

Dimensions in the Principals' Use of Transactional Leadership in the Administration of Public Secondary Schools in South East Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The study analysed the dimensions in the principals' use of transactional leadership in the administration of public secondary schools in South East Nigeria using descriptive survey design. The population of this study was 28694 teachers from one thousand three hundred and ten (1310) public secondary schools scattered in twenty one (21) Education Zones in South East States of Nigeria. Taro Yamane sampling formula and multi-stage sampling technique was used to determine the sample size of 395 teachers (184 males and 211 females) from 262 public secondary schools in South East Nigeria. The instrument for data collection was structured questionnaire titled "*Transactional Leadership Style of Principals in the Administration of Secondary School Questionnaire*" (TLSPASSQ). The instrument was validated by three (3) lecturers from the Faculty of Education Ebonyi State University Abakaliki. The reliability estimate of internal consistency of the instrument was established using Cronbach Alpha statistics with the aid of SPSS which yielded an overall index of 0.69. Statistical mean and standard deviation were used to answer research questions while the null hypotheses were tested using t-test at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that male and female principals do not use management by exception passive approaches of transactional leadership style in the administration of public secondary schools in South-East, Nigeria; that male and female principals highly used Laissez Faire Approach of Transactional Leadership Styles in the administration of public secondary schools in South-East, Nigeria. The findings of the study further showed that gender had no significant effect in the principals' use of management by exception passive leadership in the administration of secondary schools in South East Nigeria. However, gender was significant in the principals' use of Laissez Faire approach of transactional leadership style in the administration of public secondary schools in South-East Nigeria. Based on these findings, recommendations and conclusion were made therein.

Keywords: Gender dimension, transactional leadership styles, secondary school administration

INTRODUCTION

In modern times, secondary education is experiencing demands for change due to pressure from many factors, such as the need for greater access through open and distributed learning, new technology, funding decreases, student demographics, and globalization among others [1,2,3,4]. In fact, today's technological revolution, with its order of magnitude advances that have left little of common life unchanged, presents an open challenge to the secondary schools to once again 'reinvent' itself. Indeed, it could be argued that the pressure for change placed on the secondary schools today is greater than any it has faced in any previous historical

epoch [5,6]. Because of this, secondary education needs to adopt a leadership approach that will allow them to be flexible and responsive to change. Most importantly, the increasing world's demand for quality, equity, accessible and life-long education requires that school administrators irrespective of their gender inclinations adopt measures to ensure effective management of the school system [7,8]. School principals who can be referred to as the custodian of secondary schools are charged with the responsibility of providing quality leadership. Efficient school system requires effective school administration

that is assisted by the relevant stakeholders [9]. The school head is the key figure in the administration of schools; hence, he plays a vital role in setting the tone, establishing the conditions and providing stimulation for effective teaching and learning in the school [10]. The principals require leadership theory that will guide them in leading others and making decisions. Leadership is the act of directing, controlling, mobilizing and coordinating the activities of others in order to attain the goals and objectives of the organizations. According to [11], leadership is the ability to get things done with the support and cooperation of other people within the institution, organization or system.

Therefore leadership is the kind of influence under which followers accept willingly the direction and control of another person. This control according to [12] can be manifested in the area of instructional monitoring and supervision, discipline, instructional planning and implementation, school-community relationship, staff motivation and instructional evaluation among others. In other words, leaders have the task of influencing followers so that they are willing to perform willingly beyond the confines dictated by the formal authority. According to [12], leadership is the process of influencing the activities of an individual within a group in its effort towards goal achievement in a given situation. This shows that leadership is a totality of activities and process directed towards motivating and influencing followers to accomplish a stipulated organizational goals and objectives. These goals and objective according to [13] is to ensure students' academic achievement and retention is sustained at all time. This is otherwise referred to as instructional leadership. However, in relation to the present study leadership refers to the principal's ability to influence teachers, students and other stakeholders so that they enthusiastically and willingly make every effort towards the achievement of goals and objectives of secondary education. One of such

leadership theory that could bring positive change in secondary schools is transactional leadership style [14].

Transactional leadership style is a type of leadership where the leaders transact all activities to the subordinates in order for them to contribute their own quota in school activities. Transactional leaders work in exchanges with followers to bring out good results in them in relation to task performance [15]. Transactional leadership style are seen when people agree to do a particular assignment they must agree to give up that part of agreement and authority to their leader who must take full control and power over the subordinates who must obey his/her orders without question [16]. In transactional leadership, a follower offers obedience to the leader (e.g. productivity, and commitment to the organization) and receives in return important and useful rewards (financial benefits). According to transactional leadership theories, transactional leadership style consists of four leadership dimensions-Contingent Reward (CR), Management by Exception Active (MEA), Management by Exception Passive (MEP) and Laissez-faire Leadership (LL) (Avolio and [11,13,14]. However, the present study focused on the use of Management by Exception Passive and Laissez-faire Leadership. Management by Exception (passive) is the third dimension of transactional leadership style where the leader takes a passive approach to leadership by intervening only when problems become serious. In passive management expectations, the leader does not intervene in the system until problems become serious and disruptive that attracts attentions of everyone [16,17]. Then, the leader takes an action and intervenes in the situation. In this approach of leading, leaders wait for mistakes to happen and then take action. So the approach is also called as Reactive Approach. At times, when a standard performance is not as per the criteria expected, employee is punished for the discrepancy. According to [18], Management By Exception-Passive is like Reactive Management Approach or Putting-Out-Fires approach; hence, the

relationship may be quite negative in nature as the leader gives feedback only when mistakes occur [19].

The laissez-faire leader shows an indifferent attitude towards subordinate welfare and task. Therefore, laissez faire aspect of transactional leadership recognizes full freedom for employees. The leader does not take any action at all but become indecisive and reluctant on issues affecting the organization (Ahmet, 2015). In this direction, the principals may avoid undertaking any responsibility, leaves the staff and the system alone, and is within the system and management when he is needed. In the context of this study, transactional leadership style therefore is the method of leadership where principals trust or share responsibilities and allow staff to take his/her own action to enable them participate actively in activities, which in return bring positive changes in overall administration of secondary schools. Laissez-faire leaders tend to behave as if they are abdicated from the responsibilities and duties assigned to them. This leadership style according to [12] resembles "impoverished management" by describing a leader exerting minimal effort to get required work done and showing minimal concern for subordinates. According to Lin (2010) is of the opinion that though laissez faire leaders have been nominated to leadership positions and physically occupy these positions, they ignore the responsibilities and duties assigned to them. Based on this, laissez-faire leadership should be regarded not only as "lack of presence", also as "zero leadership". However, the manner principals approached transactional leadership styles could depend on the interaction in their gender differences.

Gender is a socially and culturally ascribed roles assigned to individuals in the society based on the quality of being male or females. According to [18] gender denotes ascribed roles that are assigned to males and females based on their biological differences. These roles according to the Author are what males are allowed to perform and what females

Uzoma and Ugwu are forbidden from. These roles have cultural implications in a way they define the limitations in leadership functions for women. Because culture has been agreed to be dynamic, the degree of gender stereotyping within and across societies is on a continuum. [19], clearly added that gender roles are not biologically determined but assigned to individual according to different societies. According to [20], gender refers to the roles and responsibilities of men and women that are created in our families, our societies and our cultures.

The concept of gender also includes the expectations held about the characteristics, aptitudes and likely behaviours of both women and men (femininity and masculinity). Gender is the ascribed roles to males or females in various societies [21]. According to [22], gender is a social and cultural concept which relates to either the male or female behavioural or cultural traits arising from the identified sexes. Sex according to [23] is the biological differences that exist between male and female, while gender is the socially ascribed roles expected from each of the sexes. Therefore, the issue of gender focuses on the socially and culturally differences assumed roles of the male and female sexes that give rise to the male and female gender [24]. The differences that exist between these sexes attract different opportunities and rewards, all of which culminate to differences in income, prestige and power. This means that the emphasis on gender has brought in the concept of inequality between males and females in which the males are more favoured. The concept of gender is vital in this study because would help to reveal how male or female apply its principles to leadership styles in the administration of secondary schools. Gender roles and expectations of men and women are learned and can change over time as they vary within and between cultures. Women leaders have often been described as more democratic, relationship oriented, transactional and transformational. These leadership styles have been attributed to stereotypical feminine traits such as being nurturing,

caring, considerate, and co-operative. In contrast, male leaders have been described as autocratic, task-oriented, and transactional on the basis of stereotypical masculine traits that include assertiveness, instrumental competence, and dominance [25]. Nevertheless, of the dimensions of leadership attributes that could influence the use of transactional leadership style in the administration of secondary schools is gender.

Gender roles represent behavioral assumptions that are considered suitable for men and women [26]. Through internalizing their gender roles to some extent, women and men in similar leadership positions tend to differ in the way they perform their roles. Although, male and female principals should perform similar functions in accordance to standards of civil service in Nigeria, they may differ in perception, ability and orientations. Empirical evidence and observations on differences in leadership behaviours based on gender have shown wide differences and varying conclusions regarding leadership styles and effectiveness. Some studies have demonstrated that women adopt a more democratic or participatory style in comparison to men [27]. Consequently, [28] held that women tend to display characteristics of transformational leadership more frequently than men. With regard to task-versus relationship-oriented styles, [29] submitted that prior research has not established significant differences in real work settings but some differences were recorded in laboratory settings.

Nevertheless, [30] have established that women do not lead differently from men. These researchers emphasized individual traits or role requirements over gender differences. For example [31] maintained that there is no interaction of gender on leadership styles adopted by school leaders. However, female managers showed more task-oriented leadership than their male counterparts. While men displayed some passive styles, men and women were equally collaborative. [32] affirmed that male and female leaders exhibited no significant leadership

differences, but female leaders were perceived as being more autocratic and negotiating than men. It could be argued from the above scholars that similarities between male and female leaders can be explained by the criteria in the selection process of male and female leaders and by the organizational socialization they are subjected to. Nevertheless, it is imperative to note that both men and women can embrace masculine/feminine styles in school leadership. According to [33], school leaders should adopt transactional leadership style irrespective of their gender ascribed roles or responsibilities.

Research on differences in leadership styles is closely linked to whether women can be more effective, as leadership behaviour is considered to be an important determinant of leadership effectiveness. [34], maintained that the notion of inherent differences in leadership behaviours on the basis of leaders' gender tends to describe leadership effectiveness in terms of a female advantage. As successful organizations are said to adopt more transactional models and such styles are increasingly correlated with effectiveness, women whose leadership styles are more aligned with such models could be more effective than male counterparts [35]. On the contrary, [35] held that the inherent gender based differences in leadership styles suggest that a gender advantage approach simply reinforces gender role stereotypes by offering a simplistic view of leadership that has not been proven empirically.

The research findings on gender interaction in leadership styles have not shown conclusive evidence of significant differences. [7] suggested that women were less effective in comparison to men when leadership roles were aligned with masculine traits and when there were more males as leaders and subordinates in the organization. Ogbogu (2018) considered women to be modestly more effective in education, government, and social service settings, and in middle-level management positions that favour interpersonal skills. Research specific to

school principals also offers contrasting views with regard to gender based differences in styles and effectiveness. In relation to school administration, female principals have been seen to be considerate and pay more attention to relationships than their male counterparts. For instance, [12] added that women principals approached administrative tasks differently from men in several domains, including interpersonal relationship building, focus on curriculum and teaching, and participatory decision making. However, [17] added that male principals take more responsibility in school administration than female counterpart in terms of discipline and instructional supervision.

Nevertheless, the researcher's interactions with principals and teachers in secondary schools in the study area show divergent opinions on the influence of gender on principals' leadership styles in secondary schools. In addition, there are still inconclusive reports on the influence of gender on principals' application of innovative leadership styles such as transactional leadership in secondary school administration. It is against this background that the present study was designed to analyze the dimensions in the principals' use of transactional leadership in the administration of public secondary schools in South East Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to analyze the dimensions in the principals' use of transactional leadership in the administration of public secondary schools in South East Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to;

1. Find out principals' use of management by exception passive of transactional leadership style in

the administration of public secondary schools in South-East, Nigeria base on gender.

2. Ascertain principals' use of Laissez Faire approach of transactional leadership style in the administration of public secondary schools in South-East, Nigeria base on gender.

Research Questions

The following research questions were developed to guide the study

1. How does principal's use of management by exception passive of transactional leadership style in the administration of public secondary schools in South-East, Nigeria base on gender?

2. How does principal's use of Laissez Faire approach of transactional leadership style in the administration of public secondary schools in South-East, Nigeria base on gender?

Hypotheses

The following two null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in principals' use of management by exception passive of transactional leadership style in the administration of public secondary schools in South-East, Nigeria based on gender.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in principals' use of principal use Laissez Faire approach of transactional leadership style in the administration of public secondary schools in South-East, Nigeria based on gender.

Research Methodology

The design of this study was descriptive survey design. Descriptive survey is a type of design concerned with describing events as they are, without any manipulation of any variable. According to [18], descriptive survey design aims to

accurately and systematically describe a population, situations or phenomenon. It can answer what, were, when and how questions, but not why questions. This design was used to collect the opinions and facts from the teachers on the gender

dimension of principals in the use transactional leadership style in secondary schools' administration in South East Nigeria. The study was carried out in all the public secondary schools in South East Nigeria. The population for this study was twenty eight thousand sixty hundred and ninety four (28694) teachers and principals from one thousand three hundred and ten (1310) public secondary schools scattered in twenty one (21) Education Zones in South East States of Nigeria (Source: Federal Ministry of Education Archives and States' School Directory, 2020-2021). The population distribution based on States is: Ebonyi (2633 teachers); Abia (3970 teachers); Anambra (5737 teachers); Enugu (8680 teachers) and Imo (7674 teachers). The population distribution based on gender is: Ebonyi (1257 males and 1373 females); Abia (2288 males and 1689 females); Anambra (3071 males and 2666 females); Enugu (4793 males and 3887 females) and Imo (3928 males and 3746 females) The sample of this study was 395 teachers made up of 211 males and 184 females from two hundred and thirty two public secondary schools in South East Nigeria (20% of school population). Taro Yamane sampling formula was used to determine the sample size of 395 teachers from five (5) States from the population. First, purposive sampling technique was used to select the 5 States in the South East Nigeria to ensure proper representation of all the states. Second, simple random sampling technique without replacement was used to draw 36 teachers (17 males and 19 females) from Ebonyi; 55 teachers (32 males and 23 females) from Abia; 79 teachers (42 males and 37 females) from Anambra; 119 teachers (66 males and 53

Research Question 1: How does principal use management by exception passive of transactional leadership styles in the administration of public secondary schools in South-East, Nigeria base on gender?

females) from Enugu and 106 teachers from Imo (54 males and 53 females) making it a total of 395 teachers. Finally, stratified random sampling technique was used to draw the sample size of 211 males and 184 females teachers based on the gender in the proportion of 50:48. The instrument for data collection was questionnaire titled, "Transactional Leadership Style of Principals in the Administration of Secondary School Questionnaire" (TLSPASSQ). The questionnaire was self-developed from literature by the researcher on the transactional leadership styles needed in school administration. The questionnaire contains a total of thirty two (32) items, with 8 items in cluster A and 6 items in cluster B-E. The items in the questionnaire were rated on a four point scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The questionnaire was validated by three lecturers from faculty of education, Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. The validated instrument was subjected to measure of internal consistency using Cronbach Alpha reliability method with the aid of SPSS package which yielded the index of 0.67. The researcher, with eight (8) research assistants (teachers) personally administered the instrument directly to the respondents in the sampled schools. The researcher and the assistants stayed and collected back the filled copies of questionnaire after completion. Mean and standard deviation was used to answer the research questions while t-test of independent sample was used to test the hypotheses developed for the study at 0.05 level of significance.

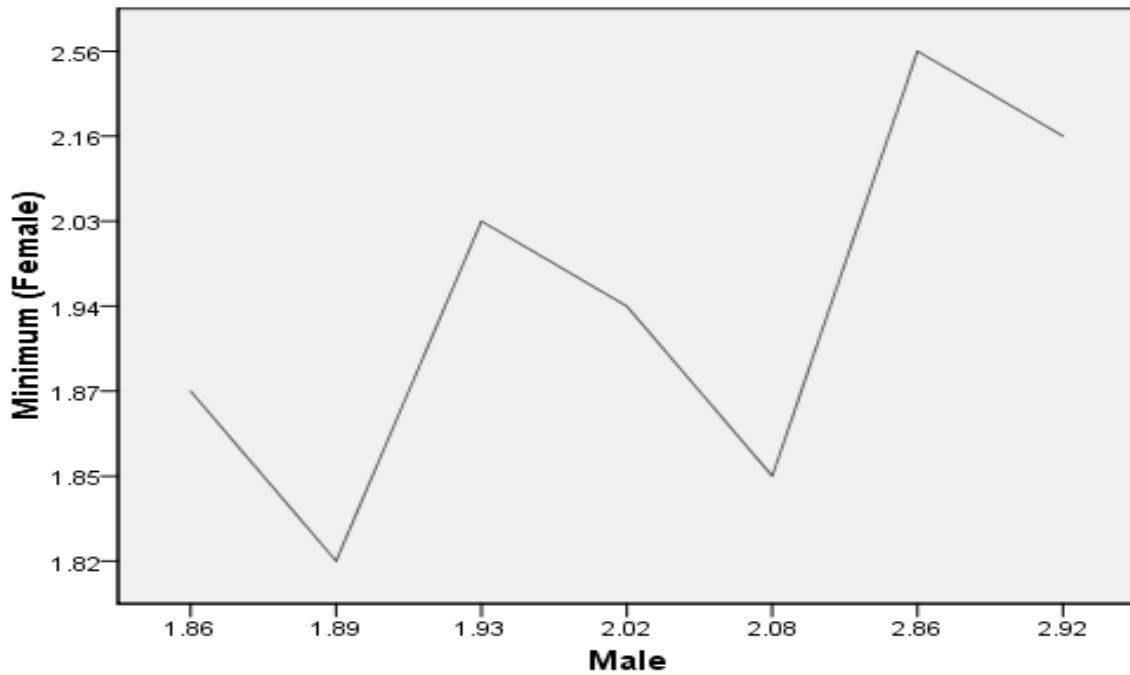
RESULTS

Table 1: Mean Ratings of Respondents on Principal Use of Management by Exception Passive of Transactional Leadership Styles in the Administration of Public Secondary Schools in South-East, Nigeria base on Gender.

S/N	Items Statements	Male	\bar{x}	S.D	Female	\bar{x}	S.D	Decision
1	Principal only intervene when standards are not met by subordinates	211	1.93	0.50	184	2.03	0.54	SD
2	Principal intervene only when performance of subordinates is below expectations	211	2.02	0.51	184	1.94	0.58	SD
3	Principal use punishment as a response to unacceptable performance	211	2.86	0.69	184	2.56	0.71	SD
4	Principal usually concentrated on affairs related to errors in school personnel	211	2.92	0.74	184	2.87	0.82	SD
5	Principal take a passive to leadership issues unless problems become serious in school personnel	211	2.08	0.58	184	2.16	0.59	SD
6	Principal wait until an error occurs before taking action in resource	211	1.86	0.59	184	1.85	0.61	SD
7	Principal is usually indecisive to leadership issues in school personnel	211	1.89	0.62	184	1.87	0.62	SD
8	Principal does not anticipate solution to unforeseen problems in school administration	211	1.93	0.63	184	1.82	0.54	SD
	Overall		2.19	0.61		2.14	0.63	SD

Key: SD= Strongly Disagree; S.D =Mean Value
 Data in Table 1 showed that item 19-20 had mean scores ranging from 2.82-2.92 with the standard deviation scores ranging from 0.69-0.82 for male and female teachers respectively which were above the criterion mean value of 2.50 indicating that the respondents agree that both male and female principals use punishment as a response to unacceptable performance and that principal usually concentrated on affairs related to errors in school personnel. It also showed that the respondents in items 17, 21, 22, 23 and 24 had the mean scores ranging from 1.82-2.03 respectively were below the criterion mean value of 2.50 indicating that the respondents disagree

with the item statement that male and female principals do not apply them as part of management by exception passive of transactional leadership style approach in the administration of public secondary schools. The grand mean and standard deviation scores for male and female teachers' responses were 1.19±0.61 and 2.14±0.63 respectively. Therefore, principals do not apply the management by exception passive of transactional leadership style in the administration of public secondary schools in South-East, Nigeria. This analysis was further elaborated in the graphical representations which showed that clear picture on the mean score.



The above graphical representation of the mean scores of male and female teachers showed the positive movement of the curve which indicate that there is similar opinions on the use of contingent reward approaches of transactional leadership styles in secondary school administration; hence, there is an agreement that principals do not use this approach even

though male respondents had higher responses by not significant.

Research Question 2: How does principal use Laissez Faire approach of transactional leadership styles in the administration of public secondary schools in South-East, Nigeria base on gender?

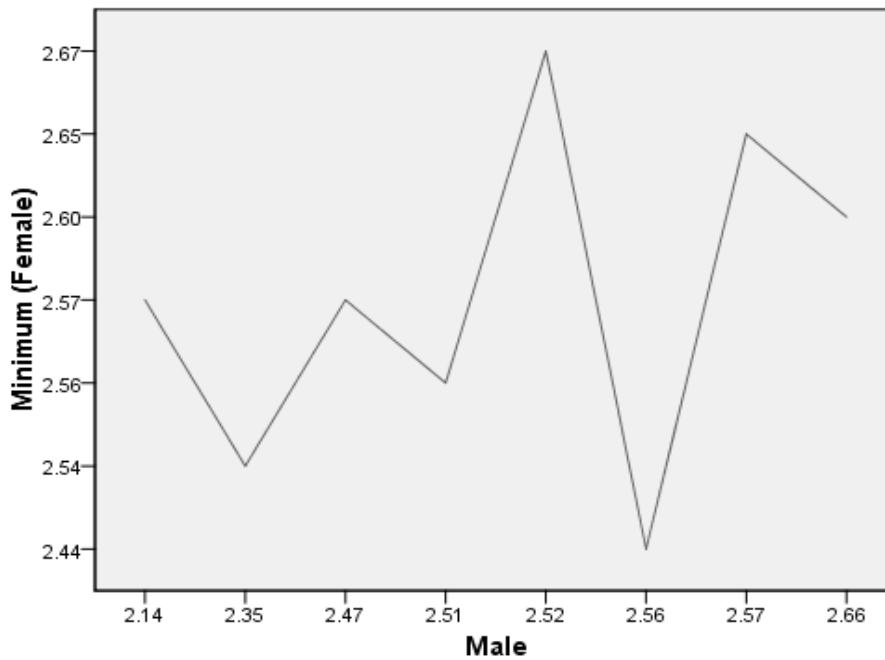
Table 2: Mean Ratings of Respondents on Principal Use Laissez Faire Approach of Transactional Leadership Style in the Administration of Public Secondary Schools in South-East, Nigeria base on Gender

S/N	Items Statements	Male	\bar{x}	S.D	Female	\bar{x}	S.D	Decision
9	Principal provides environment where their subordinates freely make decisions.	211	2.56	0.98	184	2.44	0.88	A
10	Principal shifts his responsibilities to their subordinates	211	2.14	0.71	184	2.57	0.78	A
11	Principal avoids making decisions to give direction to their subordinates	211	2.51	0.59	184	2.56	0.74	A
12	Principal may avoid undertaking any responsibility but only surfaces when he/she is needed by school authority	211	2.47	0.68	184	2.57	0.72	A
13	Principal rarely provides tangible and intangible resource support to enhance teachers' performance	211	2.57	0.69	184	2.65	0.71	A
14	Principal show concern on individual differences by allowing the subordinates to take initiatives in carrying out their duties	211	2.66	0.63	184	2.60	0.66	A
15	Principal does not provide feedback to teachers on administrative decisions	211	2.52	0.57	184	2.67	0.70	A
16	Principal avoid situations in which there are chances to encounter problems	211	2.35	0.70	184	2.54	0.75	A
	Overall		2.47	0.69		2.58	0.74	A

Key: A= Agree; S.D =Mean Value

Data in Table 2 showed that item 25-32 had mean scores ranging from 2.47-2.58 with the standard deviation scores ranging from 0.-0.74 for male and female teachers respectively, which were above the criterion mean value of 2.50 indicating that the respondents disagree that both male and female principals do not apply Laissez Faire Approach of Transactional Leadership Style in the administration of public secondary

schools in South-East, Nigeria. The overall mean and standard deviation scores for male and female teachers' responses were 2.47 ± 0.69 and 2.58 ± 0.74 which when divided would give 2.52. Therefore, principals used Laissez Faire Approach of Transactional Leadership Style in the administration of public secondary schools in South-East, Nigeria. This was further illustrated by the graph below;



The above graphical representation of the mean scores of male and female teachers showed a different movement of the curve which indicate that there is different opinions on the use of contingent reward approaches of transactional leadership styles in

secondary school administration; hence, there is an agreement that principals there is significant difference between male and female principals in the use of Laissez Faire element of transactional leadership styles in the administration of secondary schools in South East Nigeria.

Test of Hypotheses

H₀: There is no significant difference in principals' use of management by exception passive of transactional

leadership styles in the administration of public secondary schools in South-East, Nigeria base on gender.

Table 3: t-test Summary of Male and Female Teachers on the Principals' Use of Management by Exception Passive Approach of Transactional Leadership Style in the Administration of Public Secondary Schools in South-East, Nigeria

S/N	Gender	N	\bar{X}	S.D	Df	T	P-Value	Decision
1	Male	211	1.93	0.50	393	-1.94	0.05	NS
	fFemale	184	2.03	0.54				
2	Male	211	2.02	0.51	393	1.25	0.21	NS
	fFemale	184	1.95	0.58				
3	Male	211	2.36	0.50	393	3.46	0.001	S
	fFemale	184	1.79	0.59				
4	Male	211	2.36	0.50	393	3.76	0.00	S
	fFemale	184	1.50	0.60				
5	Male	211	2.08	0.58	393	-1.36	0.17	NS
	fFemale	184	1.69	0.59				
6	Male	211	1.86	0.59	393	0.14	0.89	NS
	fFemale	184	1.85	0.60				
7	Male	211	1.89	0.62	393	0.41	0.68	NS
	fFemale	184	1.87	0.62				
8	Male	211	1.93	0.53	393	1.86	0.06	NS
	fFemale	184	1.82	0.54				
Overall		395	2.09	0.57	393	0.95	0.26	NS

Key: Significance (S), Not Significant (NS)
 Data in Table 3 showed that the mean values of male and female had a significant difference in only items 19, 20, and not significant difference in items 17, 18, 21, 22, 23 and 24 respectively. It also showed overall t-calculated value of 0.95 and P-value of 0.26 which is greater than the chosen level of significance, 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference in principals' use of

management by exception passive approach of transactional leadership style in the administration of public secondary schools in South-East, Nigeria base on gender was not rejected.
 H₀: There is no significant difference in principals' use of principal use Laissez Faire approach of transactional leadership styles in the administration of public secondary schools in South-East, Nigeria base on gender.

Table 4: t-test Summary of Male and Female Teachers on the Principals' Use of Laissez Faire Approach of Transactional Leadership Style in the Administration of Public Secondary Schools in South-East, Nigeria

S/N	Gender	N _Q	\bar{X}	S.D	Df	T	P-Value	Decision
9	Male	211	2.56	0.98	393	1.34	0.01	NS
	fFemale	184	2.43	0.89				
10	Male	211	2.39	0.71	393	-2.44	0.02	S
	fFemale	184	2.57	0.77				
11	Male	211	2.51	0.59	393	0.78	0.04	NS
	fFemale	184	2.56	0.74				
12	Male	211	2.57	0.69	393	-	0.02	NS
	fFemale	184	2.57	0.72				
13	Male	211	2.65	0.69	393	-1.22	0.02	NS
	fFemale	184	2.66	0.70				
14	Male	211	2.66	0.63	393	0.86	0.00	NS
	fFemale	184	2.60	0.66				
15	Male	211	2.52	0.66	393	-2.37	0.02	S
	fFemale	184	2.67	0.70				
16	Male	211	2.35	0.70	393	-2.54	0.01	S
	fFemale	184	2.54	0.75				
Overall		395	2.55	0.72	393	-8.48	0.02	NS

Key: Significance (S), Not Significant (NS)
 Data in Table 4 showed that the mean values of male and female had a significant difference in only items 26, 31 and 32, and not significant difference in items 25, 27, 28, 29, and 30 respectively. It also showed overall t-calculated value of 0-8.48 and P-value of 0.02 which is lesser than the chosen level of

significance, 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference in principals' use of principal use Laissez Faire approach of transactional leadership styles in the administration of public secondary schools in South-East, Nigeria base on gender was rejected.

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The finding of the study revealed that principals do not apply the management by exception passive of transactional leadership style in the administration of public secondary schools in South-East,

Nigeria. This finding was supported by [19] whose findings submitted that management by exception passive leadership style had a significant impact of the all types of organizational justice

through the affect-based trust but leaders used it to a very low extent. However, the finding is not in tandem with the view of [25] who submitted that when the principals shows a passive approach at work, the social bonding in the school environment is affected and the teachers assume that their principals as supervisors does not intend to work with them in a positive manner and that further diminishes collaboration.

Nevertheless, [17] noted that today's organizational environment is proving to be very different from that of the past. The author pointed out that global competition, information technology, the quality service revolution, diversity and ethics dictated the style of leadership that one uses. Low use of management by exception passive therefore entails the absence of quality leadership by the principals and this would affect the effective administration of secondary schools in Nigeria. The finding of this study showed that the use of management by exception passive reduces the perceptions about the environment of justice and teachers or other staff recognize that they are being deprived of their rights and policies being formulated are not effective, not being communicated to them and are not related to their work performances. Most times principals do not care about the subordinates until situation get worse before they will intervene although, it gives the staff the opportunities to participate in the activities of the school as everything is virtually carried out by them. The result of null hypothesis 1 also showed that there is no significant difference in principals' use of management by exception passive approach of transactional leadership style in the administration of public secondary schools in South-East, Nigeria base on gender. The agreement in opinion showed that the application of passive approach of transactional leadership by principals were the same with regards to male and female principals. This finding was not supported by the finding of [17] whose study submitted that female leaders were rated themselves more favorably than

male leaders in female-dominated and mixed-gender work environments. Only small gender divergences were found in male-dominated settings. Women in female dominated and gender-mixed work environments reported more favorable self-ratings than women in male dominated contexts. Among male leaders, fewer divergences were observed between deferent work environments. This means that the ability of principals in using passive transactional leadership approach in school administration could depends on the social context.

It is imperative to note that schools as an organizations need a leadership style that encourages staff and students' involvement and participation in effective decision making. This finding of this study also agrees with the finding of [19] that employees want to work in a friendly working environment and that they want to know if they are more than just a number and that their thoughts and opinions matter. This is in line with the views of [20] that involving staff in important decisions not only demonstrates that their opinion is valued, but also allows them to evolve as professionals within the organization. Leadership should therefore, create a staff council to discuss school best practices, or bring lower level staff into management meetings to expose them to discussions involving the future of the school. Therefore, gender differences of principals do not hinder the adoption of quality leadership approach in streamlining the actions and strength of staff and students in attaining the objectives of secondary schools in the area.

It is critical however to note that more passive principals wait for the discrepancies to be called to their attention the more problem would surface in school administration. For instance, when autonomy is granted by a leader, subordinates are free to make many of the decisions affecting themselves in their tasks. This decision may be favourable to work environment or not which require urgent attention of the leader. This is the area that passive

leadership style is judged to have failed in monitoring the activities and welfare of the subordinates. However, the principals must not quickly intervene in issues without look into it critically to evaluate the cause and possible solutions to the issues. This however requires training and development on the part of principals to be able to apply this aspect of transactional leadership styles. This is because the principals were not using them which could also be directly linked with incompetence of principals in the use of this element of transactional leadership styles. The finding of this study equally revealed that principals highly used Laissez Faire Approach of Transactional Leadership Style in the administration of public secondary schools in South-East, Nigeria. The high average means of Laissez Faire transactional leadership style signifies the value of leading by examples by the principals. It is the duty of principals to follow his vision and achieve his goals in mutual consensus with his staff in school administration but if a leader always finds faults and errors and never encourages his staff to strive for more, he lacks a true leadership skill and thus is rejected by his staff sooner or later.

This finding collaborates with [13] who finding has shown that laissez-faire leadership was the predominant leadership style practised by both male and female principals. The agreement in finding is a pointer that principals in South East Nigeria provide environment where their subordinates freely make decisions, principal shifts his responsibilities to their subordinates, principal avoids making decisions to give direction to their subordinates, and avoid undertaking any responsibility but only surfaces when he/she is needed by school authority. This idea about laissez faire approach was buttressed by [20] who added that laissez faire approach of transactional leadership is manifested when principals show concern on individual differences by allowing the subordinates to take initiatives in carrying out their duties.

The finding of this study is also in tandem with [22] whose findings laissez faire leadership style significantly affected affective component of teacher commitment in secondary schools, and that the dominant leadership style in secondary schools is laissez faire leadership style. The validity of this finding is that most principals do not care about what goes on in the schools. From the finding of the study, it seems that leaders fail to support the legitimate interests of organizations and staff by ignoring the responsibilities and duties assigned to them and showing little or no concern for staff wellbeing. Staff of secondary schools seem to perceive this inactive, ignorant and ineffective leadership as a sign of psychological contract breach, such that organization failed to fulfill the promised obligations. Although principals use laissez faire leadership style in the administration of secondary schools, the result of null hypothesis which stated that there is significant difference in principals' use of Laissez Faire approach of transactional leadership styles in the administration of public secondary schools in South-East, Nigeria base on gender. This showed that all the respondents agreed that laissez faire leadership style is the main leadership approach used by the principals in secondary schools in south East Nigeria. This means that gender variable like ability and perception are interplays of educational leadership and should be considered in the appointment of leadership positions.

These differences in the use of laissez faire leadership style could also be attributed to other factors like experience, level of education, perception and personal charisma. Although the social role theorist, the males have agentic character, which show steadiness, power, superiority, and self-confidence while females have communal character, which shows emotion, benevolence, helpfulness, compassion, interpersonal sensitivity and gentleness. However, this study showed that male and female principals have the same ability in the use of all the elements of transactional leadership style

irrespective of these theoretical disposition and cultural role expectation. This showed that the application of any leadership style can be learned in school through experiences. Therefore, no matter the role or sex differences in terms of ability and expectations, principals must adopt quality leadership in secondary schools. This view was confirmed by [28] who submitted that gender is not significant on the perception of transactional leadership styles of secondary school principals. Therefore, other factors might be considered that affect principals use of transactional leadership style in the administration of secondary schools in Nigeria.

Nevertheless, the finding was not supported by [20] whose finding held that there were the differences between male and female principals that use the transactional leadership in terms of the source of authority nurturing their leadership and the integration of leadership with principal-teacher relationships. This showed that the application of transactional leadership of principals in secondary school might vary a little in terms of gender because of individual ability. Although, Laissez-faire

Based on the findings of the study, it was discovered that transactional leadership style requires principals encouraging subordinates to participate actively in activities and giving them contingent reward for performance or punishment depending to commitment. The findings of showed that both male and female principals do not use management by exception passive (MBEP) approach of transactional leadership style. It is obvious that when principals do not use these innovative leadership approaches, it would negatively affect the performance of teachers and students in secondary school administration. None use of quality leadership would not impact positively on the overall development of secondary education in Nigeria. However, he finding of the study also revealed that the only transactional leadership

leadership may be the best or the worst of leadership styles, if the leader follows the normally understood definition and standard practice of noninterference and "hands-off" when supposedly leading his or her followers, the worst form of leadership is manifested. However, when the twenty-first century properly prepares his or her followers, laissez-faire leadership emerges as the ultimate form of leading. If staff do not have adequate experience or the required skills, the achievement of targets may be at great risk. Important decisions that need to be taken at short notice can go horribly wrong in school administration. In addition, if staff are not self-driven and disciplined, laissez-faire leadership can lead to a great deal of inefficiency. The team may become prone to repeating mistakes and may fail to get out of problems that they encounter during a project. Teachers may get off track and may not prioritize correctly. The teachers might become apathetic, disinterested, and resentful of the school and their principals. Finally, this leadership might results in the lowest staff productivity and satisfaction of all the leadership styles.

CONCLUSION

approach used by principals in secondary schools was Laissez Faire. It is also obvious that most principals usually shift their responsibilities to teachers without active involvement in school programme of activities. This situation could affect the attainment of the objectives of secondary education in Nigeria. It is essential for school administrators to explore various transactional leadership approaches for effective administrative process. This study concluded that wide range of transactional leadership approaches can be utilized to deal with issues of administrative problems in secondary schools. For principals to administer and manage affair of teachers and students, they must possess transactional leadership skills and understand how to apply its elements in school administration.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the study recommended that:

1. Principals should be trained by the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council annually to acquire the skills in the application of management by exception passive in order not to intervene only when standard or performance are not met by subordinates as well as how to use punishment as a corrective measures and not for victimization of teachers. This
2. Principals should be engaged in seminar organized by Curriculum Organization of Nigeria (CON) to understand the negative effect of laissez fair leadership and develop their ability in building the staff ability, self-esteem and confidence to survive in work environment; as well undertake responsibility together with staff and be readily available when needed by school authority.

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