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LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES AND STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE  
IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KWARA STATE  
CENTRAL SENATORIAL DISTRICT, NIGERIA

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**Abstract**

*This paper examined the relationship between leadership strategies and students' academic performance in public and private secondary schools in Kwara state central senatorial district. Correlation survey method was employed. For the purpose of the study 50 public and 25 recognised private secondary schools were used out of 125 identified in Kwara State Central Senatorial District which was 60% of the selected sampled secondary schools. Random sampling technique was used to select 2025 subjects, (teachers and students) with 750 from private and 1275 from public secondary schools. Two researcher-designed instruments tagged "Leadership Strategies Questionnaire" (LSQ) and "Students' Academic Performance Format" (SAFF) were used to collect relevant data. These instruments were validated by experts from Educational Management and Social Sciences Education Departments. Pearson Product Moment correlation statistic was used to test the main and one to three operational hypotheses, hypothesis four was tested with t-test statistic, while hypothesis five was tested with ANOVA and Duncan Multiple Range Test (DMRT) at 0.05 level of significance. The findings showed that there was a significant positive relationship between principals' leadership strategies and students' academic performance in public and private secondary schools in Kwara State central senatorial district, Nigeria. Based on the findings, it was recommended that government at all levels should put in place improved Quality Control System (QCS) that can oversee the day-to-day running of the public secondary schools and private secondary schools in Kwara State.*

**Keywords:** Leadership strategies, Students' academic performance, Secondary schools, Kwara State

**Introduction**

The awareness that education is one of the vital instruments in national development made the federal government of Nigeria to take a keen look at the formal 6-3-3-4 system of education with a view to improve it, thereby coming with the Universal Basic Education Programme. This was launched by the then President Olusegun Obasanjo in September, 1999. The major objective of the UBE programme is to provide free, universal and compulsory basic education for every Nigerian child between the ages of 6 and 15 years. However, for the universal basic education programme to be truly free and universal and to achieve its aim, it must be managed by effective leaders. Secondary school is the gate way between primary school and university education as to produce and bring out standard academic results. No matter its method of education or policy, leadership is very germane to the achievement of the school goals.

Adesina (1983) pointed out that the achievement of these goals depends, to a large extent, on leadership strategies being put in place by the school head to achieve the school goals. For example, studies conducted by Glasser (1990), Sergiovanum (1987), Cotton and Conitredson (1989) and Omosidi (1998) believed that the influence of leadership strategies

on students' academic performance cannot be overemphasized. This is because the act of leading and managing effective schools to the respond of the increasingly complex demands of the society and students' academic excellence requires the knowledge and technical skills of committed and competent leaders.

The general notions that private secondary schools performed academically better than public secondary schools. Many attributed this to the qualities of leadership in the two types of schools. For example, Jimoh (2003) found that private secondary schools performed better, academically than public secondary schools in Kwara state. Ajayi (1998) and Oloyede (2008) also confirmed that there was a significant difference in students' academic performance in private and public secondary schools in Ekiti and Kwara states respectively. Also, the studies of Olutade (1997); Okon (2001) and Balogun (2002) only focused on the principal as the main source of authority and influence on the students' academic success in secondary schools. However, current international studies such as Bell, Bolan and Cubillo (2003); Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris and Hopkins (2006); Marxarmo, Waters, McNully, (2006) and Robinson (2007) clearly identified the term leadership as very paramount source of influence on students' academic achievement in schools. Collaborative leadership includes both principals and academic officers. This goes with Nigerian adage that "a tree cannot make a forest". It is as a result of this background that this paper intends to look at the relationship between leadership strategies and students' academic performance in public and private secondary schools in Kwara State Central Senatorial District, Nigeria.

#### **Purpose of the Study**

The study investigated the relationship between leadership strategies and students' academic performance in private and public secondary schools in Kwara State Central Senatorial District, Nigeria. Specifically the study set to examine the relationship between:

1. instructional leadership strategy and students' academic performance in public and private secondary schools in Kwara state
2. transactional leadership strategy and students' academic performance in public and private secondary schools in Kwara state
3. transformational leadership strategy and students' academic performance in public and private secondary schools
4. to determine the difference in the leadership strategies adopted between public and private schools in Kwara State
5. to determine the difference in the students' academic performance between public and private secondary schools in Kwara State

#### **Scope and Delimitation of the Study**

This study covered all the public and private secondary schools in Kwara State Nigeria. There are 342 public and private secondary schools in Kwara state that comprising three senatorial districts, namely: Kwara Central, North and South. However, the study was limited to only Kwara Central Senatorial District with the number of 125 public and private secondary schools.

#### **Significance of the Study**

The findings would assist the policy makers, educational leaders and researchers to identify the most effective leadership strategy that would bring about improvements in the teaching and learning in public and private secondary schools. It would also constitute a helpful

source of data for educational leaders and policy makers to adopt the most leadership strategies that are appropriate in achieving the desired school goals.

#### Literature Review

The influence of leadership strategies on students' academic achievement had been established in many literatures in the past. For example, Leithwood (2000), Cosins (1994), Mitchell and Tucher (1992), Adepoju (2001), Elbert and Stone (1998), Oloyede (2008) and Yusuf (2007). Leithwood (2000) conducted study on transformational leadership strategies and students' academic achievement in High school in San Francisco, USA. The study measured transformational leadership strategy using criteria such as (1) helping staff members develop and maintain a collaborative professional schools culture; (2) fostering teachers' development; and helping teachers' to solve problem. Leithwood (2002) also measured students' academic achievement using standardized final examination. The study found that transformational leadership strategy had significant influence on students' academic achievement, professional school climate culture had significant influence on students' academic performance, fostering teaching development had significant influence on students' academic achievement and that helping teachers to solve problems had significant influence on students' academic achievement.

Another study of Consins (1994) investigated relationship between transformational leadership strategy and organizational learning in Illinois University, U.S.A. The transformational leadership was measured by practices that were helpful in fostering organizational learning in terms of (1) vision building (2) individual support (3) building and holding helpful performance expectation, while organizational learning was determined in terms of school improvement efforts. The findings showed that transformational leadership strategy had positive significant relationship with organizational improvement and the effectiveness was found to be more than any other effect. The result confirmed that transformational leadership stimulated organizational improvement in all ramifications.

Yusuf (2007) investigated the relationship between leadership styles and job performance in four selected university libraries in northern Nigeria, using a Leadership Style Identification Questionnaire (LSIQ). Data was analysed using percentage and Pearson product moment correlation statistic. The findings of the study indicated that there was no significant relationship between leadership styles and job performance.

Oloyede (2008) studied leadership strategies, discipline and students' academic achievement in public and private secondary schools in Kwara state, Nigeria. The study used stratified random sampling technique to select the sample from the population which comprised the Principals, Vice principals, Heads of Departments, Class teachers and the school counsellors. The sub-variables used to measure leadership strategies were; instructional transformational and transactional leadership strategies and students' academic achievement was measured based on the students' performance in five selected core subjects in SSCE examination. The findings revealed that instructional, transformational and transactional leadership strategies had moderate and positive correlation with students' academic achievement. The result showed that though all the strategies had high correlation, instructional leadership was found to be mostly preferred.

#### Research Hypotheses

One main and five operational hypotheses guided the study.

##### Main hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between leadership strategies and students' academic performance in private and public secondary schools in Kwara State Central Senatorial District.

**Operational hypotheses**

- Ho<sub>1</sub> There is no significant relationship between instructional leadership strategy and students' academic performance in private and public secondary schools in Kwara State Central Senatorial District.
- Ho<sub>2</sub> There is no significant relationship between transactional leadership strategy and students' academic performance in private and public secondary schools in Kwara State Central Senatorial District.
- Ho<sub>3</sub> There is no significant relationship between transformational leadership strategy and students' academic performance in private and public secondary schools in Kwara State Central Senatorial District.
- Ho<sub>4</sub> There is no significant difference between students' academic performance in public and private secondary schools in Kwara State Central Senatorial District.
- Ho<sub>5</sub> There is no significant difference in the leadership strategies adopted in public and private secondary schools in Kwara State Central Senatorial District.

**Methodology**

This study was a survey of correlational type aimed at determining the relationship that existed between leadership strategies and students' academic performance. It went further to determine the range of the differences among the leadership strategies. The targeted population for this study consists of 125 out of 342 public and private secondary schools in Kwara State Central Senatorial District. Fifty public and 25 private secondary schools were randomly selected out of the 125 identified public and private secondary schools in Kwara Central Senatorial District. The sample schools represented 60% of the public and private secondary schools available in the area.

The study participants were, 25 principals, 150 vice principals, 375 heads of departments, 1350 form masters and 75 school counselors, totaling 2025 with the sum total of all the subjects 750 from private and 1275 from public secondary schools.

Two instruments were designed for the study. These were "Leadership Strategies Questionnaire (LSQ) and Students' Academic Performance Format (SAPF). The LSQ comprised items on transactional, transformational and instructional leadership strategies while SAPF was used to collect average students' academic performance in Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (SSCE) both in public and private secondary schools between 2009 and 2013.

The questionnaires were face and content validated by three experts in Educational Management and Social Sciences Education. A test, re-test method was used to determine the reliability of the instrument and the reliability obtained was 0.82 for LSQ. The main and operational hypotheses one to three were analysed with the use of Pearson product moment correlation statistic and hypotheses four and five were analysed with the use of t-test statistic, ANOVA and Duncan multiple range test at 0.05 level of significance.

**Results and Discussion**

*Main Hypothesis:*

*H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant relationship between leadership strategies and students' Academic performance in public and private secondary schools in Kwara State Central Senatorial District.*

**Table 1: Leadership strategies and students' academic performance**

Variables	N	MEAN	SD	df	Cal-r-value	Crit-r-value	Decision
Leadership strategies	2025	47.32	8.269				
				2024	0.768	0.195	H <sub>0</sub> : Rejected
Students academic performance	2025	74.36	21.96				

Table 1 reveals that there is positive relationship between leadership strategies and students' academic performance in public and private secondary schools in Kwara State Central Senatorial District. The calculated value was 0.768 which is greater than the critical r-value of 0.195 at 0.05 level of significance and for 2024 degrees of freedom. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. That is, the leadership strategies had a significant relationship with the students' academic performance in the selected secondary schools under this study.

This finding collaborates with the findings of Omosidi (2006) and Oloyede (2008) that leadership behaviour influences subordinates attitudes and subsequently affect performance in achieving organizational goals. This is also in line with Machexo (1983) who had earlier established that leadership strategies are central to students' academic achievement. This was because principals and academic officers actually applied different leadership strategies which had greatly helped both teachers and students to cultivate the required attitude towards educational excellence.

#### Operational hypotheses

*H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant relationship between instructional leadership strategy and students' academic performance in public and private secondary schools in Kwara State Central Senatorial District.*

**Table 2: Instructional leadership strategy and students' academic performance**

Variables	N	MEAN	SD	df	Cal-r-value	Crit-r-value	Decision
Instructional Leadership strategies	2025	24.79	12.11				
				2024	0.6821	0.195	H <sub>0</sub> : Rejected
Students academic perform	2025	74.36	21.96				

From Table 2, the calculated  $r$ -value of (0.6821) is greater than the critical  $r$ -value of 0.195 of 0.05 level of significance and for 2024 degrees of freedom. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. This shows that there is a positive significant relationship between instructional leadership strategies and students' academic performance in public and private secondary schools in Kwara State Central Senatorial District.

This finding is in support of earlier findings of Oloyede(2008) who also found that there is a significant relationship between instructional leadership strategy and students' academic achievement in Kwara state secondary schools. The implication of this is that the use of instructional leadership skills encouraged devolution and decentralization of responsibilities in school settings. Ogawa's (1995) study revealed that using instructional leadership strategy, school leaders had direct and indirect impact on the level of students' academic achievement. Witziers (2003) submitted that instructional leadership skill places the student at the centre of quality schools. The principals and teachers focus on improving students learning and performance.

*H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant relationship between transactional leadership strategy and students' academic performance in public and private secondary schools in Kwara State Central Senatorial District.*

**Table 3: Transactional leadership strategy and students' academic performance**

Variables	N	MEAN	SD	df	Cal-r-value	Crit-r-value	Decision
Transactional leadership strategies	2025	34.68	14.26				
				2024	0.6216	0.195	H <sub>0</sub> : Rejected
Students academic performance	2025	74.36	21.96				

As shown in Table 3, the calculated Pearson product moment correlation coefficient of 0.6216 is greater than the critical  $r$ -value of 0.195 at 0.05 significance level and for 2024 degrees of freedom. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. It means that there is a significant relationship between transactional leadership strategy and students' academic performance on public and private secondary schools in Kwara State Central Senatorial District. The above submission could be as a result of personal relationship that existed in and outside the school community and among principals and teachers in public and private secondary schools in Kwara State Central Senatorial District.

The results confirmed the earlier findings of Omosidi (1998) that there was a positive significant relationship between principals' transactional leadership style and teachers' effectiveness in curricular and co-curricular activities in Ilorin West Local Government Area secondary schools of Kwara state. This finding also confirmed the submission of Robinson (2007) that transactional leadership strategy was related to students' academic performance. This result could actually have stemmed from the fact that principals and teachers directed

their efforts towards students' academic performance.

*H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant relationship between transformational leadership strategy and students' academic performance in private and public secondary schools in Kwara State.*

**Table 4: Transformational leadership strategy and students' academic performance**

Variables	N	MEAN	SD	df	Cal-r-value	Crit-r-value	Decision
Transformational leadership strategies	2025	36.24	9.268				
				2024	0.4782	0.195	H <sub>0</sub> : Rejected
Students academic performance	2025	74.36	21.96				

Table 4 reveals that, the calculated r-value of 0.4782 is greater than the critical r-value of 0.195 at 0.05 level of significance and for 2024 degrees of freedom. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This shows that a significant relationship existed between transformational leadership strategy and students' academic performance in public and private secondary schools in Kwara State.

The results corroborated with the views of Oloyede (2008) and Leithwood (2000) that transformational leadership had significant positive impact on students' academic achievement. The characteristics of transformational leader according to Mark and Printy (2003) are clear goals, clear communication, sense of purpose and willingness to take risk; agitation or creating new ideas and ways of doing things; quality interaction with staff and students and demonstration of high performance expectation.

*H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant difference between students' academic performance in public and private secondary schools in Kwara State*

**Table 5: t-test analysis of students' academic performance in public and private secondary schools**

Variables	N	Mean	S.D	df	Calculated t-value	Critical t-value	Decision
Public	50	63.28	18.67				
Private	25	89.26	14.49	73	10.68	1.96	H <sub>0</sub> : Rejected

Table 5 shows that the calculated t-test value is 10.68 greater than the critical value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significant and for 73 degrees of freedom, thus, the hypothesis is rejected. This shows that there is a significant difference between students' academic performance in public and private secondary schools in Kwara State. The finding of Akpan (2010) was in support of this finding. He discovered that the students of private secondary schools in

Calabar are better than students' of public secondary schools. Also, the study of Alutu and Eraikhuemen (1999) the results of their study shows that in 1996 and 1998 there was appreciable difference in academic performance in favour private schools, in some selected private and public Junior secondary school students' of Edo State.

*Ho:* There is no significant difference in the leadership strategies adopted in public and private secondary schools in Kwara State Central Senatorial District.

**Table 6: ANOVA showing the leadership strategies adopted in public and private secondary schools**

Source	df	SS	Mean	calculated	critical
		Square		f ratio	f ratio
Between Groups	2	104.90852.54		12.82	3.00
Within Groups	2023	8248.157	4.08		
Total	2025	8353.065			

Significant,  $p < 0.05$

From Table 6, shows that the calculated f-value is 12.86 and a critical f-value of 3.00, the calculated f-value is greater than the critical f-value. The hypothesis is rejected due to the significant difference in the leadership strategies adopted in public and private secondary schools in Kwara State Central Senatorial District.

**Table 7: Duncan Multiple Range Test (DMRT) showing Leadership strategies adopted in public and private secondary schools**

Duncan Grouping	N	Means	Group	Leadership Strategies
A	2025	36.24	1	Transformational
B	2025	34.68	2	Transactional
C	2025	24.79	3	Instructional

Table 7 showed that the Duncan Multiple Range Test indicating the significant different noted in the ANOVA table. Group 1 with a mean score of 36.24 differed significantly from Group 2 with a mean score of 34.68, while at the same time Group 3 with a mean of 24.79 differed significantly from Group 1 and 2. All the Groups differed from one another, but the significant difference noted was a result of the mean of Group 3. Hence, the significant difference noted in the ANOVA result on Table 6. This finding was in line with earlier studies of Omosidi (1998), Ajayi (1998) and Oloyede (2008) discovered that a leader's behaviour influences subordinates attitude and subsequent performance in achieving organizations goals; whether private or public secondary schools. This implies that type of schools does not determine leadership strategies used, because teachers prefer working with principals who make their policies and goals clear and assigned duties and responsibilities.



#### Conclusion and Recommendations

The study revealed that leadership strategies have significant relationship with students' academic performance in public and private secondary schools in Kwara State Central Senatorial District, Nigeria. It was found that leadership strategies adopted by the principals and academic officers would either positively or negatively affect students' academic performance in both public and private secondary schools. This implies that leadership strategy affects teachers on their jobs which invariably affects students' academic performance. In conclusion, no leadership strategies can be regarded as the best, the one used in one situation in a particular school may not be appropriate situation in order schools.

It is therefore recommended that:

1. The school principals should endeavour to adopt the best strategies suitable to deal with the fellow human beings, hence they should be adaptive, sincere, straight forward alert to happenings around him, open minded and most importantly be accommodating and supportive so that the staff would be happy in the discharge of their duties which may influence students' academic performance positively in public and private secondary schools in Kwara State Central Senatorial District, Nigeria.
2. The school principals should plan and use strategy that focus mainly on commitment, inspiration, encouragement and involvement of staff and students' leaving outcomes which is the main focus of transformational leadership strategy.
3. It is also necessary for the school principals to plan a rewarding strategy that would encourage both the teachers in putting more efforts on their jobs, while at the same inspiring the students' in achieving better learning outcome that is the main concern of transactional leadership strategy.
4. The policy makers and educational policymaker planners should evolve school curriculum that will integrate leadership strategy with effective pedagogical practices that would enhance students' achievement. That is what instructional leadership strategy preaches.
5. Government at all levels should put in place improved quality control mechanism system, such as, daily routine supervision of both teachers' and students in public secondary schools to enhance better academic performance, like what is obtained in private secondary schools.
6. In view of this, refresher courses such as workshop, seminars and conferences should be organised regularly for the principals by the state and Federal Ministries of Education. This is to keep them abreast with the modern technique of school leadership.
7. The principal should be better informed that combination of the leadership strategies should be employed in the smooth running of schools. This is because no single strategy can be regarded as the best, but combination of the strategies helps a lot.

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