# Impact of Principals' Leadership Styles on Truancy Among Students of Public Secondary Schools in Zamfara State Metropolis, Nigeria

**Abdulhakeem, U. Sidi, Hamza, M. Abubakar and Suleman, G. Danmaitaba**
Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, Federal University of Kashere,
Gombe State. Tel: 08030401316 Email: abbasidi@fukashere.edu.ng
08031554182 Email: hamza.musa.abubakar@fukashere.edu.ng
:07061346602 Email: danmaitabag@gmail.com

*Abstract*
*This study aimed at investigating impact of principal's leadership styles on truancy among students of public secondary schools in Zamfara metropolis. Two objectives guide the conduct of this study. Descriptive survey design was adopted. The target population of the study consists of all the teachers and students in public secondary schools in Zamfara metropolis. Stratified sampling technique was employed in selecting 30 schools from two strata (Public and Private) Likewise, 160 teachers out of 1874 teachers and 320 students out of 13,789 students across 30 public secondary schools were selected using Krejcie and Morgan, (1971) table of determining the sample size required for the study. The instrument used for the study was self-structure questionnaire which was entitle "Perception of Principals Leadership Styles on Students Truancy Questionnaire in Senior Secondary Schools" (PPLSSTQSSS). The instrument was validated by two experts from the Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, Federal University of Kashere. In testing the reliability of the instrument pilot study was conducted in none of the sample schools not covered by the study, Cronbach Alpha of reliability was employed and a reliability coefficient index of 0.75 was obtained. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The findings of the study showed that truancy was a problem experienced in all the schools under study. Democratic leadership styles were popularly used by the principals in Zamfara metropolis. The various leadership styles employed by various principals had a great impact on truancy. Autocratic leadership style was found out to be associated with harshness and leaders who practice this style of leadership are always distant from teachers and students. The study concluded that truancy was caused by factors such as inability to cope with academic pressure, dislike for the school environment caused administration techniques used by school leadership, lack of school fees, sickness, problems related to family background. The study recommended awareness campaign among school administrators to enhance their understanding on the circumstances in which each leadership style is appropriate. The study also recommended wide adoption of democratic and charismatic leadership styles in curbing the rising cases of truancy among learners.*
**Keywords:** Leadership Styles, Secondary School, Truancy, Teachers and students

## Introduction
Education is a critical tool for the transformation of the individual and the larger society. Secondary education in Nigeria therefore is aimed at preparing the individual for useful living within the society and preparation for higher education, and for individual to be able to live a useful life in his society and contribute enormously towards socio-economic and political development of the nation in which he/she belongs, relevant skills, values, attitudes, knowledge and competencies that will make him to be disciplined must be impacted. The trend in secondary schools in the present time is indiscipline of all sorts. (Okeyinka, 2004)

Fareo, (2013) noted that truancy is one of the major antisocial discipline problems among secondary school students in Nigeria. The concept and acts of indiscipline have received a lot of attention by researchers, therefore, discipline in schools as respect for school laws/rules and regulations and the maintenance of an established standard

**Abdulhakeem, U. S., Hamza, M. A. and Suleman, G. D.   ©2021 Federal University of Kashere**

behaviour or attitude and implies self – direction, self-control, restraint, and respect for oneself, among others.  behaviour that disavow or negate the above mentioned are classified as indiscipline. To this end, indiscipline can simply be seen as mode of life not in conformity with rules and regulations and non-subjection to be control by established standard. By extension, the term connotes the violations of school rules and regulations capable of obstructing the smooth and orderly functioning of the school system. (Peck (2002) opined that truancy have so undermined effective teaching-learning processes that some teachers have become helpless and disorganized in their task of impacting knowledge to the learners. Zubaida, (2009) and Thami (2012), assert that the style negatively influenced the discipline of students. The more the autocratic leadership style is used the poorer the student discipline. Teachers who are not motivated to work are unable to teach effectively and efficiently, making students to dislike school and not to learn well. Principals' attitude of not putting into consideration teachers' suggestions in decision making made teachers lose interest in their jobs hence negative influence on students' discipline.

Ubogu, in fareo (2013) identified causes of truancy as illness, financial hardship, age, social class, geographical location, and Principal leadership styles that influence schools related factors such as teachers' attitude, poor administration, high cost of education and school discipline. Poor School Administration by in competent school Principals has contributed a lot to the lack of morals and necessary attitudes and skills expected in present generation, since school is regarded as the center for the young generation to acquire the attitude, skills, values and the critical minds for the analysis of society and its problem since children are easily influenced by what they learn, they are to be taught what the society considers culturally and socially values. When morals are lacking among students and are not properly controlled and managed, schools would be in states of emergency (Okeyinka, 2004) Hunt, *et al,* (2010), lament that truancy as a lackadaisical attitude of students when they missed school or class without an excuse from his/her parents/ guardians. It also means a child leaving school without the permission

of the teacher or principal. When a child is consistently late for school, he or she was considered to be a truant. A truant is therefore a student who stays away from school without proper leave permission from school authority or the parents. Autocratic leadership is a type of leadership style that centralizes power, authority and decision making (Okumbe, 2013). Autocratic principals adopt harshness which is widely detested by teachers and students alike. Principals who use strict control measures are likely to face resistance from both students and teachers and an increase in indiscipline. Students dislike harsh administrators since they make their academic records to decline tremendously. Principals formulated policies and made decisions without considering teachers and student's opinion. The style was not preferred since it de-motivated teachers who in turn influenced learners' discipline negatively. Such learners were likely to engage in truancy.

However, according to Burke and Beegle (2004), truancy can also be identified and characterized by neuroticism whereby student fear of teacher(s) makes him/her leave school and run back home or any other place for safety which greatly destroyed the fabrics of the educational programmes and has caused a lot of problems for secondary school students in their educational pursuits.

Kibet, Kindiki, Sang and Kitilit (2012) affirmed that democratic or semi-democratic approaches with both teachers and students' councils to handle various pertinent issues. They used open communication channels to pass information to the rest of the student body. This resulted in the high level of discipline reported in his study. Truancy cases were minimal in such schools. They found a positive relationship between leadership styles used by principals and discipline of students hence the need to strengthen school leadership. Democratic leadership style decentralizes power and authority. Decisions are made through consultations and discussions (Okumbe, 2013). Vincentia, 2016) observes that this style of leadership motivates teachers to work with principals to achieve school laid down objectives. Democratic leaders use more dialogue with teachers and learners, it gives room for involvement of teachers and students for decision making of formulation

of policies and allow them to talk about the constraints they face. They are more transparent and approachable. They observe at random students' work and interview them about teachers' performance. Thami (2012) asserts that democratic leadership style positively respects the worth and dignity of individual in working environment, it influences students' discipline. Students like teachers who are friendly and easy to talk to and who encourage them to express their feelings frankly.

For the purpose of this study, truancy will mean student's absenteeism from school/class without getting any permission from either parents or school authority due to principal lack of supervisory skills or in adequate provision of physiological and psychological needs of the students.

## Statement of the Problem

The continuous and rampant rate of truancy in recent years in public secondary schools cannot be over looked. Students seem to have been exposed to various forms of indiscipline which has hinder the smooth running of teaching- learning process, especially in Zamfara State This has been of great concern to all education stakeholders. Similarly, teachers absent themselves from the schools due to one reason or the other. The issue of truancy acts as a mirror reflecting the most fundamental characteristics of the crisis of purpose currently afflicting educational institutions. Some of the truant activities experience in the state include home and societal influence which include low status in social class of the parents, poverty, educational deficiency, broken homes, poor school administration, principal's leadership styles and teacher's attitude to students, the peer group and effect of the mass media to in disciplinary behavior as well as the insecurity in the state. The truants engage in drug and substance abuse and day time crime while others end up with teenage pregnancies and early marriages this research therefore focuses on the impact of principals' leadership style on students' truancy in senior secondary school Zamfara Metropolis Zamfara State, Nigeria

## Objectives of the Study

The study sought to achieve the following objectives;

1. To ascertain how democratic leadership style influences truancy among teachers and students of public secondary school in Zamfara metropolis
2. To determine the influence of autocratic leadership style on truancy among teachers and students of public secondary school in Zamfara metropolis

## Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:
1. How does democratic leadership style influences truancy among teachers and students of public secondary school in Zamfara metropolis?
2. What is the influence of autocratic leadership style on truancy among teachers and students of public secondary school in Zamfara metropolis?

## Methodology

This study adopted descriptive survey research design. The target population of the study consists of all principals and students in public secondary schools in Zamfara metropolis. Stratified sampling technique was employed in selecting 30 schools from two strata (public and private). Likewise, 160 teachers out of 1874 teachers and 320 students out of 13,789 students across 30 public secondary schools were selected using Krejcie and Morgan, (1971) table of determining the sample size required for the study. The instrument used for data collection was questionnaire which was entitle "Perception of Teachers and Students on Truancy and Principals Leadership Styles Questionnaire in Senior Secondary Schools" (PTSTPLSQSSS) A survey questionnaire with a total of 10 items was used. It is a four-point rating scale response format which ranged from 4= Strongly Disagree, 3= Disagree, 2= Agree and 1= Strongly Agree. The Questionnaire was validated by two experts from the Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, Federal University of Kashere. All their corrections, observations and modifications were strictly adhered to. In testing the reliability of the instrument pilot study was conducted in none of the sample schools not covered by the study, Cronbach Alpha was employed and a reliability coefficient index of 0.75 was obtained. The data collected was analyzed

using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21. The analysis includes both descriptive and inferential analysis. The researchers used descriptive analysis to analyze the frequency and percentage of the overall population.

**Result**

**Table 1: Influence of Democratic Leadership Styles on Truancy among Teachers and Students of public Senior Secondary School in Zamfara State, Nigeria**

| S/N | Items statement | Category of Respondents | Agree | | Undecided | | Disagree | | Remarks |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | F. | % | F. | % | F. | % | |
| 1 | Democratic leadership style enhance discipline among learners | Teachers | 115 | 75.5 | 00 | 00 | 45 | 28.5 | **Agree** |
| | | Students | 195 | 60.5 | 5 | 2 | 120 | 37.5 | **Agree** |
| 2 | Principals who Listen to teachers and student's opinions influence truancy | Teachers | 21 | 13.5 | 13 | 8 | 126 | 78.5 | **Disagree** |
| | | Students | 96 | 30 | 20 | 6 | 204 | 64 | **Disagree** |
| 3 | Principals who are have a close relationship with teachers and students influence truancy | Teachers | 15 | 9.5 | 12 | 7.5 | 133 | 83 | **Disagree** |
| | | Students | 20 | 6 | 6 | 2 | 294 | 92 | **Disagree** |
| 4 | Allowing teachers and students to participate in decision making influences truancy | Teachers | 12 | 7.5 | 14 | 84 | 134 | 83 | **Disagree** |
| | | Students | 25 | 8 | 0 | 00 | 295 | 92 | **Disagree** |
| 5 | Democratic leadership style has been used to curb truancy | Teachers | 118 | 73.5 | 32 | 20 | 10 | 6.5 | **Agree** |
| | | Students | 268 | 83.5 | 0 | 00 | 52 | 16.5 | **Agree** |

**Source: Field work, (2021)**

Table 1. Item 1 shows that (71.5%) of Teachers agreed, (28.5%) disagreed While (60.5%) Students agreed, a greater portion of the students as many as (37.5%) disagreed, and insignificant portion of (2%) were undecided. Similarly, Item 2 figured that (13.5%) of the teachers agreed, (78.5%) of the teachers disagreed and a subnormal of (8%) were undecided. (30%) of the students agreed, (64%) of the students disagreed and (6%) of the students were undecided. Moreover, Item 3 of the table show that (9.5%) of the teachers agreed, (83%) of the teachers disagreed and a shrimp number of teachers about (7.5%) were undecided. (6%) of the students agreed, a significant portion of about (92%) of the students disagreed and (2%) of the students were undecided. More so, Item 4 of the table revealed that (7.5%) of the teachers agreed, a reasonable number of the teachers which is about (83%) disagreed and (8.5%) of the teachers were undecided. A pygmy amount of the students which is about (8%) agreed while (92%) of the students disagreed. In addition, findings of the study limn that (73.5%) of the teachers agreed and (6.5%) of the teachers disagreed, (20%) of the teachers were undecided. Finally, (83.5%) of the students agreed, (16.5%) of the students disagreed.

**Table 2: Influence of Autocratic Leadership Styles on Truancy among Teachers and Students of public Senior Secondary School in Zamfara State, Nigeria**

| S/N | Items statement | Category of Respondents | Agree | | Undecided | | Disagree | | Remarks |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | F. | % | F. | % | F. | % | |
| 1 | Principals associated with harshness influence truancy | Teachers | 33 | 20 | 7 | 4 | 120 | 75 | **Disagree** |
| | | Students | 195 | 60.5 | 5 | 2 | 120 | 37.5 | **Agree** |
| 2 | Distant leaders influence truancy in school organizations | Teachers | 25 | 15.5 | 2 | 5 | 125 | 78.5 | **Disagree** |
| | | Students | 204 | 64 | 20 | 6 | 96 | 30 | **Agree** |
| 3 | | Teachers | 5 | 10.5 | 6 | 3 | 137 | 85.5 | **Disagree** |

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|   | Lack of concern about students feeling cause truancy from both teachers and students | Students | 294 | 92 | 20 | 6 | 6 | 2 | **Agree** |
| 4 | Making decisions without the consent of both teachers and students influence truancy | Teachers | 134 | 83.5 | 06 | 10 | 20 | 12.5 | **Agree** |
|   |   | Students | 25 | 8 | 0 | 00 | 295 | 92 | **Disagree** |
| 5 | Constant adherence to school rules and regulation influence truancy | Teachers | 135 | 84.5 | 15 | 9 | 10 | 6.5 | **Agree** |
|   |   | Students | 294 | 91.5 | 0 | 00 | 26 | 8.5 | **Agree** |

**Source: Field work, (2021)**

Going through the opinions of the respondents on autocratic leadership style, Table 2 shows that (20%) of teachers agreed, (75%) disagreed and (4%) of teachers were undecided. While (60.5%) of the students agreed, a greater portion of the students as many as (37.5%) disagreed, and insignificant amount of (2%) were undecided. Similarly, Item 2 figured that (15.5%) of the teachers agreed, (78.5%) of the teachers disagreed and a subnormal of (5%) were undecided. (64%) of the students agreed, (30%) of the students disagreed and (6%) of the teachers were undecided. In addition, Item 3 of the table show that (12.5%) of the teachers agreed, (82.5%) of the teachers disagreed and a shrimp number of teachers about (5%) were undecided. (92%) of the students agreed, a significant portion of about (2%) of the students disagreed and (6%) of the students were undecided. More so, Item 4 of the table revealed that (83.5%) of the teachers agreed, a reasonable number of the teachers which is about (12.5%) disagreed and (10%) of the teachers were undecided. A pygmy amount of the students which is about (8%) agreed while (92%) of the teachers disagreed.   In conclusion findings of the study limn that (84.5%) of the teachers agreed and (6.5%) of the teachers disagreed, (9%) of the teachers were undecided and finally (91.5%) of the students agreed and (8.5%) of the students disagreed.

**Discussion of Findings**

Findings of the study in Table 1 show that majorities (71.5%) of principals were of the opinion that principals who had time to listen to both the teachers' and the students' opinions built a positive school environment that attracted students to school and did not influence truancy among learners. These findings are consonance with the findings of Vicentia, (2016) who found out that democratic leadership style was practiced by principals who involved teachers and students in formulation of school policies frequently and that these teachers positively influenced the discipline of the learners and made school attractive for the learners. It is revealed that majority 67.5% of the students agreed that democratic leadership enhance discipline and motivations among student

However, the teachers were asked to rate how the relationship of their principals with students and teachers influenced truancy. (78.5.0%) of the teachers disagreed that leaders who had a close relationship with the teachers influenced truancy among learners. This implies that a school where the leader was friendly had a positive climate that encouraged students to regularly attend school. Similarly, 64% of the students affirmed that principals who listen to their opinion did not influence truancy among them instead encourage them to learned as well as to be active participant in the learning process.

In addition, the teachers were asked to rate how the relationship of their principals with students and teachers influenced truancy. (83. %) of the teachers disagreed that leaders who had a close relationship with the teachers influenced truancy among learners. This implies that a school where the leader was friendly had a positive climate that encouraged students to regularly attend school. In addition, students reported that leaders who were close to them created a good learning atmosphere which encouraged regular school attendance. This was shown by the (92%) of the students who disagreed that leaders who had a close relationship with them kept them close to the school.

Conversely, all the teachers (92%) disagreed that a leader who makes follow ups when necessary would cause truancy among learners. Such a leader gives his subjects the autonomy to carry on their duties as required and only comes in when needed. It was reported that most teachers and students

preferred such an environment. It encouraged students to stay in school and avoid cases of truancy The findings also showed that allowing teachers and students to participate in decision making in the school encouraged students to attend school regularly. It is easier for people to violate decisions when they are involved. Currently, the boards of management in secondary schools have the provision for a student representative. The student is expected to take the views of the student body to the board of management which makes crucial decisions for schools. This is a way of involving students in decision making, which creates a positive environment in school and aids in running smooth atmosphere for students in school. It was agreed by (73.5%) of the teachers and a further that democratic leadership style enhanced discipline in school and had been used to restraint or curb truancy in schools respectively. These findings were seconded Mbiti, (2007) who asserts that schools with leaders who practice democratic leadership style experience very few cases of truancy throughout their stay in schools. More so, majority (83.5%) of the students strongly agreed that making follow ups on their well-being when necessary reduced illegitimate absences. (83.5%) of the students indicated that being involved in decision making enabled them to easily own up the decisions that are made by school authorities and to obey them. Their morale to attend school was high since they felt valued as important stakeholders of their schools. Involving students in decision making ensures that the students' needs are fully addressed and that their voices are heard, which tremendously stricture or curbs truancy among them.

More so, table 2 of the findings revealed that, (75%) of the respondents indicated that harsh leaders were not likely to experience cases of student truancy. This conquered with Yahya (2010) in Vicentia, (2016) asserted that autocratic principals adopted harshness which was widely detested by teachers and students alike. They faced resistance and increase in the number of indiscipline cases. Students hated harsh administrators who made the school climate unfriendly hence triggering them away from school and its related activities. Likewise, findings revealed from the students' perspective, autocratic leaders were harsh which created unfavorable

learning environment and thus led to increased cases of truancy as reported by majority (60.5.0%) of the students agreed. Students fear staying in schools where punishments are the order of the day and their views are not taken into consideration. Equally students prohibit physical punishment and mental harassment that led them to stay away from the schools.

The study sought information on the influence distant leaders had on student truancy. It was established by (15.5%) of the respondents agree that a principal who kept a distant relationship with both students were likely to experience truancy among learners. Such a leader would rarely understand the learners' needs, behavior and self-esteem. Majority of the students also reported that leaders who were quite distant from them did not effectively monitor cases of truancy among learners. 64% of the students reported that leaders who made decisions without involving students were likely to have cases of truancy in their respective schools.

Similarly, about (82.5%) of the teachers disagree that leaders who did not show concern for the feelings of the students were likely to experience cases of truancy. Moreover, Majority of the students also reported that leaders who were quite distant from them did not effectively monitor cases of truancy among learners. (92%) of the students reported that leaders who made decisions without involving students were likely to have cases of truancy.

Majority of the teachers (83.5%) agreed that leaders who mostly made decisions concerning teachers and students without consulting them were likely to have truancy among their students. It was hard for students to own decisions they did not take part in decision making process. Such principals face resistance from both teachers and students and report high cases of truancy among their learners. (92%) of the students reported that leaders who made decisions without involving students were likely to have cases of truancy. Finally, teacher about 84.5% agreed that adherence to school rules and regulations did not influence truancy among students. 91.5% of the students affirmed that adherence to school rules and regulation did not in any way influence truancy.

## Conclusion

The study concluded that truancy was caused by factors such as inability to cope with academic pressure, dislike for the school environment caused administration techniques used by school leadership, lack of school fees, sickness, problems related to family background and insecurity. Similarly, the study concludes that no single leadership style can be used alone if excellent results have to be achieved in schools. Different situations may call for different ways of approaching them. Thus leaders should properly understand leadership styles, their advantages and disadvantages and situations in which a particular style may be used for best results.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study laid down the following recommendations:

i. Awareness campaign among school administrators to enhance their understanding on the circumstances in which each leadership style is appropriate should be encourage it is also recommended wide adoption of democratic and charismatic leadership styles in curbing the rising cases of truancy and insecurity among learners.

ii. The principals in Zamfara State should organize exchange programmes security awareness measures to help them to overcome or curtail the issues of truancy among their teachers and students.

iii. Principals in Government schools should attend more in-service programmes to learn management skills and the pros and cons of using each leadership style so that they can adopt the most appropriate styles based on the circumstances in their schools.

## Reference

Burke, K. & Beegle, K. (2004). Why Aren't Children Attending School: The Study of Northwestern Tanzania. *Journal of African Economies*, 13(2), 333-335.

Fareo D. O. (2013) Truancy and Academic Performance of Secondary School Students in Southwestern Nigeria: Implications for Counseling International *Journal for Cross-Disciplinary Subjects in Education (IJCDSE)*, Special Issue V 3 (2), pages

Hunt, F., Westbrook, J., Akyeampong, K. & Sebates, R. (2010). *School dropout: Pattern, causes, changes and policies*. Sussex: UNESCO.

Kibet, M. J., Kindiki, J. N., Sang, J. K. & Kitilit, J. K. (2012). *Principals' Leadership and its Impact on Student Discipline in Kenyan Secondary Schools: A Case of Koibatek District. Publishers*

Krejcie, R.V. & Morgan, D.W. (1971). Determining sample size for research activities. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, *30*, 607-?

Okeyinka A. O. (2004) Indiscipline Among Students in Public Secondary Schools In Oyo West Local Government Area Of Oyo State, *Nigeria Journal of Social Science Education Journal (SOSCED-J)* 3(1), 67-77.

Okumbe, J. A. (2013). Educational Management, Theory and Practice. Nairobi: University of Nairobi press.

Tata, U. S. Shehu, S. Aliyu A. D. (2015). Investigation into the Causes of Truancy among Public Senior Secondary School Students in Azare Metropolis of Bauchi State, Nigeria *IOSR Journal of Research & Method in Education. 5(5), 40-45 www.iosrjournals.org e-ISSN: 2320–7388, p-ISSN: 2320–737*

Thami, L. K. (2012). Influence of principals' leadership styles on students' discipline in Public Secondary Schools in Kikuyu District in Kenya. Unpublished M.Ed. Dissertation of the University of Nairobi, Department of Educational Administration and Planning. Nairobi

Vincentia, W. (2016) Influence of Principals' Leadership Styles on Student Truancy In Public Secondary Day Schools In Nakuru Municipality, Kenya.

**Abdulhakeem, U. S., Hamza, M. A. and Suleman, G. D.   ©2021 Federal University of Kashere**

Unpublished M. Ed Dissertation University of Nairobi.

Zubaida, A. N. (2009). Indiscipline and its Management Techniques: A Case Study of a Special Education School in Kano State. *The Journal of the National Council for Exceptional Children.* 11(2): 455 – 463