

# Principals' Administrative Styles and Students' Academic Performance in Taraba State Secondary Schools, Nigeria

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## Abstract

The study determined the relationship between principals' administrative styles and students' academic performance in Taraba State secondary schools, Nigeria. The objectives of the study were to determine the relationships between initiative structure of leadership styles, consideration structure of leadership styles, participatory structure of leadership styles as they affect students academic performance. A null hypotheses was raised and tested at 0.05 level of significance. Correlation research was adopted as a design for the study., the population of the study comprised all the 4,300 teachers' and 10,750 students registered with Taraba State Teaching Service Board. Using stratified random sampling, 430 teachers representing 10% of the population were randomly selected from the 8 education zones spread across the state. Proforma was using in collecting academic performance record of the 10,750 secondary school students who graduated from 2009 – 2011. 30 Items Questionnaire was also used as the second instrument for data collection in this study. Using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient, and Regression analysis, data were analysed, The results of the study revealed that there were no significant relationships between principals initiative administrative styles and students' academic performance in English language. The findings also revealed no significant relationships between consideration structure of principals' administrative styles and students' academic performance in English language. The findings further revealed no significant relationships between participatory administrative styles of principals' and student academic performance in senior secondary schools in English language for the year 2010, and in Mathematics 2010 and 2011 respectively. It further revealed that among the three leadership styles, none is the best predictor of students' academic performance in Taraba State secondary schools. Based on these findings, it was recommended among others that School administrators should explore ways and means of using varying administrative styles that could yields the much needed results of enhancing students' academic performance in Taraba State secondary schools.

**Keywords:** Principals, administrative style, initiative structure, consideration structure, participatory structure

## Introduction

Education in Nigeria is an instrument for effecting national development. The country's educational goals have been set out in the National Policy on Education in terms of their relevance to the needs of the individual and the society (FRN, 2014). Against this backdrop, the National Policy on Education set up aims and objectives, which were to facilitate educational development in the country. In fostering these aims and objectives, the school principal has important roles to play. Among this roles include providing effective managerial skills and styles in the art and science of administering secondary schools, thereby enhancing better job performance among teachers that could enhance students' academic performance. How effective the principal is in performing these roles has been a matter of concern to many educationists (Fika, Ibi and Aji, 2015). Senior secondary education in Nigerian schools is for a period of 3 years and it is for students who had successfully completed the Basic 9 education programme.

It is therefore not surprising that there is enormous demand for effective management of secondary schools in Taraba State, Nigeria. It seems however, that quite a good number of school principals have not considered their styles of administration as determinants of students' academic performance in the State and the nation at large. Hence, some of them seem to find it extremely difficult to effectively lead their schools (Akininbagbe, 2002).

As educating a nation remains vital strategy for the development of the society throughout the developing world, 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). Since education is an investment, there is a significant positive correlation between education and socio-economic productivity.

Muthondu (2007) opined that world is changing very rapidly and indeed this speed of change makes it almost impossible for any person of either gender or preferred administrative style to have all the knowledge, insight or power to achieve success. The old form of administration that gave power and a title to one or few individuals, in most cases the males is rapidly becoming dysfunctional and jettison. Potential leaders of any gender should train themselves to adapt to the changing society and make every effort to teach and model the style of administration which will most effectively lead the institution into achieving its set goals.

Performance of students in examinations is attributed to a number of factors; these include provision of physical facilities, classroom size, effective school discipline policies, administrative support and effective leadership. Studies in Botswana, Nigeria, and Papua New Guinea concur to this (Muli, 2005). Good administration provides necessary guidance, clarity of direction and rewards for effective performance of students. Okumbe (1998) pointed out that, in any organization human resources are the most important resources it has and therefore, the success of the organization depends entirely on how effectively its workers are managed. This means that sustained effort is needed to achieve integration where all the members are involved and work together with a sense of common purpose of achieving the organization's goals.

It is important to conceptualize school administration as a social process. A social system involves two classes of phenomena which are independent and interactive. The first class consists of the institution, its roles and expectations which are in line with the goals of the system. The second class consists of the individuals inhabiting the system with their personalities and dispositions (Okumbe, 1998). A school consists of the principal, teachers, non-teaching staff and students who interact with each other to accomplish predetermined goals. For a school organization to be kept together, effective administrative and efficient management skills are required (Farrant, 1997). Effective administration in school has been widely noted as a factor that will make a difference between achievers and non-achievers. Dramatic changes noted in a work environment will result due to a visionary leadership who encourages and persuades rather than commands followers towards common goals. Bukar, Ibi and Abdullahi (2015) emphasize that principal are directly involved in influencing the activities of the students and school towards goal setting and goal attainment. In light of the foregoing, the study examined the school Principals' administrative styles as it relates with students academic performance in Taraba State senior secondary schools

It has been observed over the years that there is a mix reaction from stakeholders on effective administrative styles among principals of secondary schools in Taraba State, Nigeria. It seems however that many of such principals have not considered their styles of administration as determinant of students' academic performance in the State. The major concern of parents is the experiences and administrative styles that principals' exhibit as it is found to have direct bearing on the overall performance of students' as well as the teachers since both are to perform under the monitoring and supervision of a principal. The dwindling performance of students of senior secondary schools in Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE) in core subject of the school curriculum has been a source of concern to stakeholders and parents in education industry. Many reasons might have accounted for this. Among this was perhaps the observed deficient administrative style used by school principals as it is found to have direct effect on students' academic performance. The problem of this study therefore was to examine the principals' administrative style as it relates with students' academic performance in Senior Secondary Schools in Taraba State, Nigeria.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Principalship is a critical management skill involving the ability to encourage group of people towards common goal. Leadership focuses on the development of followers and their needs. Managers exercising transformational administrative style focusing on the development of value system of employees, their motivational level and moralities with the development of their skills, (Sashkin & Sashkin 2003). Omolayo (2009) identified different administrative styles of a school principal which include initiative, consideration and participatory structure of management.

Initiative structure of administration is the extent to which a principal defines managers and group member roles, initiates actions, organizes group activities and defines how task are to be accomplished by the group. A leader in this structure defines his goals and facilitates group movement toward them. This administrative style decides everything and tries to manipulate the followers into approving his ideas on how the school should function. A leader in this group does not give trust to any member of the group.

Lee (1995) reported that, the Initiative structure of management leadership style results in the group members reacting aggressively and apathetically in the work environment. This often results in unending industrial disputes in an organization hence affecting the overall achievement of the organizational goals and objectives. Mwalala, (2008) observed that Initiative structure and harsh climate leads to poor performance of students. Initiative structure of management, also known as autocratic leaders, provide clear expectations for what needs to be done, when it should be done, and how it should be done. There is also a clear division between the leader and the followers.

Initiative leaders make decisions independently with little or no input from the rest of the group (Lewin & Caillords 2001). Researchers found that decision-making was less creative under Initiative structure administrator. Muli (2005) also found that it is more difficult to move from an Initiative structure leadership style to a participatory structure leadership style than vice versa. Abuse of this style is usually viewed as controlling, bossy, and dictatorial. Initiative structure type of administration is best applied to situations where there is little time for group decision-making or where the leader is the most knowledgeable member of the group.

Participatory structure of management (Democratic) emphasizes that not only the designated managers have inputs and influence over the decisions that affect the organization but members of the staff who are affected by those decisions are actively sought to provide observations, analysis, suggestions and recommendations in the executive decision making process. In participatory management, the designated managers (or principals) still have the final responsibility for making decision and answering for them but staff are involved in the process.

In their study, Lewin and Caillords(2001) found that participative administrator, also known as democratic leadership, is generally the most effective administrative style. Participatory structure leadership not only offers guidance to group members, but they are allowed to participate in the group and allow input from other group members. Hence, children in this group were less productive than the members of the Initiative structure group, but their contributions were of a much higher quality. Participative administrator encourages group members to participate, but retain the final say over the decision-making process. Group members feel engaged in the process and are more motivated and creative who in turn improve their performance as well as the performance of the organization.

Consideration structure administrator is the extent to which a leader exhibits concerns for the welfare of the members of the group. This factor is oriented towards interpersonal relationships, mutual, trust and friendship. This type of structure is people-oriented, friendly, approachable, treating group member as equal, looking out for the personal welfare of group members and making self accessible to group members.

Consideration structure of management allows the employee to make the decisions. The leader tends to avoid power and authority. Consideration structure of management may lead to indiscipline due to non-enforcement of rules and regulations in a school leading to poor performance in national examinations. Researchers found that children under Consideration structure of management, also known as laissez-fair leadership, were the least productive of all three groups. The children in this group also made more demands on the leader, showed little cooperation and were unable to work independently. Consideration structure of management leadership offers little or no guidance to group members and leave decision-making up to group members. While this style can be effective in situations where group members are highly qualified in an area of expertise, it often leads to poorly defined roles and a lack of motivation among the group members (Fika, 2006).

In Nigeria, the success of secondary school students is mainly gauged by their performance in Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (SSCE). When people are educated, their standards of living are likely to improve, since they are empowered to access productive ventures, which would lead to an improvement in their livelihoods. The role of education therefore, is not just to impart knowledge and skills that enable the beneficiaries to function as economies and social change agents in society, but also to impart values, ideas, attitudes and aspirations important for natural development.

Leadership at work in educational institutions is thus a dynamic process where an individual is not only responsible for the group's tasks, but also actively seeks the collaboration and commitment of all the group members in achieving group goals in a particular context (Aji, 2014). Administration in that context pursues effective performance in students, because it does not only examine tasks to be accomplished and who executes them, but also seeks to include greater reinforcement characteristics like recognition, conditions of service and morale building, coercion and remuneration (Balunywa, 2000). Administration incorporates the accomplishment of the task, which is the organizational requirement and the satisfaction of employees, which is the human resource requirement (Okumbe, 1998). Maicibi (2003) contends that, without a proper administrative style, effective performance cannot be realized in schools. Even if the school has all the required instructional materials and financial resources, it may not be able to use them effectively, if the students are not directed in their use, or if the teachers who guide in their usage are not properly trained to implement them effectively.

Students' performance in the Nigeria context mainly entails; teaching consistently with diligence, honesty and regularity orchestrated by increased good results from students; setting adequate written and practical exercises, ensuring effective marking, evaluating all exercises promptly and carefully and observing academic regulations and instructions (Bello, Bukar & Ibi 2016). The feeling by many people, including the researcher, is that this is a shallow understanding of students' performance. The researcher is of the view that performance of any students should not only be considered from the academic outcomes only, but should also focus on other education outcomes such as the affective domains and the psychomotor skills. In school environments therefore, students' performance should not only be defined in terms of test scores, examination

results, students' ability to socially apply what is learnt, and the rate at which students move on to higher institutions of learning, but should consider the achievements of the school in other areas like equipping the learners with the requisite skills for survival.

The term 'academic performance' has been described as the scholastic standing of a student at a given moment. It refers to how an individual is able to demonstrate his or her intellectual abilities. This scholastic standing could be explained as the grades obtained in a course or groups of courses taken (Omolayo, 2009). Bello, Bukar and Ibi(2016) commented on the scholastic standing of students argued that performance is a measure of output and that the main outputs in education are expressed in terms of learning, that is, changes in knowledge, skills and attitudes of individuals as a result of their experiences within the school's system. Thus, in determining academic performance, Sakin (2000) emphasized the use of grades in examinations and reported that grades could serve as prediction measures and as criterion measures.

Academic performance therefore is largely identified by a range of statistical indicators. Bello, Bukar and Ibi, (2016) supported this argument and reported that performance is the level of attainment of a person in an examination, that is, how an individual is able to demonstrate his or her abilities in an examination. Hence, Performance has been regarded as a measure of educational output.

The subsequent activation of inspectorate unit in 2007 by the Taraba State Government, aimed to ensure that this program does not only increase access, but also improves the schools' education outcomes on an ongoing basis. However, improvement in performance requires that schools are well led by competent school heads. In fact, the Ministry of Education in Taraba State is posting people of the highest education management qualification to head schools with the hope that they can better employ the best principal with precise administrative attributes. In addition, the Ministry of Education, Taraba State is frequently conducting workshops for Principals and Vice-Principals on administrative and managerial skills. However, despite the above, performance is still low in most of the schools in the state. Administrative style determines the atmosphere, culture, and strategies dominating the organization. The style is made of a set of attitudes, traits, and skills in the principals formed based on four factors: values, trusting employees, leadership orientation, and a sense of security shaped in important situations (Muli 2005). Administrative style of the principals shows how they interact with their staff (Muthondu, 2007). Each principal performs their main tasks behaving in a way that might have differences with other principals. These consistent types of behavior that principals apply with others at work are called administrative styles.

A study conducted by National Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC, 2008) and that of Education Research Centre (ERC) on the performance of students in public examination over some years, revealed that 75% of the total factors causing success or failure of students are decided by nature of school leadership and administrative qualities. It is against this background that the researcher examine determined the Principals' administrative styles and students' academic performance in Taraba state Secondary Schools.

### **Methodology**

Correlation was adopted as a design for this study. The correlation research design aimed at determining the nature, degree and direction of relationships between variables or using these relationships to make predictions (Cohen, Mannion & Morrison 2007). Anderson (1980), argued that correlation design is concerned with describing the degree or magnitude of relationship between two variables. The population of this study comprises of 4,300 teachers' and 10,750 students registered with Taraba State Teaching Service Board. Using stratified random sampling, 430 teachers representing 10% of the population were randomly selected from the 8 education zones of the state. Cohen, Manion & Morrison(2007) recommended the used of simple random technique because of its potential usefulness to eliminate bias in the research and the chances of any member of the population being selected are not dependent on previous selection. Questionnaire and profoma were used as instruments for the study. The profoma was used in collecting results of students' academic performance in Senior Secondary School Certificate in English language and Mathematics from 2009 – 2011 while Questionnaire was used in collecting information on pattern of administrative styles of principal in Secondary School in Taraba State. Pearson Product Moment Correctional Coefficient( $r$ ) was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significant, and Regression analysis was also used to determine the best predictors among the variables.

### **Results and Discussion**

The analysis tested the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

**Ho:** There is no significant predictor of students' academic performance in English language and Mathematics subjects among the three Principals' administrative style in Taraba State Senior secondary school.

**Table 1 Coefficients of the three administrative Styles and Performance in Mathematics**  
**Coefficients**

Model	Un standardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	
(Constant)	5.672	.535		10.592	.000
Initiative Structure	-.011	.015	-.053	-.763	.446
Consideration Structure	-.006	.011	-.033	-.502	.616
Participatory Structure	-.002	.013	-.012	-.167	.868

a. Dependent Variable: Performance in Mathematics

**Source:** Survey Analysis

Table 1 shows p – value of 0.000 and that indicates initiative structure of school administrator is not a significant predictor with (t = -0.763, p = 0.446), consideration structure of school administrator also found no significant predictor with (t = -0.502 and p = 0.616), while participatory structure of school administrator is not a significantly predictor with (t 0.167, p = 0.868), hence , the three administrative styles that tend to predict the academic performance of students in English, none of the three variables were found to be significant predictors.

**Table 2: Regression Model Summary for the Administrative Styles and Performance in Mathematics**  
**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.080 <sup>a</sup>	.006	-.003	1.13423

a. Predictors: (Constant), Participatory Structure, Consideration Structure and Initiative Structure

b. Dependent Variable: Performance in Mathematics

Table 2 presents summary of the modeling three administrative styles of principal and students' academic performance in mathematics in Taraba State secondary schools. It can be reveal that the independent variables Initiative, participatory and consideration structure of principal administrative styles included in the model revealed only 0.3% of the variance in the dependent variable that are related to the 'student academic performance'. The remaining 99.7% of the variance in the dependent variable 'student academic performance' is explained by other predictor(s) that are not included in the model.

**Table 3: Coefficients of the Administrative Styles and Performance in English Language**  
**Coefficients**

Model	Un standardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	
(Constant)	3.820	.697		5.479	.000
Initiative Structure	.035	.019	.126	1.827	.069
Consideration Structure	-.016	.015	-.073	-1.124	.262
Participatory Structure	-.005	.016	-.023	-.317	.752

a. Dependent Variable: Performance in English Language

**Source:** Survey Analysis

Table 3 shows p – value of 0.000 and that indicates initiative structure of school administrator is not a significantly predictor with (t = 1.827, p = 0.69), consideration structure of school administration also found to be not significant predictor with (t = - 1.124 and p = 0.262). Finally, participatory structure of school administration is not significant predictor with (t 0.317, p = 0.752). Therefore, among the administrative styles that tend to predict the academic performance of students in English, none of the three variables found to be significant predictors.

**Table 4: Regression Model Summary of the Administrative Styles and Performance in English Language**  
**Model Summary <sup>a</sup>**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.114 <sup>a</sup>	.013	.003	1.47686

a. Predictors: (Constant), Participatory Structure, Consideration Structure and Initiative Structure

b. Dependent Variable: Performance in English Language

Table 4 provides the summary of the modeling of the principals' administrative styles and students'

academic performance in English language in Taraba State secondary schools. It can be deduced that the independent variables Initiative, participatory and consideration structure of school administrator included in the model 0.3% of the variance in the dependent variable. While 99.7% of the variance in the dependent variable 'student academic performance' is explained by other predictor(s) that are not included in the model.

### Summary of Findings

The finding of this study reveals that:

1. There was no best predictor of student academic performance in both English and Mathematics subjects for the year 2009 to 2011 among the principals administrative styles in Taraba State secondary schools.
2. There was significant relationship between Initiatives structure of principals' management styles and students' academic performance in English language for the year 2009, Mathematics 2009 and 2011. It also revealed no significant relationship between Initiatives structure of management administrative styles and students' academic performance in English language for the year 2010, 2011 and Mathematics 2010.
3. There was significant relationship between Initiatives structure of principals' administrative styles and students' academic performance in English language for the year 2010 and 2011, Mathematics 2009 and 2011. It also found no significant relationship between the consideration structure of management administrative styles and students' academic performance in English language for the year 2009 and Mathematics 2010.
4. There was a significant relationship between participatory structure of management administrative styles and students' academic performance in English language for the year 2009, 2011, and Mathematics 2011. It also shows no significant relationship between participatory structure of administrative styles of principals and students' academic performance in English language for the year 2010 and Mathematics 2010 and 2011.

### Discussion

The study determined the relationship between principals' administrative styles and student's academic performance in Taraba State Secondary Schools. The finding revealed that there was a significant relationship between initiatives structure of principal administrative leadership and students' academic performance in Mathematics 2009, English 2009, and Mathematics 2011 and the relationship was in favor of student's academic performance. While it had also revealed that there was no significant relationship between initiatives structure of school leadership and students' academic performance in English language 2010, English language 2011 and Mathematics 2010. Initiative was also found to be most prevalent principals administrative style used in Taraba State Secondary Schools. This finding was consistent with the findings of previous researchers (Akininbagbe 2002; Aji, 2014). This type of administrative style found to affect student academic performance as it established no significant relationship between students' academic performance and consideration structure of management in schools settings (Fika, 2006). Therefore, it is clear that the administrative style of a principal has a close relationship with the students' academic performance. This finding was consistency with the findings made in earlier studies (Sakin, 2000; Nsugba 2003 & Omolayo, 2009).

Other findings revealed a significant relationship between consideration structure of principals' administrative style and students' academic performance in English 2010, English 2011, Mathematics 2009 and Mathematics 2011. Suggesting that the more a principal used consideration structure in his administrative styles the better the academic performance of students in the schools. It further explained that principals of schools need to programme his/her Schedule in order to achieve results. Hence, students need to be relating with school management (principal) in order to effectively perform in their academic pursuit. The finding was in consonance with the findings of Fika, (2006) who found that people perform better under the autocratic administrative style.

Significant relationship was found between initiative structure of principals' administrative style and students' academic performance in English and Mathematics 2009, and Mathematics 2011 suggest that the more a principal used initiative structure in his or her administrative style the better the academic performance of students in the schools. The finding was in agreement with the findings made by Akininbagbe, (2002) who found significant relationship between initiative structure of principals' administrative style and students' academic performance in Lagos State secondary schools. Also no significant relationship found between initiative structure of principals' administrative style and students' academic performance in English and Mathematics 2010, and English 2011. The findings suggested that the more a principal used initiative structure in his or her administrative style the poor the academic performance of students in the schools.

The non-significant relationship found in this study between participatory structure of principals' administrative style and students' academic performance in English and Mathematics 2010, and Mathematics 2011, implies that there was no concurrence between them. This finding suggests that participatory structure principals' administrative style had no significant relationship with students' academic performance. The finding

was consistent with the findings Aji 2014. It also found a significant relationship between participatory structure principals' administrative style and students' academic performance in English and Mathematics 2009, and English 2011 as that implies that there was no concurrence between them.

### Conclusion

Within the findings of this study, the researchers concluded among others that the three administrative styles of principals', initiative structure of leadership styles was vital to students' academic performance in Taraba State secondary schools. This means that students' academic performance in the schools was a function of effective administrative style used by principals in their respective school. It was further concluded that Consideration and participatory structure of leadership styles were not vital variables that could relate to students' academic performance in Taraba State Secondary schools. Evidences from the findings of the study have led the researchers to conclude that students' academic performance in the schools was a function of the administrative style demonstrated by the principal.

### Recommendation

For students' academic performance to be enhanced and effective:

1. School administrators must explore ways and means of using varying administrative styles that could yields the much needed results of enhancing students' academic performance in Taraba State secondary schools.
2. Parents and guardian in the state should not rush to a particular principal with a specific administrative style with the notion that particular dispositions improve students' academic performance as they rush to enroll their wards into such schools.

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