

Transformational Leadership Style of Secondary School Principals as Correlate of Counsellors' Effectiveness in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

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Abstract: *The unsatisfactory state of guidance and counselling programme in Nigerian schools has called for assessment of factors which could improve the situation. Literature has proven that principals are the key agents in the implementation of school guidance programme. With a correlation research design, this study investigated the extent transformational leadership style of school principals correlate with counsellors' effectiveness in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. School principals, teachers and counsellors (N=1808) were the participants in the study, selected from 82 secondary schools in Akwa Ibom state using multi-stage sampling technique. Principals' Self-report Transformational Leadership Style Questionnaire (PSTLSQ), Transformational Leadership Rating Scale (TSLRS) and Counsellors' Effectiveness Questionnaire (CEQ) were the instruments used for data collection in the study. The data collected were analysed using Mean, Standard deviation, Pearson Correlation and Regression methods. The results obtained indicated that transformational leadership style of school principals significantly correlate with counsellors' effectiveness to a moderate extent. Based on the findings, implication, conclusion, limitation and recommendations were drawn.*

Keywords: *Transformational leadership styles, secondary school principals, counsellors' effectiveness*

I. Introduction

Transformational leadership is characterized by vision, creativity, encouragement and positive changes in organisation which it is been practiced. This type of leadership promotes high performance, motivation and morale among followers. In the case of individualized consideration, transformational leadership involves offering support and encouragement to individual followers. Transformational leaders act as role models to their followers; this serves as an inspiration and engenders their commitment to the group goals (Robbins, 2001).

Many authors have defined transformational leadership in various ways. For instance, Burns (1998) described it as a process in which leaders and followers make each other advance to a higher level of morality and motivation. In Burns' opinion, these leaders try to raise the awareness of their followers by turning to higher ideals and moral values like freedom, justice, equality, peace, humanitarianism, and not to lower feelings like fear, greed, envy or hatred. In terms of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, transformational leaders activate higher needs in their followers. Followers are raised from their "daily selves" to their "better selves", in contrast to transactional leaders with an orientation of exchange, who reward their supporters on attaining the objectives set in advance. Bass (1995) added that a transformational leader shapes and motivates his followers by increasing their awareness of the importance of task results, by convincing followers to rise above their own personal interests for the sake of the organization or team and activating their higher needs. These leaders can attain these conditions through one or more of the following manners: they tend to be charismatic to their followers, thus inspiring them; they inspire an intellectual awakening and consideration of the individual; and influence their followers to see problems from a new perspective. Thus, this type of leadership is very necessary in the school system.

Transformational leadership in the school system is expressed by the principals in terms of motivating the staff and students to focus on the mission and vision of the school. Such principals work toward achieving the educational goals, aims and objectives as stated in the National Policy on Education (2004). They increase their level of motivation, maturity and aspirations, as well as their reference to the need for achievement, self-realization, social welfare, the success of the school and concern for its social environment (Bass, 1999). In addition, principals with transformational leadership style create a change in expectations and aspirations of the staff and students themselves. Thus transformational principals create a significant change in the lives of staff and students as well as the entire school. They reshape concepts and values, changes staff aspirations and expectations and change the school culture. In addition, transformative leadership of a school principal is expressed in the motivation of his staff to take an active part in determining criteria for success and evaluation. These criteria will serve in performance evaluation, in discussions on study programs and on teaching strategies and further interactions with teachers as individuals and teams (Goldring, Porter, Murphy, Elliot, & Cravens,

2007). It is not surprising then that transformational leadership style may increase counsellors' effectiveness in school.

Counsellors' effectiveness is achieved when guidance and counselling services are appropriately and adequately implemented. Guidance and Counselling services refer to all the programmes and activities carried out by counsellors to help students and staff of the organisation make adequate adjustment and solve their problems. They are programmes that bring the students to the awareness of who they are in terms of their personality, potential, ability, capability, functions, and relevance (Otu & Eseadi, 2016). The authors added that guidance and counselling services are inevitable in all systems where human beings are operating because of the complexities of life and unstable nature of the systems, including schools.

Researchers such as Kamore and Tiego (2015) assessed the factors hindering the effectiveness of guidance and counselling services in Kenya and discovered that guidance and counselling is faced with many challenges such as lack of facilities and financial support by school administration, conflict with school discipline policy and lack of clear government policies to guide guidance and counselling services in secondary schools. Oye, Obi, Mohd and Bernice (2012) had earlier pointed out that majority of the teachers have no regards for guidance and counseling activities in schools; that the school time-table does not make provisions for guidance and counseling activities; that the government does not provide adequate support for the promotion of guidance and counseling activities in schools. But Otu and Eseadi (2016) recently opined that some of the challenges faced by school counsellors are caused, in part, by the unsupportive leadership styles of principals and that transformational leadership style could promote effectiveness of school counsellors. It is based on these facts that the present study examines transformational leadership style of secondary school principals as correlate of counsellors' effectiveness in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The researcher answers the question "To what extent does transformational leadership style of secondary school principals correlate with counsellors' effectiveness" and tests the hypothesis "Transformational leadership style of secondary school principals does not significantly correlate with counsellors' effectiveness".

Measures

Design

Correlational research design was adopted in this study. Correlation research design shows the extent two or more variables in a study relate. Thus, based on the purpose of this study, the researcher used correlational design to find out the extent of relationship between the transformational leadership style of school principals and counsellors' effectiveness in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

Area of the study

The study was carried out in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. This state is one of the six states in the South-South Nigeria with 31 local government areas and many private and public secondary schools. Akwa Ibom is one of the states in Nigeria that have made attempt to practice guidance and counselling programme in secondary and primary schools. This is evident in availability of counsellors in some schools, though in a poor ratio, and in functional Counselling Association of Nigeria (CASSON). Thus, the present study is suitable in this area.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

At the pre-survey level 350 principals were sampled but in the actual study, 82 principals (from 82 secondary schools) who were identified as having transformational leadership style, 809 teachers and 108 counsellors formed the sample of the study. The sample was selected using a multi-stage procedure.

Table 1: Frequency table for demographic variables

Demographic Variables	N	%
Principals		
Male	44	54
Female	38	46
Total	82	100
Teachers		
Male	321	40
Female	488	60
Total	809	100
Counsellors		
Male	43	40
Female	65	60
Total	108	100

Table 1, shows percentage of participants in the study with gender.

Instruments for data collection

Principals' Self-report Transformational Leadership Style Questionnaire (PSTLSQ): This instrument was developed by the researcher and its items were selected from transformational leadership style literatures. The instrument has 20 items which enabled the principals to report the extent they exhibit transformational leadership ability. PSTLSQ has a 4-point Scale of Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE) and Very Low Extent (VLE).

Transformational Leadership Rating Scale (TSLRS): This instrument was developed by the researcher and its items were selected from transformational leadership style literatures. The instrument has 28 items which teachers and counsellors use to rate the transformational leadership ability of the school principal. TSLRS has a 4-point Scale of Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE) and Very Low Extent (VLE).

Counsellors' Effectiveness Questionnaire (CEQ): This is a 26 item questionnaire developed by the researcher to measure the effectiveness of counsellors. The instrument has 4-point Scale of Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE) and Very Low Extent (VLE).

Validation of the Instrument

The copies of the instruments were given to three experts for face validation. One expert each was selected from Department of Educational Foundation in the areas of Guidance and Counselling, and Educational Administration and another from the Department of Science Education in the area of Measurement and Evaluation, all from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The validators scrutinized the instrument with regard to the response format, appropriateness of the items and language clarity, especially as they relate to the purpose of the study, research questions and hypotheses.

Reliability of the Instrument

In order to establish the internal consistency (reliability coefficient) of the instruments, the validated instruments were trial tested with 10 principals who has transformational leadership style, 34 teachers and 16 counsellors selected from 10 secondary schools in Cross Rivers State. The scores of obtained were collated and analyzed using Cronbach Alpha method. PSTLSQ yielded 0.89 while TSLRS yielded 0.76 and CEQ yielded 0.80 alpha.

Method of Data Collection

The researcher visited each school used for the study with three research assistants from Otusum Consult, Training & Services, Nigeria. PSTLSQ was administered to the school principals during a pre-survey while TSLRS was administered to teachers and counsellors and CEQ was administered to principals and teachers. Inform consent forms were given to all the participants to declare their willingness and interest to participate in the study.

Method of data analysis

Mean, Standard deviation, Pearson Correlation Coefficient and Regression statistics were employed to analyse the data collected in the study. To ascertain the extent of relationship between the variables relating to research question, the following guidelines was used: 0.00-0.19 (very low extent), 0.20-0.39 (low extent), 0.40-0.59 (moderate extent), 0.60-0.79 (high extent) and 0.80 and above (very high extent). The decision rule for testing the hypothesis was to reject the null hypothesis if the exact probability value (p-value) is less than the a priori probability value (0.05 level of significance), otherwise do not reject.

II. Results

Table 2: Pearson Correlation analysis showing the extent of the relationship between transformational leadership style of principal and counsellors' effectiveness

Variables	N	\bar{X}	SD	r	Decision
TLRS	917	90.80	± 8.04	.558	Moderate Extent
CEQ	891	65.86	± 4.97		

r=Pearson Correlation Coefficient, *N*=total number of respondents.

From table 2 it is observed that responses to TLRS yielded a mean score of 90.80 with standard deviation of 8.94 while responses to CEQ yielded a mean score of 65.86 with standard deviation of 4.97. *r* value of 0.56 indicates that the extent of the relationship between transformational leadership style of principal and counsellors' effectiveness is moderate.

Table 3: Summary of regression analysis for the relationship between transformational leadership style of principal and counsellors' effectiveness

Variables	N	F	R ²	□	Sig.	Decision
TLRS	917	401.108	.311	.558	.000	Rejected
CEQ	891					

Predictors: (Constant), TLRS. Dependent Variable: CEQ; $df=1,413$; $p<.05$.

The results in Table 3 show that transformational leadership style of principal significantly correlate counsellors' effectiveness, $R^2 = .31$, $F(1, 888) = 401.11$, $\beta = .56$, $p < .05$. Since the exact probability value (.000) is less than the *a priori* probability value (0.05), the null hypothesis which states that transformational leadership style of secondary school principals does not significantly correlate with counsellors' effectiveness is rejected. The R^2 value of .31 shows that transformational leadership style of school principals accounts for 31% of the variance in counsellors' effectiveness. The Beta (β) weighting of .56% indicates that for every standard deviation unit change in transformational leadership style, counsellors' effectiveness will rise by 56%.

III. Discussion

This study revealed that the extent of the relationship between transformational leadership style of secondary school principals correlate with counsellors' effectiveness in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria is moderate, and that transformational leadership style of school principals significantly correlate with counsellors' effectiveness. This means that principals with transformational leadership provide supports necessary for the advancement of guidance and counselling programme in the school. This support could be financial, moral, psychological, social and physical support. When counsellors are fully supported they are effective and their impact is seen in the entire school community. This means the counsellors have supportive and enabling environment to provide guidance and counselling services to students and staff in full.

It could be possible that transformational principals (i.e., principals that have transformational leadership styles) would motivate teachers and other staff to support guidance programme in the school. Such principals may form counselling committees that are headed by the school counsellor just to promote the course of guidance and counselling services. It could also be possible, based on the findings of this study, that transformational principals will include guidance and counselling in the school timetable and allow the counsellors to carry out both group and individual counselling activities in the school. This is because; transformational principals are always advancing any programme that will cause the achievement of the educational goals, aim and objectives.

The finding, the present finding lend credence to Otu and Eseadi (2016) who asserted that transformational leadership style of principals could promote effectiveness of school counsellors. Also, the finding support Bass' (1999) assertion that transformational leadership involves motivating the staff and students to focus on the mission and vision of the school. The study supports the opinion of Goldring, Porter, Murphy, Elliot and Cravens (2007) that transformational principals create a significant change in the lives of staff and students as well as the entire school and that they reshape concepts and values, changes staff aspirations and expectations and change the school culture. The findings also support Oye, Obi, Mohd and Bernice's (2012) finding that majority of the teachers have no regards for guidance and counselling activities in schools and that the school time-table does not make provisions for guidance and counseling activities. Based on the results of the current study, transformational principals motivate teachers to support counselling activities and also incorporate counselling the school timetable in order to make counsellors effective.

IV. Conclusion/Implication

In conclusion, the researcher observed that school counsellors may not be effective unless the school principals exhibit transformational leadership style due to the moderate but significant relationship existing between transformational leadership style of school principals and counsellors' effectiveness

V. Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher recommended that government should train school principals on transformational leadership techniques and that government should ensure that school counsellors are given the necessary support that will enable them to function effectively.

Limitations

Considering the weakness of correlation in study, it was challenging to harmonize the responses of principals, teachers and counsellors in the two instruments used in the study. It could be possible that counsellors and teachers did not rate the leadership style very carefully or that teachers and principals did not assess counsellors' effectiveness adequately and this resulted in the moderate extent of the relationship between

transformational leadership style of principals and counsellors' effectiveness. Subsequent studies might discover something similar or something different in the long run.

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