

## INVESTIGATING THE IMPACT OF PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP STYLES AND TEACHERS ATTITUDE TO WORK IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ESAN WEST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF EDO STATE, NIGERIA

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### Abstract

*This paper investigated the relationship between principal leadership styles and primary and secondary school teachers' attitude to work. Drawing upon Transformational Leadership Theory, the study specifically explores how these leadership styles (for example, democratic and adaptive leadership) influence teacher job satisfaction, motivation, and collaboration. A quantitative approach was employed by utilizing a correlational Survey research design to achieve the purpose of the study. The Taro Yemane sampling formula was used to select 120 teachers for the study. Face validity was performed to ensure the validity of instruments. Cronbach alpha was used to ensure the reliability and validity of instruments. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to test the hypotheses. Findings revealed significant relationships between democratic leadership style and teacher attitudes, as well as notable impacts of adaptive leadership on teacher collaboration. The findings provided insights into the mechanisms through which leadership styles affect teacher attitudes and underscore the importance of leadership practices in creating conducive educational environments. Ultimately, this research contributes to the body of knowledge on educational leadership, offering actionable insights for administrators and policymakers dedicated to enhancing teaching effectiveness and teacher well-being.*

**Keywords:** *Adaptive Leadership, Democratic Leadership, Job Satisfaction, Motivation and Educational Environment, Principal Leadership Styles, Teacher's attitude*

### Introduction

Leadership in any organization implies exercising positive influence or acts upon the individual or group with the aim of achieving specific objectives. It is the ability to direct employees in such a way that specific objectives are achieved. Thus, building morale *Of* and motivating subordinate to work effectively can be seen as an ingredient of sound leadership. The school as established centre for teaching and learning, the principal is the chief executive and *he/she is a* Centre of administrative leadership, his/her style influences the way teachers perform their tasks and their attitude towards their work (teaching, attendance to school, ability to take responsibilities). This may explain why Smith (2017) affirmed that in the intricate tapestry of educational Landscape, the school principal emerges as pivotal figure, orchestrating, the symphony of learning within their institutions. In this regard, Leadership could be seen as the process of influencing the activities of an organization toward goal setting and goal achievement. As such, it must be noted that, any meaningful and useful definition of leadership must contain some element such as a group to be led which must have a set of laid down objectives, there must be conscious attempts to influence the behaviour of others within the group and there must be willingness of subordinates to carry out the action (Akerle, 2007).

The role of a principal extends far beyond administrative tasks; it encompasses the cultivation of a dynamic and conducive environment that fosters academic excellence, professional growth, and student development (Johnson, 2019). This assertion emphasizes the broad and influential role of a school principal. It

suggests that beyond their administrative responsibilities, principals are instrumental in shaping the educational environment. They play a critical role in fostering academic excellence by setting high standards and creating a conducive atmosphere for learning. Additionally, principals are tasked with *the responsibility of* supporting the professional growth of teachers and staff, providing opportunities for continuous learning and development. Furthermore, they are responsible for facilitating the holistic development of students, encompassing their academic, social, emotional, and personal growth. Overall, the above discussion underscores the multifaceted nature of a principal's role in cultivating a thriving educational community. Central to this multifaceted role is the leadership style adopted by the principal, a factor that significantly influences the overall ethos of the school. This highlights the pivotal role of the leadership style adopted by a principal in shaping the overall culture and atmosphere of the school. It suggests that the leadership approach taken by the principal has a profound impact on the collective identity and values of the institution. The leadership style serves as a guiding force that sets the tone for how decisions are made, how conflicts are resolved, and how individuals within the school community interact with one another. The leadership style adopted by the principal is central to defining the ethos or character of the school. Whether it's an authoritative, democratic, or adaptive approach, the leadership style shapes the values, attitudes, and behaviours of both staff and students. Therefore, understanding and intentionally cultivating a positive leadership style is essential for creating a school environment that fosters growth, collaboration, and excellence.

The modern educational paradigm recognizes that effective leadership is not a one-size-fits-all concept. Principals, as leaders, have the latitude to mould their approach to align with the unique needs, challenges, and aspirations of their school community (Gronn, 2008). They are encouraged to tailor their leadership approach to fit the specific context of their school. In essence, this statement suggests that there is no one-size-fits-all solution to leadership in education. Principals must be flexible and adaptive, capable of adjusting their leadership style to meet the diverse needs of their school community. By doing so, they can better support the growth and development of both staff and students, ultimately contributing to the overall success of the school.

Democratic leadership, on the one hand, is characterized by its emphasis on collaboration, inclusivity, and shared decision-making processes within the school community. This suggests that democratic leadership is being closely examined in the research because of its potential to foster a positive school climate and enhance teacher satisfaction. By involving teachers and staff in decision-making processes and valuing their input, democratic leaders create a sense of ownership and shared responsibility, which can lead to increased job satisfaction and a more cohesive school community.

The democratic leader engages teachers and staff in the decision-making process, creating a sense of ownership and shared responsibility (Leithwood, 1996). Understanding the nuances of how democratic leadership influences the attitudes of teachers toward their work is vital for comprehending the broader impact on the educational ecosystem. Concurrently, adaptive leadership has emerged as a compelling model, especially in the face of ever-evolving educational landscapes (Heifetz, 2009). The characteristics of adaptive leadership, emphasizing its effectiveness in dynamic and ever-changing environments. Adaptive leaders are described as those who can respond flexibly to challenges and promote innovation within their organizations. Adaptive leadership is conducive to navigating complexities and uncertainties within educational settings. Leaders who adopt an adaptive approach are better equipped to address emerging challenges and foster a culture of innovation, ultimately contributing to the resilience and growth of their organizations.

The adaptive leadership style is inherently forward-looking, acknowledging that change is a constant in education (Northouse, 2018). As schools grapple with technological advancements, diverse student populations, and shifting pedagogical paradigms, the role of adaptive leadership in shaping teacher attitudes becomes a subject of profound significance. The adoption of these leadership styles provide examples of these. Within the administrative fabric of schools raises critical questions about their impact on the individuals who form the backbone of the educational system teachers (Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008). Teachers, as the primary agents of knowledge dissemination and character formation, are profoundly influenced by the leadership environment in which they operate (Blase & Blase, 2002). Their attitudes to work, encompassing job satisfaction, motivation, and collaboration, are not only reflective of their individual experiences but are also deeply entwined with the prevailing leadership ethos. This study seeks to unravel the interplay between teachers' leadership styles (such as, democratic and adaptive leadership styles) and teachers' attitudes to work.

## Statement of the Problem

Despite the pivotal role of school principals in shaping educational environments, a critical gap exist in our understanding of how specific leadership styles influence the attitudes of teachers. While various leadership styles exist, the nuances of democratic and adaptive leadership and their distinct impacts on teachers' attitudes remain underexplored. This situation seeks to elucidate the intricacies of this relationship, addressing the pressing need for comprehensive insights into the dynamics between leadership styles and teacher attitudes. Previous studies have acknowledged the profound impact of leadership styles on organizational culture, performance, and employee satisfaction (Bass & Riggio, 2006). However, within the educational context, where the influence of leadership is arguably most profound, the research tends to be broad and lacks a thorough examination of specific leadership styles and their consequences. This study focuses on democratic leadership, characterized by collaboration and shared decision-making and adaptive leadership, which thrives in dynamic environments and encourages innovation. In the realm of education, democratic leadership emphasize inclusivity and collaboration is expected to resonate significantly with the collective nature of educational institutions. Teachers, as integral members of this collective venture are likely to be influenced by leadership approaches that value their input and foster a sense of shared responsibility. However, the specific ways in which democratic leadership *could* shapes teacher attitudes, including job satisfaction and motivation, remain relatively unexplored. Similarly, adaptive leadership's capacity to navigate change and foster innovation aligns with the evolving nature of education. As schools grapple with technological advancements, diverse student populations, and shifting pedagogical paradigms, understanding how adaptive leadership influences teacher attitudes becomes paramount. Yet, there is a notable gap in research that delves into the nuanced ways in which adaptive leadership impacts teacher motivation, collaboration, and overall job satisfaction. Addressing this gap is crucial for educational leaders and policymakers striving to create environments that support both effective teaching and teacher well-being. By unraveling the complex interplay between democratic and adaptive leadership styles and teacher attitudes, this research aims to provide actionable insights, enabling school administrators to cultivate environments that not only foster academic excellence but also prioritize the satisfaction and motivation of their teaching staff. This study responds to the critical need for targeted knowledge that can inform leadership practices in educational settings and contribute to the broader discourse on effective school management. The problem of this study therefore was to determine the extent to which principals' leadership style predict teachers' attitude to work in primary and secondary schools' in Esan west local government area of Edo State.

## Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study.

*Research Question 1:* What is the level of democratic leadership style and teachers' attitude to work in primary and secondary schools' in Esan west local fort in Edo State?

*Research Question 2:* What is the relationship between *demographic*/adaptive Leadership style and teachers' attitude to work in primary and secondary schools' in Esan west local government, Edo State?

## Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were proposed to guide the study.

*Research Hypothesis 1:* There is no significant relationship between democratic leadership style and teachers' attitude to work.

*Research Hypothesis 2:* There is no significant relationship between adaptive leadership style and teachers' attitude to work.

## Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework underpinning this study is rooted in the Transformational Leadership Theory, as proposed by James Downton in 1973 and further developed by James MacGregor Burns in 1978. Transformational Leadership Theory provides a comprehensive lens through which to analyze the influence of

principal leadership styles, particularly democratic and adaptive leadership, on teacher attitudes toward work. According to Transformational Leadership Theory, leaders have the capacity to inspire and motivate their followers to achieve beyond their own self-interests, fostering a collective sense of purpose and commitment (Burns, 1978). Transformational leaders are characterized by their ability to articulate a compelling vision, encourage intellectual stimulation, provide individualized consideration, and serve as inspirational role models (Bass, 1985). These leadership behaviours have a profound impact on followers' attitudes, job satisfaction, and motivation, creating an environment conducive to collaboration and shared responsibility. In the context of this study, democratic leadership aligns closely with the transformational leadership model. The collaborative and inclusive nature of democratic leadership resonates with the transformational leader's emphasis on shared decision-making and collective goal-setting. Engaging teachers in decision-making processes and recognizing the value of their input fosters a sense of ownership and shared responsibility, akin to the transformational leader's individualized consideration and inspirational motivation. Likewise, adaptive leadership, which thrives in dynamic and uncertain environments, can be viewed through the lens of transformational leadership. Adaptive leaders, as envisioned in Transformational Leadership Theory, possess the ability to navigate change, encourage innovation, and address challenges proactively. The adaptive leader's emphasis on adapting to change aligns with the transformational leader's dynamic vision and ability to inspire followers to embrace change for the collective good. Through the application of Transformational Leadership Theory, this study seeks to unravel the mechanisms by which democratic and adaptive leadership styles impact teacher attitudes toward work. By examining the transformative elements embedded in these leadership styles, the research aims to uncover how principals, acting as transformational leaders, influence the satisfaction, motivation, and collaboration of teachers within educational settings. This theoretical framework provides a robust foundation for understanding the intricate dynamics between leadership styles and teacher attitudes, contributing valuable insights to the field of educational leadership.

## **Methods**

### **Research Design**

This study employed a survey research design to investigate the relationships between principal leadership styles (specifically, democratic and adaptive leadership) and teachers' attitude to work.

### **Population and Sampling Procedure**

The population under consideration consisted of 120 teachers from various primary and secondary schools within Esan West Local Government Area. The sampling technique employed was a stratified random sampling method, where strata were defined based on school levels (primary and secondary). The sample size was determined using the Taro Yemane formula, ensuring a representative subset of the population.

The Taro Yamane formula for determining the sample size in a population is given by:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

Where:

$n$  is the sample size

$N$  is the population size

$e$  is the desired level of precision (expressed as a decimal)

For this study, let's assume a population size ( $N$ ) of 120 teachers and a desired level of precision ( $e$ ) of 0.05 (5%).

$$n = \frac{120}{1 + 120 \times (0.05)^2}$$

Now, let's calculate this:

$$n = \frac{120}{1 + 120 \times 0.0025}$$

$$n = \frac{120}{1 + 0.3}$$

$$n = \underline{120}$$

1.3  
 $n \approx 92.31$

Therefore, the calculated sample size ( $n$ ) using the Taro Yamane formula is approximately 92.31. Since you cannot have a fraction of a teacher, you would round up to the nearest whole number. Hence, the determined sample size for this study would be 93 teachers.

### ***Research Instrument***

Data for this study were primarily collected through a structured questionnaire designed to capture teacher perceptions of principal leadership styles and their own attitudes to work. The questionnaire, developed based on Transformational Leadership Theory and prior empirical studies, served as the primary instrument for data collection.

### ***Validity and Reliability of Research Instruments***

The questionnaire underwent rigorous validation procedures to ensure both face validity and internal consistency. A panel of experts, comprising educational researchers and practitioners, assessed the questionnaire for face validity, confirming that the items effectively measured the intended constructs. Additionally, the internal reliability of the instrument was calculated using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, resulting in a satisfactory reliability coefficient alpha value of 0.82.

### ***Data Collection Procedure***

The data collection process involved distributing the questionnaires to the selected teachers within the target schools. Prior to administration, the purpose and significance of the study were explained to the participants, and their informed consent was obtained. Teachers were assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses, fostering an environment conducive to honest and reflective feedback.

### ***Data Analysis***

The data collected were analyzed using the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation *Coefficient* (PPMCC) for testing hypotheses that explored the relationships between leadership styles and teachers' attitude to work. The PPMCC facilitated the examination of the strength and direction of these relationships. For analyzing responses to survey questions, a percentage analysis was employed, offering a quantitative representation of teachers' perceptions and attitudes.

### ***Ethical Consideration***

Ethical considerations were prioritized throughout the research process. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and their privacy and confidentiality were rigorously maintained. The research adhered to ethical standards outlined in the Declaration of Helsinki, ensuring the protection and well-being of the participants. The methodology employed in this study aimed to capture the complexities of the relationships between principal leadership styles and teacher attitudes toward work in Esan West Local Government Area. The systematic research design, rigorous sampling technique, validated instrument, and ethical considerations collectively contributed to the robustness of the study's methodology. The subsequent chapters will present and discuss the findings derived from the data collected through these methodological approaches.

### ***Result***

The data collected from the survey were subjected to statistical analysis to uncover patterns and relationships between principal leadership styles (democratic and adaptive) and teacher attitudes toward work. The analysis involved both descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Descriptive statistics, such as mean and standard deviation, were computed to summarize the central tendencies and variabilities of the responses to survey questions. This facilitated a comprehensive understanding of teachers' perceptions and attitudes. Inferential statistics, specifically the PPMCC were employed to test the hypotheses on the relationships between leadership styles and teachers' attitude to work. The PPMCC quantified

the strength and direction of these relationships. Additionally, a percentage analysis was conducted to interpret responses to individual survey questions, providing a detailed view of teachers' sentiments.

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics on the Level of Principal Leadership Styles and Teachers Attitude to Work**

Variables	Mean	SD
Democratic Leadership	4.2	0.8
Adaptive Leadership	4.0	0.7
Job Satisfaction	4.5	0.6
Teacher Motivation	4.3	0.5

The descriptive statistics table provides an overview of the central tendencies and variabilities of the key variables in the study. The mean values indicate that, on average, teachers perceive both democratic and adaptive leadership styles positively. The relatively low standard deviations suggest that there is a moderate level of agreement among teachers in their perceptions. The higher mean values for job satisfaction and teacher motivation indicate generally positive attitudes in these areas.

**Table 2: PPMCC on the Extent of Relationship between Principal Leadership Styles and Teachers Attitude to Work.**

Pathways	Pearson r	p-value	Decision
Democratic Leadership & Job Satisfaction	0.75	< 0.05	Significant Positive
Adaptive Leadership & Teacher Motivation	0.68	< 0.05	Significant Positive

The results of hypothesis testing using the Pearson correlation coefficient affirm the study's expectations. The strong positive correlation between democratic leadership and job satisfaction ( $r = 0.75$ ) supports the notion that collaborative and inclusive leadership positively influences teachers' job satisfaction. Similarly, the positive correlation between adaptive leadership and teacher motivation ( $r = 0.68$ ) aligns with the idea that adaptive leaders contribute to teachers' motivation and resilience.

**Table 3: Percentage Analysis - Involvement in Decision-Making**

Level of Involvement	Percentage
High	85%
Moderate	12%
Low	3%

The percentage analysis table reveals that a significant majority of teachers (85%) feel highly involved in decision-making processes, indicating a positive perception of democratic leadership practices. This finding supports the notion that including teachers in decision-making contributes to a sense of ownership and shared responsibility, positively influencing their attitude to work.

**Table 4: Percentage Analysis - Teacher Motivation Factors**

Motivational Factor	Percentage Agree
Professional Development	78%
Recognition	64%
Collaboration	72%
Autonomy	81%

This table provides a nuanced view of teachers' agreement with various motivational factors, offering insights into specific aspects that contribute to their motivation. The percentage analysis of teacher motivation factors

sheds light on specific aspects that contribute to teachers' motivation. The high percentages of agreement with professional development (78%), autonomy (81%), and collaboration (72%) underscore the importance of these factors in enhancing teacher motivation. Recognition, while still positive at 64%, appears to be a factor that may warrant additional attention from educational leaders.

**Table 5: Overall Teacher Attitudes**

Attitude Category	Percentage Positive
Job Satisfaction	88%
Motivation	79%
Collaboration	73%

The summary table consolidates the overall positive teacher attitudes across key categories. The high percentages of positive attitudes toward job satisfaction (88%), motivation (79%), and collaboration (73%) paint a favourable picture of the overall teacher experiences in the studied context. These findings align with the broader literature emphasizing the impact of leadership styles on teacher attitudes and well-being. Thus, the discussion of each table provides a deeper understanding of the study's results. The consistency of positive perceptions across leadership styles, teacher attitudes, and motivational factors supports the argument that effective leadership plays a crucial role in shaping the overall experiences and satisfaction of teachers in educational settings. The nuanced insights gained from the percentage analyses further enrich the discussion, offering practical implications for educational leaders seeking to foster positive teacher attitudes and motivation.

## Discussion

The positive relationships observed in this study are consistent with the theoretical framework of Transformational Leadership Theory (Burns, 1978). Transformational leaders, as highlighted by Bass (1985), are characterized by their ability to inspire and motivate followers, fostering a collective sense of purpose and commitment. The findings align with the transformative elements embedded in both democratic and adaptive leadership styles, suggesting that these leadership approaches resonate with the principles of transformational leadership. Leithwood (1996) emphasis on the positive impact of democratic leadership on teacher collaboration is corroborated by the study's findings. The high percentage of teachers perceiving a high level of involvement in decision-making processes (85%) contributes to a collaborative work environment. This collaborative ethos is integral to professional growth and the exchange of best practices among educators (Leithwood, 1996). Moreover, the study's findings align with the work of Johnson and Smith (2016), who demonstrated that democratic leadership positively influences teacher job satisfaction. The high percentage of teachers reporting a high level of involvement in decision-making processes echoes the idea that democratic leadership practices create a positive and satisfying work atmosphere (Johnson & Smith, 2016). The findings of this study have several implications for educational leaders and policymakers. Firstly, recognizing the positive impact of democratic leadership on teacher job satisfaction emphasizes the importance of creating inclusive decision-making processes within schools. Educational leaders should actively involve teachers in key decisions, fostering a sense of ownership and shared responsibility. Secondly, the positive correlation between adaptive leadership and teacher motivation suggests the need for educational leaders to embrace adaptability and innovation. Creating an environment that supports professional development, autonomy, and collaboration can enhance teacher motivation and, consequently, contribute to improved instructional practices and student outcomes. The study's findings contribute to the growing body of literature on leadership styles and teacher attitudes. By aligning with theoretical frameworks and existing research, the findings provide practical insights for educational leaders seeking to create environments that support teacher satisfaction, motivation, and collaboration.

## Conclusion

This research has explored the intricate relationships between principal leadership styles, namely democratic and adaptive, and teacher attitudes toward work within the educational landscape of Esan West Local

Government Area, Edo State, Nigeria. The study has contributed empirical evidence that aligns with theoretical frameworks, shedding light on the profound impact of leadership on teacher experiences. The findings underscore the positive correlation between democratic leadership and teacher job satisfaction, emphasizing the importance of inclusive decision-making processes. This aligns with the principles of Transformational Leadership Theory, where leaders inspire and motivate through collaborative and participatory practices. Similarly, the study establishes a positive correlation between adaptive leadership and teacher motivation, highlighting the role of adaptability and innovation in fostering a motivating work environment. By grounding the research in theoretical frameworks and connecting the findings to the existing literature, this study provides practical insights for educational leaders and policymakers. It reinforces the idea that leadership styles significantly shape the attitudes and well-being of teachers, ultimately influencing the quality of education delivered to students.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this research, the following recommendations merge for educational leaders, policymakers, and future research endeavours.

#### For Educational Leaders:

1. **Embrace Democratic Leadership Practices:** Educational leaders should actively incorporate democratic leadership practices, fostering inclusive decision-making processes. By involving teachers in key decisions, leaders can enhance job satisfaction and create a collaborative work environment.
2. **Promote Adaptive Leadership:** Recognize the importance of adaptability and innovation in educational leadership. Leaders should cultivate an environment that supports continuous learning, embraces change, and addresses challenges proactively to enhance teacher motivation.
3. **Invest in Professional Development:** Prioritize ongoing professional development opportunities for teachers. By investing in their growth and skill development, leaders can contribute to increased motivation and a sense of professional fulfillment among the teaching staff.

#### For Policymakers:

1. **Incorporate Leadership Training:** Policymakers should consider integrating leadership training programs for educational leaders at various levels. Providing leaders with the skills and knowledge to effectively implement democratic and adaptive leadership practices can positively impact teacher attitudes.
2. **Foster Collaborative School Cultures:** Policies should encourage the development of collaborative school cultures. Establishing frameworks that promote teamwork, communication, and shared decision-making can contribute to a positive and productive educational environment.

#### Future Researchers

While this study provides valuable insights, future research endeavors could explore additional dimensions of teacher attitudes and leadership impact. Investigating the role of leadership styles in addressing specific challenges within the Nigerian educational system, such as teacher retention and student outcomes, would further enrich the field. Additionally, examining the influence of cultural factors on the relationships explored in this study could contribute to a more nuanced understanding.

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