Perception of Teachers on Laissez faire Principals ` Leadership Styles in Secondary Schools in Sokoto State, Nigeria

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Abstract
The study aim at determined the perceptions of Teachers on laissez faire Leadership Style of Principals in Senior Secondary Schools in Sokoto State. The objective that guided the study was; to examine the extent to which senior secondary school teachers in Sokoto perceive Principals laissez faire leadership style, the study was basically based on descriptive survey design that employed quantitative method. The total number of population under study was 300. 169 questionnaires were administered to the respondents. The sampling techniques were Simple random sampling. Data was collected through questionnaires which were based on three likert scale, 1 for Undecided, 2 Disagree 3 Agree the researchers treated all the research questions one after another using descriptive statistic of a computer program called Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The data was once again presented in simple percentages and frequency. However, mean scores were used by the researchers to find out the extent of teachers' perception of the principals laissez faire leadership style, Based on the data collected, it was found that principals' laissez faire leadership style are made of principals making decisions regarding the school progress, school leadership is unified and School leadership does enjoy having teachers counting on it for suggestions and ideas. Overall, there is high teachers' perception of the laissez faire leadership style in Sokoto state (with overall mean of 2.96) (see table 7.1)

Keywords: Perception of Teachers and Laissez faire Leadership Style

Introduction
Globally, educating a nation remains the most vital strategy for the development of the society throughout the developing world (Aikaman & Unterhalter, 2005) [3]. Many studies on human capital development concur that it is the human resources of a nation and not its capital or natural resources that ultimately determine the pace of its economic and social development. The principal institutional mechanism for developing human capital is the formal education system of primary, secondary, and tertiary training (Nsubuga, 2003) [34]. In addition, the competitiveness, especially in high value added and knowledge based sectors of the economy, depends on knowledge, skills and competences associated with abstract reasoning, analysis, language and communication skills and application of science and technology which are most efficiently acquired through secondary education schooling (Lewin, 2001).

Kemp and Nathan (1989) identified three styles of leadership namely authoritarian, democratic or delegative, and or laissez-faire. According to Campbell, Bridges and Nystrand (1993) the authoritarian or autocratic leadership style is used when leaders tell their employees what they want done and how they want it accomplished, without getting the advice of their followers. This style results in the group members reacting aggressively and apathetically in the work environment. They further suggest that authoritarian style should normally only be used on rare occasions. This often results in unending industrial disputes in an organization hence affecting the achievement of the overall goals and objectives.

School administrators who build school capacity through an effective leadership style may influence student achievement through teachers (Christie, Thompson, & Whiteley, 2009) [9]. The school leader must have or be able to develop the capacity to work with staff to focus on curriculum, instruction and student learning gains (Fullen, 2001). The perception of the school administrator is often as a person who manages a school and not as a person who is an instructional leader. The leader's daily activities and decisions reflect the pervasive focus and style of the school's leadership (Noonan & Walker, 2008) [33].

A teacher-focused leader works toward the development of school capacity which builds upon positive teacher capacity with the end results increasing student achievement.

The outcome of a student's education as evidenced through test scores is often determined by the focus and effectiveness of a school's leadership (Leithwood, 2005 & 2008) [22]. The educational leader's role is to hire and motivate teachers to raise student learning gains (Hoy & Woolfolk, 1993, Janzi & Leithwood, 1996). Students reveal their ability to learn through their measured achievement, attendance, and participation in school activities. However, it is the students' perception of their teachers that sets the daily learning process in motion. Further, it is the teacher's perception of how they are valued and supported by their school's leadership that often has an influence on their daily decisions to motivate students (Bandura, 2003, Demir, 2008) [5, 6].

Mass education at secondary education level, however, may require new leadership approaches in order to enhance efficiency and effectiveness. Improved efficiency is needed and can be achieved through management reforms; raising the learner teacher ratio, increasing teachers' time on task, reducing repetition and improving accountability (Nsubuga, 2003) [34]. Through inefficiency much learning time is lost in many Sub-Saharan African (SSA) education systems. Twenty five percent or more of school days may be lost each year in poorly managed schools (Lewin, 2001).

The current global trends towards acquisition of quality education has created heated debate on the types of leadership styles which school principals, teachers and Boards of Management should adopt for effective implementation of curriculum to yield high quality educational output (Ibrahim & Orodho,2014). In Africa, Considering the importance of the principal's tasks, his/her leadership style is one of the major factors determining the school climate in his/her school. In other words, the principal is in the position to initiate and maintain the kind of atmosphere he/she wants through his/her behavior (Taylor, 2002). This accelerated quest for quality education has received top priority not only in most sub-Saharan African countries (Oketch & Ngware, 2012; Orodho, 2014).

In Nigeria, it is pertinent to note that some schools experience more conflicts than others, and this is attributed among other things to the principals' level of leadership effectiveness; discipline in school is the offspring of effective leadership, while indiscipline is caused by absence of commitment on the part of some principals (Adesina, 1990) [1]. Today, maintaining discipline in Nigerian secondary schools is putting the maturity of principals to the severest task. School rules are broken with impunity, and it has become the fashion of the day for pupils to take the laws into their own hands.

The problems of effective leadership style by school principals in Sokoto state is poor due to the increase in the number and size of many secondary schools, employment of more teachers, changes in school structure, and enlarged curriculum and politics, and also rapid expansion through the creation of junior and senior secondary schools lead to recruitment of more teachers as principals. Some of these principals may have less experience, as experienced principals are no longer available for some schools (Sokoto State Ministry of Education, 2014).

It is against this background that this study was prompted and delved into an examination of the teachers' perception of principals' leadership styles in Sokoto North Local government, because principals have responsibilities, accountabilities and obligations to be performed towards humanity in Sokoto state, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem
Principals are important personality in the governance and management of schools in the best interests of the institution and ensure development; promote quality education for all pupils in accordance with the standards set by the Act or any other law; Ensure and assure the provision of proper and adequate physical facilities for the school; determine causes of students indiscipline and make a report to the Education Board; facilitate and ensure the provision of guidance and counseling to all learners, encourage the learners, teachers and non-teaching staff and others, parents and community, and other stakeholders to render voluntary services to the institution, amongst others (Sokoto State Ministry of Education, 2012).

Sokoto North Local Government Education office, (2014) reported that some of the school principals (about 50%) have no experience of leadership, don't have the capacity to work with staff to focus on curriculum and are politically appointed, not qualified. These have raised the poor leadership style among the principals, which must be addressed to ensured quality teachers, remuneration and motivation of teachers, improving discipline and to reduced the number of youth participation in political thuggery.

Studies in relation to this area have been carried out but these studies do not address the problem in this particular location. Therefore the study is meant to address the problem in this particular area.

General objective
The main purpose of the study was to find out the teachers' perception of principal laissez faire leadership styles in secondary schools in Sokoto State, Nigeria

Objectives of the Study
1. To evaluate the extent to which secondary school teachers in perceive Principals laissez- faire leadership style.

Research Question
1. What is the extent to which secondary school teachers in Sokoto North Local Government perceive Principals laissez- faire leadership style?

Theoretical framework
This study was based on the Contingency theory as propounded by Tannenbaum and Schmidt in 1990. This approach sees leadership as specific to the situation in which it is being exercised. For example, whilst some situations may require an autocratic style, others may need a more participative approach. It also proposes that there may be differences in required leadership styles at different levels in the same organization suggesting the idea that leadership behavior varies along a continuum and that as one move away from the autocratic extreme the amount of subordinate participation and involvement in decision taking increases.

They also suggested that the kind of leadership represented by the democratic extreme of the continuum will be rarely encountered in formal organizations. Four main leadership styles can be located at points along such a continuum:
1. Laissez- Faire: In this style the leader allow fellows to have complete freedom to make decisions concerning

the completion of their work. It allows followers a high degree of autonomy and self-role, while at the same time offering guidance and support when requested (the Laissez- style).

Concept of laissez faire leader
Laissez- Faire Leadership Style
Laissez- faire leadership style involves a situation where the leader avoids power and authority leaving the group to establish whatever they wish to do. Sturbridge and Stoughton (2000) report that Laissez-faire leadership style is sometimes described as a wild anarchy. Under this type superior staff has minimum input into the operation of the organization. Subordinate staff takes the majority of the decisions with little reference to the superior staff who instead encourage subordinate staff to assume many functions of their superior staff.

According to Musaazi (1999), in this type of leadership style, there are no rules, the governing principle as 'let people do what they wish'. Okumbe (2001) [25] believes that in this type of leadership, leaders take a passive stake towards the problems of the organization. For instance, in a school setting the head teacher would not bother whether the teacher is available and doing anything or not. Such leadership style is likely to have adverse effects on the teaching learning process and hence the students' academic achievement and performance in Sokoto north local government area.

Mumbe (1995) [29] believes that in this type leadership the leader makes a passive stake towards the problem of the organization for instance in a school setting the principal does not bother whether teachers perform or not, whether students learn or not and the same attitudes applies to teachers. Addionally, Ghasaija (1997) describes laissez-faire leadership as that where there is no apparently a leader in the organization, all authority lies in the hands of employees; they determine goals, make decisions and resolve problems on their own. Such a style of leadership cannot be effective in secondary schools in Sokoto North local government Area; given the fact that it requires highly skilled man power. Therefore they need continuous guidance and supervision from the principals and other administrators in the hierarchy. Furthermore, Resnick (2002) defines leadership as a process through which an individual the (leader) secures the cooperation of others (followers) towards goals achievement in a particular setting. This emphasizes the concept of teamwork whereby principal should always work as a team in planning, leading, controlling, decision making and coordination of all school programmers.

It is apparent that leadership plays a very critical role in galvanizing all the other factors in the school together. However, in spite of the importance of leadership, its contribution to improved school achievement will not be maximized, unless leadership is distributed and shared with the significant others. The researcher agrees with the school of thought that the concept of leadership must change, as Grant (2006:512) argues that a different understanding of leadership is needed; a shift from leadership as readership to distributed form of leadership. Musera, Achoka and Mugasia (2012) [32] study explored the perceptions of secondary school teachers on leadership styles of principals in school management in Kakamega Central district. The study adopted an exploratory approach using a descriptive survey. A sample of 13secondary schools ware selected. A sample of sixty five teachers consisting of 13 deputy principals and 52

class teachers participated in the study. The main tool of data collection was a questionnaire. Descriptive statistics was used in data analysis. The findings reveal that school management is a preserve of male and those who had served long in the teaching profession. The type of leadership style of the sampled schools is transformational.

Research Methodology
Research Design
The researcher adopted descriptive survey research design. The design was appropriate in this study because the study was to find out the leadership styles of the principals in Sokoto north had already occurred. The investigator merely analyzed their nature of leadership style.

Population
The population of the study is embedded in the 6 secondary schools in Sokoto North Local Government Area. These schools are comprised of a total population of 1494 teachers. This population was used because the study dealt with teachers from the 6 secondary schools Sokoto North Local Government.

Sample and Sampling Procedure
The researcher used stratified random sampling to select 302 teachers from the six schools. The number of respondents was determined according to Morgan Table for determining random sample size (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). The study focused on Principal, and the major respondents were the teachers. Teachers were considered because they are equally involved in school leadership and management towards performance.

Table 1: Population, Sample Size and sampling Techniques

Category of participants	Population	Sampling size	Sampling techniques
Teachers	1494	302	Stratified Random Sampling
Total	1494	302	

Sources: field Study (2015)

Research Instruments
The researcher used a self- made questionnaires titled Teachers' Perception of Principals' Leadership Style Questionnaire (TPPLSQ). According to Amin (2005), questionnaires are pencil and paper instruments designed to gather data from individuals about their knowledge, attitudes beliefs and feelings. The Questionnaire contained close-ended questions for quantitative data gathering. Questionnaires was preferred because the target populations of teachers were literate and experienced in responding to written questions. The researcher employed a 4 Likert Scale to measure the variables which were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The section A, solicited the bio data of the respondents and section B solicits for Teachers' perception of principals' autocratic, demographic and laissez-faire leadership style. Scoring of the responses was as follows "SD=1, D=2, A=3 and SA=4)

Validity and Reliability of Data Instruments
Validity. The researcher with the help of supervisor and other experts discussed the questionnaire basing on the Content Valid Index (CVI) which was a scale developed by computing or rating the relevant items in the instrument or

questionnaire by checking their clarity, their meaningfulness in line with all objectives stated. The instruments were then passed onto the supervisors and other experts for further scrutiny before they were administered in the field.

$$CVI = \frac{Relevant\ items\ Total}{Number\ of\ items} = \text{the computed CVI was as follows: } 18/22 = 0.8$$

Reliability of the instrument. As Gay, et al, (2009) state that self-constructed measurement instruments should be pilot tested before use, to determine validity, reliability, and feasibility, the investigator pilot tested the questionnaire in two none participating schools in Sokoto North. The researcher used Cronbach's Alpha coefficient to ascertain the internal consistency of the research instrument and the result shown was as follows:

Table 2: Reliability test of TPPLSQ

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.720	18

This reliability value indicated that the instrument was of high reliability for data SScollection.

Data collection Procedure
Questionnaires were sent by the researcher to the Research Assistant in the area of the study. Soon, the Instrument was administered to the respondents i.e. teachers by the Research Assistant who was also part of the staff of the sampled schools.

Procedure for Data Analysis
Data analysis is the process of systematically applying statistical and or logical techniques to describe and illustrate, condense and recap, and evaluate data (Nowak, 1994). The data collected was analyzed by the researcher treating all the research questions one after another using descriptive statistic of a computer program called Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The data was once again presented in simple percentages and frequency. However, mean scores were used by the researcher to find out the extent of teachers' perception of the principals leader style.
The interpretation of the means obtained was based on the ranking by George and Mallery (2003) as given below:

Research question three: What is the extent to which teachers' perceive Principals laissez- faire leadership style in Sokoto North Local Government?
In this segment of leadership style, items were described in the subsequent tables that follow:
Table 4.18 indicates whether principals leave decisions to be made by the teachers without any prior intervention from them.

Table 3: Independent Decisions making by teachers

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SD	36	12.5	12.5	12.5
	D	18	6.3	6.3	18.8
	A	126	43.8	43.8	62.5
	SA	108	37.5	37.5	100.0
	Total	288	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary Data (2015).

Table 4.18 from the data generated by the table it was understood that 36(12.5%) of the respondents' strongly disagreed whereby 18(6.3%) of them also disagreed. This showed that 18.5% were in disagreement that principals leave decisions for teachers to make without any prior intervention from them. On the contrary, 126(43.8%) respondents agreed while 108 (37.5%) strongly agreed. The majority of the respondents who constituted of 81.2% was in agreement that principals leave decisions to be made by the teachers without any prior intervention. This therefore indicated some sense of lesser-faire attitude from the part of the principals of the schools under the study.
This was supported by Okumbe (2001) [25] who mention that a Laissez- faire leaders take a passive stake towards the problems of the organization. For instance, in a school setting the head teacher would not bother whether the teacher is available and doing anything or not.
Table 4.19 describes the teacher's responses on whether they have freedom to do as they think best in the interest of the school progress

Table 4: Showing freedom of teachers to thinking in the interest of the school progress

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
SD	54	18.8	18.8	18.8
D	54	18.8	18.8	37.5
A	72	25.0	25.0	62.5
SA	108	37.5	37.5	100.0
Total	288	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary Data (2015)

Table 4.19 shows that 180(62.5%) of the respondents were in agreement that teacher in secondary schools in Sokoto north have freedom to do what they think is the best interest of the school, but 108(37.5%) disagreed with the statement. This implies that teachers in mentioned schools were at liberty to think about good things that would help in realizing students' academic achievement.
This was inconsistent to Talbert and Milbrey, (1994) who stated that Laissez-faire leadership style allows complete freedom to group decision without the leader's participation. Thus, subordinates are free to do what they like. The role of the leader is just to supply materials. The leader does not interfere with or participate in the course of events determined by the group
Table 4.20 Show the respondents' opinion on whether Principal prefers collective decision making in the school.

Table 5: Showing principal preference of collective decision making

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
SDs	36	12.5	12.5	12.5
D	72	25.0	25.0	37.5
A	54	18.8	18.8	56.3
SA	126	43.8	43.8	100.0
Total	288	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary Data (2015)

Table 4.20 shows that 180(62.5%) agreed that their principals prefer collective decision making in the school. However, 108(37.5%) disagreed with that assertion. Therefore, this implies that majority were of the opinion that their principals support collective decision making which would help in

attaining students' academic achievement in Sokoto north secondary schools.

This was inconsistency with Resnick's (2002) who emphasizes the concept of teamwork whereby principal should always work as a team in planning, leading, controlling, decision making and coordination of all school programs.

Table 4.21 presents the respondents' opinion on whether the school leadership enables students to do as they wish.

Table 6: Enabling students to do as they wish

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SD	18	6.3	6.3	6.3
	D	54	18.8	18.8	25.0
	A	90	31.3	31.3	56.3
	SA	126	43.8	43.8	100.0
	Total	288	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary Data (2015)

Table 4.21 describes the opinions of the respondents on the statement that says the school leadership enable students to do as they wish. Where 216 (75%) of them were in agreement with the statement. However, 72 (25%) disagreed with that assertion. Based on the responses it implied that, the leadership styles employed in secondary schools in Sokoto north local government give students a lot of freedom to do whatever they wish which is therefore likely to affect their academic achievement.

This was supported by Mumbe (1995) [29] who believes that laissez-fair leaders always makes a passive stake towards the problem of the organization for instance in a school setting the principal does not bother whether teachers perform or not, whether students learn or not and the same attitudes applies to teachers.

Table 4.22 describes responses on whether there is free delegation of duties and responsibilities in the school.

Table 7: Free delegation of duties and responsibilities in the school

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SD	54	18.8	18.8	18.8
	D	18	6.3	6.3	25.0
	A	72	25.0	25.0	50.0
	SA	144	50.0	50.0	100.0
	Total	288	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary Data (2015)

Table 4.22 depicts that 216(75%) of the respondents were in agreement that there is free delegation of duties and responsibilities in their schools. While 72(25%) of them disagreed with that statement. This indicates that in Sokoto north secondary schools there is free delegation of duties and responsibilities. By so doing teachers would work hard towards the attainment of good academic achievement of the students in their school.

This was slightly supported by Ghasaija (1997) who describes laissez-faire leadership as that where there is no apparently a leader in the organization, all authority lies in the hands of employees; they determine goals, make decisions and resolve problems on their own.

Table 4.23 below indicated the mean ranking to extent of teachers' perception of the principals Laissez-faire leadership style in Sokoto north local government, the result obtained revealed there is moderate principals' Laissez-faire leadership style

Table 8: Means ranking to the Teachers' Perception of the Principals Laissez-faire Leadership Style in Sokoto North Local Government

Items for teachers (n=288)	Mean	Interpretation	Ranking
Principal leaves decisions to be made by teachers without any intervention	2.74	Moderate	3
Teachers have freedom to do as they think best in the interest of the school progress	280	High	2
Principal prefers collective decision making in the school	2.90	High	1
Decisions are made from down to the top	2.72	Moderate	4
The school leadership enable students to do as they wish	2.62	Moderate	6
There is free delegation of duties and responsibilities in the school	2.70	Moderate	5
Average Mean	**2.74**		**High**

Source: Results of the analysis (2015)

Results in Table 4.23 showed the means ranking to the teachers' perception of the principals' Laissez-faire leadership style in Sokoto north. It is observed that among the items above Principal prefers collective decision making in the school (mean of 2.90) is the highest perception. Teachers have freedom to do as they think best in the interest of the school progress, principal leaves decisions to be made by teachers without any intervention, decisions are made from down to the top and there is free delegation of duties and responsibilities in the school. Overall, there is high teachers' perception of the principals' Laissez-faire leadership style in Sokoto North Local Government (with overall mean of 2.74). Different researchers have investigated the relationship between principal' lesser faire leadership styles and students' performance. They have come up with different findings. Achieng (2000) found that principal rated as being lesser faire had high mean performance than autocratic principal. The findings concur with Kimacia (2007) who observes that there is a relationship between lesser faire leadership styles and

students performance in national examinations and noted that laissez faire Principal had higher performance than autocratic principal. Huka (2003) contradicts by noting that principal who are rated most laissez faire had the lowest mean score while autocratic Principal had higher mean score. Muli (2005) and Wangui (2007) had the same findings. Kimacia (2007) found that there is no significant difference between Principal age and leadership style.

Conclusion

Based collective decision making in the school, teachers have freedom to do as they think best on the data collected, it was found that Principals lassie faire leadership style are made of Principal prefers in the interest of the school progress, principal leaves decisions to be made by teachers without any intervention, decisions are made from down to the top and there is free delegation of duties and responsibilities in the school. Overall, there is high teachers' perception of Principals laissez faire leadership style in Sokoto North Local

Government Area (with overall mean of 2.74)

Recommendations on the Teachers Perception of Principals Laissez- Faire Leadership Style.
The researchers, basing on the result of the study which established that there was moderate laissez-faire leadership style of the principals in the schools under the study, the researchers recommends that, the principal should for the benefit of their students and other members of staff avoid the habit of showing lack of concern. This would help the school improve its competitive advantage.

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