

**PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP STYLES AND TEACHERS' ACADEMIC OPTIMISM AS FACILITATORS OF STUDENT ACADEMIC SUCCESS AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN EJIGBO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF OSUN STATE**

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**Abstract**

*The study investigated principal leadership styles (Transformational, Transactional, Leader Member Exchange) and Teachers Academic Optimism as facilitators of Students academic success among secondary school students in Ejigbo local government area of Osun state. The research adopted a descriptive research design. Three hundred (300) copies of the questionnaire were distributed for administration, out of which 290 were returned, implies that 96.6% of the participants actually partook in the study. Three research questions were raised and answered. Data collected were analyzed using of Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and Regression analysis. The findings indicated that there was a significant relationship between principal leadership styles (transformational, transactional, leader member exchange), teachers academic optimism and academic success.; transformational ( $r = .730, p < 0.01$ ), transactional ( $r = .329, p < 0.01$ ), leader member exchange ( $r = .710, p < 0.01$ ) and teachers academic optimism ( $r = .613, p < 0.01$ ) This implies that all the independent variables (principal leadership styles and teachers academic optimism) played significant roles on the student academic success. Further result revealed that the value of  $R = .337, R^2 = .114$ , while  $Adj. R^2 = .101$ . This implies that all the four factors combined together accounted for 10.1% variance in the prediction of student academic success. This implies that there was a significant contribution of principal leadership styles and teachers academic optimism to the student academic success among secondary schools students in Ejigbo area of Osun state. It is therefore recommended that, principals should increase their use of transactional leadership style in their management of schools to boost their student's performance as well as their teachers' confidence which could lead to excellent academic success.*

**Keywords: Academic success, Transformational, Transactional, Leader member exchange, Academic optimism**

**Introduction**

Academic success is predicated by students' engagement in educationally purposeful activities, satisfaction, acquisition of desired knowledge, skills and competencies, persistence, attainment of educational outcomes, and post-college performance (Kuh, 2006). This simply means that the concept of academic success varies from researcher to researcher. Ellis & Worthington (1994) and Scheuerman (2000) explained academic success as the term that refers to those successful students who have ability and endeavour to manage the demand of university effectively both in society and academic, to have a desire to be successful and to be considered as socially proficient, intrinsically motivated and goal oriented. According to Strydom (1996), by continuous improvement of learning, learners develop and get used to a specific circumstances adequately basing on their specific demands as well as faculties existing in the circumstances which is described as academic success. Generally, academic success can simply be defined as student self-motivation, self-efficiency and his power to cope with the study environment, while the only goal is to achieve excellent academic performance at high school, college or university. Academic success is crucial for any student who aspires for a greater height in life. Several students could wish to be successful in life but factors that could promote academic success might be absent in them. That is, it is not every individual that aspire to succeed in their academic endeavours that does so, there are several factors that inhibits or promotes academic success. This

study therefore, explored principal leadership styles (transactional, transformational and leader member exchange) and teachers academic optimism as facilitators of students' academic success among secondary school students in Ejjigbo local government area of Osun state.

Adeyemi (2010) defined leadership style as the ability of a leader to get tasks done with the assistance and cooperation of people in a school system. The concept of a principal's 'leadership style' is familiar to administrative staff for there are many textbooks and literature that deal with it. According to Daft and Noe (2001), a principal's leadership style has an effect on teachers as well as students. The principal's leadership style influences the efficiency and also the effectiveness of the teachers' performance in school (Alageheband, 1997). Chandan (1987) define leadership style as the ingredient of personality embodied in leaders that causes subordinates to follow them. Okumbe (1998) on the other hand defines leadership styles is particular behaviours applied by a leader to motivate subordinates to achieve the objectives of the organization. It refers to the underlying needs of the leader that motivate his behaviour (Siskin, 1994; Okeniyi, 1995). It is the manifestation of the dominant pattern of behaviour of a leader (Olaniyan, 1999; Okurumeh, 2001). It is also a process through which principal influences a teacher or group others in the attainment of educational goals (Akinwumiju and Olaniyan, 1996; Adeyemi, 2006). Therefore, the leadership style of a principal depends on the leaders' behaviours. This behaviour is the main foundation for choosing efficient leadership style (Douglas, 1996).

Transformational leaders motivate others to do more than they originally intended and often even more than they thought possible (Bass & Avolio, 1994). The transformational leadership style can be divided into four dimensions: the idealized influence, the inspirational motivation, the intellectual stimulation and the individual consideration (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Idealized influence implicates a socialized charismatic leader related to beliefs, values and missions. Idealized influence is dependent on the degree followers want to emulate the leader due to veneration, recognition and trust. Inspirational motivation bears on the degree to which leaders motive followers by challenging them, enthusiastic communication of visions, optimism and encouragement. Intellectual stimulation is the degree to which leaders stimulate followers to view problems from a different angle and to be innovative and creative to find solutions. Individual consideration is the degree to which the leader is concerned for follower's needs and competencies and to offer supportive environment to exploit these (Bass, Avolio and Jung, & Berson, 2003). Koh, Steers and Terborg (1995), investigated the effects of transformational leadership on teacher attitudes and student performance in Singapore and the findings explain that transformational leadership was to be associated with additional positive effects in predicting organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behaviour and teacher satisfaction. Leithwood and Jantzi (1999) conducted a research in Canada and provide findings that transformational leadership has strong positive effects on organizational conditions (school and classroom conditions). School conditions included variables such as school planning and organizational culture, while classroom conditions referred to instructional services, and policies and procedures and also found that the effects of transformational leadership on students' academic achievement are no doubt weak but more significant and more positive.

Transactional leadership is a style of leadership in which leaders promote compliance by followers through both rewards and punishments. Through a rewards and punishments system, transactional leaders are able to keep followers motivated for the short-term. Transactional leaders set goals, articulate explicit agreements regarding what the leader expects from organizational members and how they will be rewarded for their efforts and commitment, and provide constructive feedback to keep everybody on task (Vera & Crossan, 2004). Transactional leadership establishes and standardizes practices that will help the organization reach maturity, emphasizing setting of goals, efficiency of operation, and increase of productivity. People with this leadership style also can punish poor work or negative outcomes, until the problem is corrected (Bass and Bernard, 2008). Transactional leaders are

concerned with processes rather than forward-thinking ideas. Transactional leaders are generally split into three dimensions: contingent reward, management-by-exception: active and management-by-exception: passive (Aamodt, 2016). Findings in the study conducted by Walumbwa (2004), on the full range leadership framework (the effect of transformational and transactional leadership on followers' outcomes) and its effect on three instructional outcomes in a university setting and discovered that increases in ratings of instructors' transformational leadership were associated with increases in student ratings of their willingness to exert extra effort, their perceptions of their teachers' effectiveness, and their satisfaction with them, while transactional leadership did not make any significant contribution. Walumbwa (2004), determined that the teacher who employ transformational leadership in their classrooms are perceived as effective teachers and students are willing to exert extra effort for such teachers and are satisfied, students should report increases in traditional learning outcomes when they perceive from their instructors as transformational than they would of transactional leaders.

The last variable in this study is teachers' academic optimism. Academic optimism at the teacher's level is made up of teacher's sense of efficacy, his trust in students and parents, and his emphasis on academic affairs (Hoy, Hoy & Kurz, 2008). It has been proved that teachers' academic optimism affects on students' academic achievement (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998). As Huang & Chang (1996) believe perception of the teacher's support influenced self-efficacy, finally resulting in academic achievement. Also helpfulness of the teacher as a result of optimism leads to students' better performance (Levpuscek and Zupancic, 2009). As far as students spend just one-third of schools hours to successful learning tasks, known as academic learning time (Woolfolk, 2010), and the hours they are engaged in learning task is positively related to their learning (Weinstein & Mignano, 2007), it is very important to engage them in learning task. The best person who can do this learning task is the teacher. Undoubtedly the teacher who believes his own self efficacy and that of his students can promote excellent learning. It can then be concluded that when students feel that their teachers believes in them and their ability to succeed without any doubt, they come to the conclusion that their teachers are providing them enabling environment and support to succeed in school and in their future endeavour, While much has been written about factors that promotes academic success among secondary school in Ejigbo area of Osun state only few has addressed the concept of teachers academic optimism vis a vis academic success hence this study therefore, investigates principal leadership styles (transformational, transactional, leader member exchange), and teachers academic optimism as facilitators of student academic success among secondary schools students in Ejigbo Local Government area of Osun State.

### **Methodology**

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. A study is classified as descriptive if it attempts to describe systematically a situation, phenomenon, challenge or provides information about issues such as the living condition of a community, or describes attitudes towards an issue. The study investigated principal leadership styles (Transformational, Transactional, Leader Member Exchange) and Teachers Academic Optimism as facilitators of students' academic success among secondary school students in Ejigbo local government area of Osun state. The research population in this study consisted of all secondary schools within the educational system of Ejigbo Local Government area of Osun state. This secondary education exhibit large the same features whether they are federal, state or private owned schools. The set up is similar and they depend largely on the same curriculum given by the federal ministry of education. Two hundred and ninety (290) secondary school students comprising of 182 females and 108 males ages ranging from 14 -19 years from eight different secondary schools were randomly selected for this study using multi stage sampling techniques.

The academic success scale developed by Smith, García and Mckeachie (1991) was used to measure student academic success in their educational pursuits. The scale consists of 30 items and each item was rated using 5 point Likert scoring ranging from Strongly Agree = 5 to Strongly Disagree = 1.

Two of the items are: 1). “I need other people to encourage me to study.” and “What I learn in some course subjects can be used in others and also in my future profession”. It has reliability coefficient of  $\alpha = .897$ . The transformational scale was developed by Wasti (2001). The scale was developed to measure transformational leadership style of leaders in schools on student academic success. The scale has a variety of items with different response scales and formats. The scale consists of 22 items and each item was rated using 5 point Likert scoring scale which include; Never=1, Rarely=2, Sometimes =3, Regularly= 4 Very Frequently=5. Two sample items are: “My teacher tries to enhance my internal motivation when s/he wants to motivate me for a task.” and “My teacher knows about our competencies, work-related personal concerns and needs and how to motivate each of us.” The developers reported that it has reliability alpha of 0.80. In this study reliability alpha of 0.687 was obtained.

The transactional scale was developed by Flyvbjerg (2006). The scale was developed to measure the transactional style on student success. It contains of 16 items ranging from Never=1, Rarely=2, Sometimes =3, Regularly= 4 Very Frequently=5. Two samples item are: “My teacher is able to control his/her temper and handles difficulties rationally” and “My teacher has good understanding of the emotions of people around him/her. The developers reported reliability of .78 while reliability of 0.875 was also reported in this study. The leader member exchange scale was developed by Pellegrini & Scandura (2006). The scale was developed to measure the leader member exchange style on student success. It contains of 16 items ranging from Never=1, Rarely=2, Sometimes =3, Regularly= 4 Very Frequently=5. Two samples item are: “My teacher gives advice to his/her students on different matters as if he/she were an elder family member.” and “My teacher allows me to have a say in matters concerning my performance. The developers reported reliability of  $\alpha = .86$  and reliability of 0.88 was obtained in this study.

The teacher academic optimism scale was developed by DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran, (2001). It was used to measure the teacher academic optimism on student success. It contains 12 items ranging from Never=1, rarely=2, Sometimes =3, regularly= 4 Very Frequently=5. Two samples item are: “My teachers believe that we students are competent learners.” and “Students in my classroom can achieve the goals set for them. The developers reported reliability of  $\alpha = .93$  and 0.86 was obtained in this study. Questionnaires were used to collect data from participants in the study. Permission was obtained from the school authorities before the participants were asked to complete the questionnaires. Ethical issues of assurances were given on the basis of confidentiality and discretion of the study. The participants were informed of the purposes and/or objectives of the study, and its seriousness. Instructions on how to complete the questionnaires were given and, they were encouraged to be truthful as much as possible in their responses. Having obtained an approval from the school authorities to conduct the study, students were informed about the procedure and thereafter the administration of the questionnaires were done. The administration of the questionnaires involved two other research assistants who assisted in the distributions and retrieval of the questionnaires. The data obtained from the field were subjected to necessary statistical test Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and regression analysis to test the relationship between independent variables and the dependent variable. The various research questions generated for the study were tested at 0.05 levels of significance.

**Results**

**Research Question 1:** What is the significant relationship that exists between the (principal leadership styles (transformational, transactional, leader member exchange), teacher's academic optimism and student academic success among secondary schools students in Ejigbo Local Government area of Osun State?

**Table 1:** Summary of correlation matrix showing the relationship between the study variables

	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	SD
Academic Success	1.000					100.79	17.65
Transformational	.730**	1.000				63.6200	10.11
Transactional	.329**	.115**	1.000			43.67	13.05
Leader Member Exchange	.710**	.542**	.219**	1.000		55.14	14.39
Academic Optimism	.613**	.315**	.272**	.878**	1.000	35.99	10.18

\*\*Correlation is significant at 0.01(2-tailed)

Source: Field survey

Table 1 above reveals the inter-correlational matrix of the independent variables (principal leadership styles (transformational, transactional, leader member exchange), and teachers academic optimism) and dependent variable (student academic success) some secondary school students in Ejigbo local government area of Osun State. All the independent variables (principal leadership styles (transformational, transactional, leader member exchange) and teachers academic optimism) were positively correlated with academic success among secondary schools students in Ejigbo area of Osun State; transformational leadership style had significant relationship with student academic success ( $r = .730$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), transactional leadership style had significant relationship with student academic success, ( $r = .329$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), leader member exchange style also had significant relationship with student academic success ( $r = .710$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and lastly, teachers academic optimism had significant relationship with student academic success ( $r = .613$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ).

**Research Question Two:** What is the joint contribution of (principal leadership styles (transformational, transactional, leader member exchange), and teachers academic optimism) to student academic success among secondary schools students in Ejigbo Local Government area of Osun State.?

**Table 2: Multiple Regression Analysis on Student Academic Success**

Multiple R= .337

Multiple  $R^2 = .114$

Multiple  $R^2$ (adjusted)=.101

Standard error of estimate= 16.84943

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	10429.703	4	2607.426	9.184	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	81196.359	286	283.903		
Total	91626.062	290			

Source: Field Survey



The Table above shows the joint contribution of the independent variables principal leadership styles (transformational, transactional, leader member exchange), and teachers academic optimism) to dependent variable (student academic success) among secondary schools students in Ejigbo local government area of Osun State. The value of  $R = .337$ , while  $R^2 = .114$ ,  $Adj. R^2 = .101$ . This implies that all the four factors combined together accounted for 10.1% variance in the prediction of student academic success among secondary schools students in Ejigbo local government area of Osun State. The ANOVA result from the regression analysis indicates that there was a significant joint contribution of the independent variables principal leadership styles (transformational, transactional, leader member exchange), and teachers academic optimism) on the dependent variable (student academic success),  $F(9, 184, p < 0.01)$  among secondary schools students in Ejigbo, Osun State.

**Research question three:** What is the relative contribution of principal leadership styles (transformational, transactional, leader member exchange), and teachers academic optimism) to student academic success among secondary schools students in Ejigbo Local Government area of Osun State?

**Table 3: Relative contribution of each of the independent factors to the prediction of student academic success**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error			
(Constant)	77.425	8.087		9.574	.000
Transformational	.100	.098	.158	1.028	.003
Transactional	.479	.080	.350	6.023	.000
Leader Member Exchange	.112	.143	.102	.115	.001
Academic Optimism	.109	.206	.162	.528	.002

Source: Field Survey

Table 3 above revealed the contribution of principal leadership styles (transformational, transactional, leader member exchange), teachers academic optimism to dependent variable (student academic success) among secondary schools students in Ejigbo local government area of Osun State. Transactional leadership style has the highest contribution to student academic success ( $\beta = .350$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), and this was followed by teachers academic optimism ( $\beta = .162$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), transformational leadership style ( $\beta = .158$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and lastly, leader member exchange style ( $\beta = .102$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ).

### Discussion

The results reveal that there is positive significant relationship among the independent variables (principal leadership styles (transformational, transactional, leader member exchange), teacher's academic optimism and dependent variable (student academic success) among secondary schools students in Ejigbo local government area of Osun State. The findings of this study revealed that there exists relationship between the leadership styles and academic optimism of the teachers in school settings and academic success. This finding was corroborated by the work of Oredein, 2000 and Goldhaber & Brewer (1997) who averred that the level of academic success of the students is predicated on leader member exchange, the leadership style of the teachers, either transformational or transactional and the state of teachers' academic optimism. In essence, the transformational nature of the teachers would increase the propensity of the students' success in their studies. This view was laid credence to by Geijsel, Slegers, Leithwood and Jantzi (2003), who believe in the transformational leadership style as a source of intellectual stimulation. There is need to know that every teacher should see his/her role as important towards producing the best crops of students in the secondary schools. The academic success of the students cannot be compromised and should be taken seriously. As a

result of this, every stakeholder needs to imbibe the attribute of showcasing transformational leadership quality as this would go a long way in making the society a pride of place in terms of developing the capacity of the young adults (secondary school students) to a global standard in academic attainment.

The result shows that, principal leadership styles (transformational, transactional, leader member exchange), and teachers academic optimism) significantly contributed to (student academic success) among secondary schools students in Ejigbo, Osun State. This is justified by the value of  $R = .337$ ,  $R^2 = .114$ ,  $\text{Adj. } R^2 = .101$ . The ANOVA result from the regression analysis also indicates that  $F = (9.184, p < 0.01)$  This implies that all the four factors combined together accounted for 10.1% variance in the prediction of student academic success of the participants. This result was corroborated by the findings of (Walumbwa, Wang, Lawler and Shi, 2004.; Harvey, Royal and Stout, 2003; and Hanushek, 1986) when they asserted that leadership styles as well as teachers confidence are catalysts to academic achievement and success of the students. Therefore, the combination of the factors produced a significant influence on academic success of the students. The combination of transformational, transactional, leader member exchange and teachers academic optimism at a moderate level ultimately would impact in a favourable way on the academic success of the students. This is because it would showcase an exposure of holistic treatment towards the students which essentially would enhance their academic success. The significant level of these four factors combined is an indication that they would be able to enhance the performance of the students in their studies.

The study revealed that principal leadership styles (transformational, leader member exchange), and teachers academic optimism) had positive relative contribution, to dependent variable (student academic success) among secondary schools students in Ejigbo, Osun State, while transactional leadership style had the most significant contribution to students' academic success this was followed by teachers academic optimism, transformational and lastly, leader member exchange style. This was supported by the studies of previous scholars (Afe, 2001; Oredein, 2000; Koh, Steers and Terborg (1995). There were unanimous submissions by these scholars that transactional leadership style, transformational leadership, teacher academic optimism and leader member exchange would spur students to better academic success, rather than decreasing it. In the light of this, it can then be concluded that, the principal styles and teacher optimism are predictors of academic success among secondary school students of Ejigbo local government area of Osun state.

### **Conclusion**

The possibility that some of the respondents may not be honest with their responses may affect the result. However, the number of the responses was good enough for meaningful generalization of the result. The area covered may not have been large enough. In spite of these limitations, the purpose of the study has been achieved.

### **Recommendations**

It was accordingly recommended that:

1. Principals increase their use of transactional and transformational leadership styles in their management of schools to enhance academic success of their students.
2. Teachers in secondary schools in Ejigbo local government area should be encouraged to increase their use of positive behaviour like optimism in the management of secondary schools students to improve their academic attainment.
3. The ministry of education could use these findings to formulate continuous training programs for principals and teachers as this in no small way leads to excellent academic success among secondary schools students in Ejigbo area and generally in Osun state.

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