

INFLUENCE OF DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP STYLE OF PRINCIPALS ON INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIP IN BASIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KADUNA STATE NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study investigated the ‘influence of democratic leadership style on interpersonal relationship in secondary school in Kaduna state. Nigeria’ The survey research method was adopted for this study; the total population of the study was 7,785. This consisted of 336 principals, 4119 teachers, and 3330 students (Prefects). The Sample size of the study is 365, comprising 113 Principals, 141 Teachers and 112 Students. The research instrument that was used for data collection is the questionnaire. The instrument was validated by expert in the field of educational management. Pilot study was carried out and the data of the respondents were analyzed using simple percentage and frequency. One way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to test all null hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level of significance. Findings of the study among others revealed that there is a significant difference in the opinion of respondents on the extent to which principal democratic leadership style influences interpersonal relationship between schools and local communities in secondary schools in Kaduna state. The research concludes, that principal democratic style enhances interpersonal relationship between school and Ministry of Education Officials / proprietors in secondary in Kaduna State. Based on the findings it was recommended among others that school principal should be exposed to more leadership training at workshops to promote harmonious relationship and framework that suit the needs of the ministry of education and the school community, principals should ensure that all stakeholders including the students are involved in decision making through consistent communication and consultation on issues and activities in the school environment. the principal should device a means of apprising their relationship and activities within the school environments. The principals must create a conclusive atmosphere for interaction and suggestion among students, schools’ community teaching in order to straighten the interpersonal relationship in school environment.

Keywords: *Democratic leadership, Democratic leadership style, Interpersonal relationship*

Introduction

Leadership is the key to the progress and survival of any group or nation. Nations of the world have become what they are today largely because of leadership. Interpersonal relationships are dynamic systems that change continuously during their existence like living organisms, relationship have a beginning, a life span, and an end (Babu & Satya, 2024). They grow and improve gradually, as people get to know each other and become closer emotionally, or they gradually deteriorate as people drift apart, move on with their lives and form new relationships with others. The educational institutions in Nigeria today are reflections of the types of present and past leadership enjoyed (Patrick, 2025). According to the advance learner’s dictionary relationship is the way in which two people, groups or countries behave towards each other. Relationship in the work place should be likened to a life-wire which would enable individuals

to interact, display interpersonal skills and human relations that would enhance achievement of goals (Akinwale, 2025). To have a good working relationship with people means that, you are in good terms with them and can work effectively with them. This paper is set to examine the influence of leadership styles and interpersonal relationship and the necessary qualities of good leadership in secondary schools within Kaduna state. Precisely, the failure of educational managers' in understanding what qualities a leader should possess had worsen the situation not to talk of what plans they have for the schools (Acton, 2025).

Statement of the Problem

Specifically, the problems identified in this study were:

First, Bureaucratic bottleneck in the operational activities of most schools had kept principalship qualities untapped. In essence, schools either public or private have a chain of organizational structure through which policies are formulated and disseminated from the top to the bottom.

Secondly, as leaders they are expected to work as a team player to attain an educational objective. It is unfortunate today that leadership task is devoid of this. In as much as personal qualities are essential for a successful leadership role (Fullan, 2026), the overall objectives of the establishment are expected to lead other personal interest. To be a good leader, sentiments need to be excluded from the programmes of the organization, where unavoidable. This research is therefore intended to examine the opinions of principals, teachers and students in determining the impact of leadership styles in the interpersonal relationship in secondary schools in Kaduna state. From the trends of problems, the crux of the matter in the study is the impact of leadership styles practices on interpersonal relationship in secondary schools in Kaduna state. The focus of this study can be postulated as "are the principals leadership styles having any effect on the interpersonal relationships of secondary schools in meeting the yearning and objectives of secondary schools in the study area?" in line with the above, the following were formulated to guide the study.

Research Objectives

This study sought to achieve the following objectives:

1. Determine the influence of democratic leadership style of principals on the interpersonal relationship between schools and local communities in Kaduna State; and
2. Find out the influence of democratic leadership style of principals on the interpersonal relationship between school and MOE/proprietors of secondary schools in Kaduna State.

Research Questions

Based on the research objectives, the following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. What is the influence of democratic leadership style of principals on the interpersonal relationships between school and local community in Kaduna state?
2. What is the influence of democratic leadership style of principals on the interpersonal relationships between schools and MOE/proprietors of secondary schools in Kaduna state?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were postulated.

- HO₁ There is no significant influence of democratic leadership style of the principals on the interpersonal relationships between school and local community in Kaduna state; and
- HO₂ There is no significant influence of democratic leadership style of the principals on the interpersonal relationship between schools and MOE/proprietors of secondary schools in Kaduna state.

Literature Review

This Part of the article examined the democratic leadership style used in school setting, which influence interpersonal relationships on academic performance. This will be discussed under the following subheadings: Concept of principal ship and principal as a leader and qualities of an ideal leader as well as summary.

Democratic Leadership style:

This style involves the leader including one or more employees in the decision-making process (determining what to do and how to do it). However, the leader maintains the final decision-making authority. This is normally used when a leader has part of the information, and employees have other parts. A leader is not expected to know everything (Fullan, 2026),

Benefits of a democratic leadership style

1. Invites discussion, opinions and views
2. Builds a consensus
3. Encourages the ideas and creativity of others
4. Recognizes that people other than the leader may well have ideas about a better way forward

Limitations of the Democratic leadership style

1. Can caused difficulties when quick decision is needed in a crisis
2. Confusion if communication is not clear about what or whether anything has been decided
3. When people are in-experienced or don't feel confident they may struggle with being asked to participate
4. Some people may regard being asked as a sign that a leader isn't leading – "I'm not paid to do this – you are!"

Interpersonal Relationship

This means the interactions between an individual and another including their rights and duties or obligations in their neighborhood either as individuals or government (Murray & Fussey, 2024). According to (Clement & Gheorghe, 2025)relationship is meant interaction between individuals which can be expressed as friendship, affection, frequency of meeting, co-operation and open communication.

School Community Relationship

The sudden and continuous increase in school population at all level of Nigeria education has led to the inadequacy of facilities and equipment in many Nigerian school. It therefore has to invite the people to participate actively in running the schools, especially in the area of providing supporting educational services (Olayinka & Deniran, 2025). The administrative machinery will be based on the following cardinal principles (Abdullahi & Aminu, 2025), Vis:

- a. Close participation and involvement of the communities, at the local level, in the administration and management of their schools;
- b. Effective line of communication between local community and the state on one hand and national machinery for policy and implementation on the other.

Principals' leadership and community relationship

A person or thing that holds a dominant or superior position within its field, and is able to exercise a high degree of control or influence over others (Dugan, 2024). The traditional perspectives perceive the concept of leadership as inducing compliance, respect and cooperation. This implies that, the leader exercises power over the followers to obtain their cooperation (Douglass & Scott, 2024).

The Concept of Principal ship

The principal of a secondary school is the administrative head of a post-primary institution otherwise called the secondary school (Chinenye, 2025). He is responsible for implementing the educational policy of the country. He usually reports to the Chief Inspector of Education in charge of Secondary education.

Principal as a Leader

The demand of every age has been for more and better leaders. Trained, capable and dedicated leadership is required. In our schools, the rapid growth in size and the complexity of education programmes call for good leadership. Leadership is a process by which a person influences others to accomplish an objective and directs the organization in such a way that makes it more cohesive and coherent (Olugboyega & Ejohwomu, 2024).

Qualities of a principal rather.

The idea leader is expected to possess the following qualities: intelligence, self-confidence, sociable, professional mindedness, humility and modesty and moral integrity.

Intelligences: On intelligences, Burden and Astik (2024) is of the view that an ideal leader should possess the following qualities

Sound Educational Philosophy: The principal/leader should have a clear understanding of the philosophy of life and the value on which society is based. He should have a clear conception of the functions and the objective of school education and also the correct methods and practices through which the objective can be effectively realized. This philosophy must be constantly examined and reviewed in the light of new problems and new insights.

High Scholarship: The principal/leader should primarily be an educational expert. Only then can he win and hold the real respect of his staff as well as the community. “It must not only be known by his staff and scholars that he is their principal by appointment but felt that he is their principal by superior ability, energy and character.”

Research Methodology

The research method would present a synopsis of the research approach that was used to achieve the objectives of the study. To this effect, it would indicate the research design to be used and population. Thereafter, sampling and sampling technique, instrumentation, validation of instruments, procedure of data collection and method of data analysis will be discussed. The survey research method was adopted for this study. The population for this study comprised of 336 principals, 4119 teachers, and 3330 students making a total of 7,785. The Sample size of the study is 365, comprising 113 Principals, 141 Teachers and 112 Students. This made a total number of 365 stakeholders which were selected from the above zones in line with Research Advisor (2006). The research instrument that was used for data collection is the questionnaire.

The instrument is considered valid only when it measures truly and accurately what it intends to measure. In this case, content/face validity of the instrument was determined by two experts in the field of educational management. A pilot study was carried out in Government Secondary School Birnin-yero and Queen Amina College., Sabon-Tasha, Kaduna respectively. 20 copies of questionnaire were administered during the pilot study, to determine the reliability of the instrument used in this study, split half method of reliability by Guttman was employed. A correlation co-efficient (r) formula was used in this respect and reliability test score was 0.83.

In view of this Mukherjee and Datta (2026) postulated that the internal consistency is an average value of the correlation coefficient which must be pretty high above 0.80. The result therefore shows that the items are reliable within the acceptable 0.05 significant level. Data collected was computed using simple percentages and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) statistical procedures. All the hypotheses were tested using ANOVA because of the need to establish the extent of relationship (if any) that exists among two or more variables. The acceptability or otherwise of each hypothesis was determined at 0.05 level of significance. In analysing the bio-data and research questions, data collected were presented in a tabular form and responses were calculated in percentages followed by detailed interpretation.

Research Question 1: What is the influence of democratic leadership style practice of principals on the interpersonal relationships between school and local community in Kaduna state?

Table 1: Opinions of Respondents on Principal Democratic Leadership Style on Interpersonal Relationships between school and local community in Secondary Schools

S/N	ITEM STATEMENT	R	SA%	A%	U%	D%	SD%
1.	Principal democratic leadership style help in the	Principals	26(20%)	101(76%)	2(2%)	2(2%)	2(2%)
		Teachers	30(22%)	104(74%)	2(1%)	2(1%)	3(2%)
		Sch.	16(18%)	72(79%)	1(1%)	1(1%)	1(1%)
		prefects					

	welfare of teachers and students						
2.	Principal democratic leadership style help in the provision of school facilities	Principals	48(36%)	73(55%)	-	10(8%)	2(2%)
		Teachers	54(38%)	75(53%)	-	10(7%)	2(2%)
		Sch. prefects	29(32%)	54(59%)	-	7(8%)	1(1%)
3.	Principal democratic leadership style help in the welfare of teachers and students	Principals	34(26%)	89(67%)	-	6(5%)	4(2%)
		Teachers	35(25%)	96(68%)	-	6(4%)	4(2%)
		Sch. prefects	24(26%)	61(67%)	-	4(4%)	2(3%)
4.	Principal democratic leadership style help in the welfare of teachers and students	Principals	52(39%)	77(58%)	2(1.5%)	2(1.5%)	-
		Teachers	59(42%)	78(55%)	2(1.5%)	2(1.5%)	-
		Sch. prefects	32(35%)	57(63%)	1(1%)	1(1%)	-
5.	What happens in school affects the community and what happens in the community affects the school	Principals	45(34%)	86(65%)	-	2(2%)	-
		Teachers	47(33%)	92(65%)	-	2(2%)	-
		Sch. prefects	31(34%)	58(64%)	-	2(2%)	-
6.	The school cannot exist in isolation but in cooperation with the community	Principals	58(44%)	69(52%)	-	4(3%)	2(1%)
		Teachers	63(45%)	72(51%)	-	4(3%)	2(1%)
		Sch. prefects	41(45%)	47(52%)	-	2(2%)	1(1%)
7.	Effective school community relationship raises students' persistence and achievement	Principals	71(53%)	62(47%)	-	-	-
		Teachers	68(49%)	73(51%)	-	-	-
		Sch. prefects	49(54%)	42(46%)	-	-	-
8.	The school library and play grounds can especially be significant	Principals	61(35%)	67(51%)	-	2(1%)	3(2%)
		Teachers	65(46%)	72(51%)	-	2(1.5%)	2(1.5%)
		Sch. prefects	45(50%)	44(48%)	-	1(1%)	1(1%)

	service to the community						
9.	It helps in information sharing and dissemination	Principals	46(35%)	74(56%)	-	11(8%)	2(1%)
		Teachers	49(35%)	80(57%)	-	10(7%)	2(1%)
		Sch. prefects	33(36%)	52(57%)	-	5(6%)	1(1%)
10.	It helps in lobbying benefits for the school	Principals	36(27%)	89(67%)	2(1.5%)	2(1.5%)	4(2%)
		Teachers	40(28%)	93(66%)	2(1%)	2(1%)	4(2%)
		Sch. prefects	23(25%)	64(70%)	1(1%)	1(1%)	2(3%)

Source: Field Work 2025

Research Question 1 in table 1 contains items 1-10 where the respondents express their views or opinions on Principal Democratic Leadership Style on interpersonal relationships between school and local community in secondary Schools. From the table, it was affirmed by the respondents that the principals' democratic leadership style had positive interpersonal relationships with the teachers, students and the host community. This is observed from the table, where the percentages are very high.

Research Question 2: What is the influence of democratic leadership style practices of principals on the interpersonal relationship between schools and MOE/proprietors of secondary schools in Kaduna state?

Table 2: Opinions of Respondents on Principal Democratic Leadership Style on interpersonal Relationship between ministry of education/ proprietor and school.

S/N	ITEM STATEMENT	R	SA%	A%	U%	D%	SD%
1.	Principal democratic leadership style helps in lobbying benefits for school	Principals	41(31%)	84(63%)	2(1.5%)	2(1.5%)	4(3%)
		Teachers	44(31%)	89(63%)	2(1%)	2(1%)	4(4%)
		Sch. Prefects	26(29%)	61(67%)	1(1%)	1(1%)	2(2%)
2.	Principal democratic leadership style help in the provision of school policies	Principals	52(39%)	73(55%)	2(2%)	-	6(4%)
		Teachers	56(40%)	77(55%)	2(1%)	-	6(4%)
		Sch. Prefects	35(39%)	52(57%)	1(1%)	-	3(3%)
3.	Ministry of education provided schools with useful information	Principals	54(41%)	70(53%)	-	2(2%)	7(3%)
		Teachers	59(42%)	74(53%)	-	2(2%)	6(3%)
		Sch. Prefects	36(40%)	51(56%)	-	1(1%)	3(3%)
4.	School and ministry of education relationship help in the provision of qualified teachers	Principals	58(44%)	66(50%)	2(1.5%)	2(1.5%)	5(3%)
		Teachers	64(46%)	69(50%)	2(1%)	2(1%)	4(2%)
		Sch. Prefects	40(44%)	46(51%)	2(2%)	1(1%)	2(2%)

5.	School is responsible in given feedback to the ministry of education	Principals	70(53%)	57(43%)	-	-	6(4%)
		Teachers	75(53%)	62(44%)	-	-	4(3%)
		Sch.	46(51%)	43(47%)	-	-	2(2%)
		Prefects					
6.	Cordial relationship between school and ministry of education bring about response to a particular school	Principals	57(43%)	70(53%)	2(2%)	-	4(3%)
		Teachers	63(45%)	72(51%)	2(1%)	-	4(3%)
		Sch.	40(44%)	47(52%)	2(2%)	-	2(2%)
		Prefects					
7.	Principal democratic leadership style help to provide free universal basic education for every school age child	Principals	47(35%)	84(63%)	-	2(2%)	-
		Teachers	51(36%)	88(62%)	-	2(2%)	-
		Sch.	33(36%)	57(63%)	-	1(1%)	-
		Prefects					
8.	Principal democratic leadership style help to create programme to enhance the status, raise the moral and welfare of teachers through improve salary structure and retraining of teachers	Principals	52(39%)	75(56%)	-	4(3%)	2(2%)
		Teachers	57(40%)	78(55%)	-	4(3%)	2(2%)
		Sch.	35(39%)	53(58%)	-	2(2%)	1(1%)
		Prefects					
9.	Schools help in the provision of good advice to the ministry of education on how activities should be run in various schools	Principals	49(37%)	71(53%)	-	6(5%)	7(5%)
		Teachers	51(36%)	77(55%)	-	6(4%)	7(5%)
		Sch.	30(33%)	55(60%)	-	3(2%)	1(1%)
		Prefects					
10.	Ministry of education is responsible in bringing about good change in the school curriculum and activities	Principals	50(38%)	77(58%)	-	-	6(4%)
		Teachers	55(39%)	82(58%)	-	-	4(3%)
		Sch. Pref.	31(34%)	58(64%)	-	-	2(2%)
		Prefects					

Research Question 2 discussed the influence of democratic leadership styles of principals on the interpersonal relationships between the school and MOE/proprietors of secondary schools in Kaduna state. From the table 2 above, the percentage record of findings indicated that the democratic leadership styles of the principals have positive relationship between the principals, members of the MOE, teachers and students. This was affirmed by the percentage agreement of the teachers, students and the staff of Ministry of Education in the state.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significance difference in the opinion of principals, teachers and Students (School Prefects) on the influence of democratic leadership style practices of principals on the interpersonal relationship between school and local community in

Kaduna state. The summary of hypothesis tested in respect of hypothesis one is presented on table 3

Table 3: Pearson Product Moment correlation PPMC on significant relationship between the Principal Democratic Style Practices and Interpersonal Relationships between Students and Non-Teaching staff in Secondary Schools.

Variable	Number	Mean	StdR-cal	DfR-critical	P-value
Respondents	365	1.8849	7.77596	0.028	363 .195 .594
Section G	365	31.8329	2.90358		

The result of the Pearson moment product correlation above, shows that the r-cal value (.028) is less than r-critical value (.195) at 363 degrees of freedom and at 0.05 level of significance. The observed level of significance (P.594) is greater than 0.05. This means that there is no relationship between schools and local community in secondary schools. Therefore, the null hypothesis is retained.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significance difference in the opinion of principals, teachers and Students (School Prefects) on the influence of democratic leadership style practices of principals on the interpersonal relationship between schools and MOE/proprietors of secondary schools in Kaduna state. The summary of hypothesis tested in respect of hypothesis one is presented on table 4

Table 4: Pearson Product Moment correlation PPMC on significant relationship between the Principal Democratic Style Practices and Interpersonal Relationships between the School and MOE/Proprietors in Secondary Schools.

Variable	Number	Mean	StdR-cal	DfR-critical	P-value
Respondents	365	1.8849	7.77596	0.0295	363 .195 .000
Section H	365	31.9452	2.74207		

The result of the Pearson moment product correlation above, shows that the r-cal value (.295) is greater than r-critical value (.195) at 363 degrees of freedom and at 0.05 level of significance. The observed level of significance (P.000) is less than 0.05. This means that there is a relationship between ministry of education /proprietor and school. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Discussions of the Findings

The discussions are presented based on the order of the hypotheses tested:

The summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation on Table 1 shows the R-cal value of (0.28) at DF 363 and at the level 0.05. The R-critical value (.195) is less than R-cal value (0.28), the probability level of significant P (.594) is greater than 0.05. This means that there is no significant relationship in the opinions of respondents on the extent to which principal democratic leadership style influences interpersonal relationships between school and local community in secondary schools in Kaduna State. Consequently, the null hypothesis was retained.

Table 2 shows the R-cal value of (0.295) at df 363 and at the level 0.05. The R-critical value (.195) is less than R-cal value (0.28), the probability level of significant P (.000) is less than 0.05. This means that there is significant relationship in the opinions of respondents on the extent to which

principal democratic leadership style influences interpersonal relationship between schools and MOE/proprietors in secondary schools in Kaduna State. Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected. To back this up, the descriptive analysis on table 2 revealed that principal democratic leadership style influence interpersonal relationship between schools and MOE/proprietors in secondary school.

Conclusion

The study concludes that principals' democratic leadership style practices influenced on interpersonal relationship. This was seen in the responses of the students and non-teaching in most secondary schools in Kaduna State; and as shown in hypothesis result critical P value is 592. This was also expressed in the actions of MOE/Proprietors in most secondary schools in Kaduna State. as shown in hypothesis result critical P value is 000.

Recommendations

In line with the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. The principals must create a conducive atmosphere for interactions and suggestions among students, school community and staff in order to strengthen the interpersonal relationship in the school environment.
2. The principals should imbibe the culture of delegation of duties and responsibilities to teachers and prefects in school activities for them to have sense of belonging and as well strengthen interpersonal relationship in the school.

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