beta = .332$, $t = 4.188$, $p = .001$). Social skills and characteristics have significantly positively predicted school effectiveness ($\beta = .340$, $t = 3.483$, $p = .000$). However, personal characteristics have insignificantly predicted school effectiveness ($\beta = .088$, $t = 1.071$, $p = .285$) as perceived by the senior masters and assistant senior masters in Niger state secondary schools. Based on the analysis of the multiple regressions of

χ_2 = Personal Characteristics;

χ_3 = Social skills & Characteristics;

e = Random error.

The proposed hypothesis test examining the validity of the model, is expressed as follows:

$$H_0: Y = \beta_0 + e_i$$

$$H_A: Y = b_0 + b_1\chi_1 + b_2\chi_2 + b_3\chi_3 + e_i$$

management skills, personal characteristics, and social skills and characteristics; and school effectiveness model, the findings on the indicator explained the variance in school effectiveness has rejected the null hypothesis; that is 'Y' is not equal to zero. The regression equation for the school effectiveness model is as follows:

$$\hat{Y} = b_0 + b_1\chi_1 + b_2\chi_2 + b_3\chi_3 + e_i \dots\dots\dots (1)$$

$$\hat{Y} = 0.470 + (0.356)\chi_1 + (0.105)\chi_2 + (0.394)\chi_3 + \text{Error}$$

Based on the perception of the senior and assistant senior masters in Niger state secondary schools, multiple regression analysis indicated that, Management skills have significantly positively contributed to school effectiveness ($\beta = .332$, $t = 4.188$, $p = .001$). Social skills and characteristics have positively significantly predicted school effectiveness ($\beta = .340$, $t = 3.483$, $p = .000$). The equation also explained that, a unit increase in management skill; school effectiveness will increase by .332. However, Personal characteristics have insignificantly predicted school effectiveness ($\beta = .088$, $t = 1.071$, $p = .285$), due to the fact that, the significant value of personal characteristics is greater than the alpha (α) value (.05). The result also showed that, a unit increase in management skills; school effectiveness will increase by .332. A unit increase in personal characteristics; school effectiveness will increase by .088 and finally, a unit increase in social skills and characteristics; school effectiveness will increase by .340.

As a result of the provision of the leadership training and learning program by the Niger state government with the aim of improving the principals' leadership attributes, personal characteristics may significantly predict school effectiveness in the future. This finding collaborates with the study on the principals' organizational management and students' academic achievement in secondary schools in Ekiti state Nigeria by Olaleye, (2013). One of his research questions is 'What are the principals' management skills that influenced academic achievement of the students? The outcomes of the result indicated that, the respondents have over 70% agree that, management skills contributed to the students' achievement.

The finding also collaborates Papa & etals, (2002) explain that, result of the empirical findings from global perspectives based on the school effectiveness study have discovered the influence of leadership attributes in ensuring the success of schools. The influence of principals' leadership management skills are realistic, it is empirically supported that, the overall perception among scholars, principals' leadership contribute student academic achievement (Olaleye, 2013). This stand as one of the attributes of school effectiveness and improvement(Griffith, 2003).

The literature revealed that, there is overall acceptance among educators that, principals' leadership attributes contributes to school effectiveness and student achievement (Ololube, 2005). It is proven that; most responsible individual that ensure the failure or accomplishment of the secondary school's goals and objectives is the principal leadership. Principal is expected to be the organizer of human learning in secondary school(David, Teddlie, & Reynolds, 2000). Among the literatures that support the contribution of principals' leadership attributes highlighted that, principals' leadership fashions and connects the compelling purpose and supports the school with a vision for transformation in order to improve school system for students (Omeke Faith & Onah Kenneth, 2012). They added that, an extensive development has been made over the past 15 years in perceiving that, principals' leadership is immensely contributing to school effectiveness.

Based on the previous experience of the researcher that, there were recurrent poor academic performance of the students within the state, which stand as one yardstick of school effectiveness and formed the basis for this research, this is also in line

with the views of some researchers, that majority of principals were unable to meet up with the challenges associated with the effectiveness of their respective schools in Nigeria (Arikewuyo, 2009 & Bolanle, 2013). This may be as a result of the insufficient disposition of such leadership skills and characteristics by the secondary schools heads (Papa et al., 2002).

Conclusions

This research investigated the leading predictor of school effectiveness in Niger state secondary schools based on the perception of senior and assistant senior masters. The genesis for the conduction of this study is as a result of minimal research attention towards the predicting factors of school effectiveness in the Northern part of Nigeria; specifically, in Niger state where the study been conducted. The study generated numerous imperative new discoveries towards the fillings in the conceptual and empirical gap between the dimensions of principals' leadership attributes (management skills, personal skills, social skills and characteristics) and school effectiveness within the Niger state secondary schools. Principals play a vigorous and imperative role in leading the schools, teaching and learning to ensure success in schools (Richardson, Lane, & Flanigan, 1996). However personal characteristics found to be insignificantly predicted school effectiveness as regards to the perception of the senior and assistant senior masters in the current study, therefore it is prerequisite to emanate a package with an extensive information of improving the personal characteristics systematically and continuously, this may improve the leadership attributes of the principals and thus; make them address issues regarding to the complicated roles of

improving the school effectiveness in the future

Recommendations for practice

Recommendations grounded from the outcomes of present research, accentuated that, principals' leadership attributes (management skills, personal characteristics, social skills and characteristics) are the key predictors of school effectiveness. To improve on the significant effect of other predictors that are not strong and insignificant, researchers suggested the followings:

1. Pre-service development program for aspiring principals: Niger state government should organize a short-term voluntary preparatory course of leadership for the employment test and those that were able to make it, should be permitted to gain entrance to a profession as a school principal; this serves as a means of having the basic knowledge on leadership attributes (Taipale, 2012).
2. Induction training programs for the novice principals: It is highly suggested that, Niger state government should organize training on school leadership for those that undergoes and passed the pre-service training carrier test among the aspiring principals. This is because many countries have been trying this and eventually bring about success in improving the leadership attributes of their school principals. This idea seems to be suitable based on the fact that it promotes students' achievement and eventually brings about high school effectiveness (LaPointe, 2006).
3. In-service training for serving principals: Niger state government should introduce a leadership

training program for the principals already into the mainstream of civil service with an incentive in the form of scholarship to support the miscellaneous and principals' voluntary professional development expenses (Bush & Jackson, 2002).

4. The training exercise could be done monthly, although some country's principals are permitted to partake in in-service training every year. All these efforts are done with aimed of refining and developing the leadership attributes of the principals (Taipale, 2012).
5. Certification: Additional certificate in educational leadership from the recognized institution of learning should be incorporated among the strategies for selecting school principals in Niger state, Nigeria. This will assist in possessing the basic knowledge necessary for school leadership activities (Arikewuyo, 2009). This may eventually improve the effectiveness of the senior secondary schools in Niger state.
6. Partnering with a Mentor Principal: Niger state government should create a program named "Partnering with a Mentor Principal." to create a more collegial relationship by sharing ideas between the experience and novice principals concerning issues on school leadership. This will contribute in enabling the experience principals to share their ideas with the novice principals and thereby improving the leadership attributes of school principals.

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