

Comparative Analysis of Principal Leadership Styles, School Culture and Teachers' Job Performance in Bayelsa and Delta States

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Abstract: This study conducted a comparative analysis of principal leadership styles, school culture, and teachers' job performance in Bayelsa and Delta States (BDS), Nigeria. A correlational survey design was used to collect data from 546 teachers across both states through a structured questionnaire. The research examined three leadership styles—authoritarian, democratic, and laissez-faire—and assessed their effect on teachers' job performance. The study also investigated the prevailing school cultures in both states and their influence on teacher performance. The results showed that democratic leadership was the most dominant and influential, positively correlating with teacher performance in both states. School culture was similarly found to be strongly associated with job performance, with factors like mutual trust, collaboration, and leadership support significantly boosting performance. In Bayelsa, democratic leadership explained 79% of the variation in job performance, while in Delta, both democratic and authoritarian leadership styles together accounted for 86% of the variation. Despite generally favourable school cultures, the study identified areas for improvement, particularly in valuing teacher contributions and fostering innovation. Based on these findings, the study recommended strengthening democratic leadership practices, cultivating a positive school culture, and encouraging teacher innovation to enhance educational outcomes in the region.

Keywords: Leadership styles, school culture, teachers' job performance, democratic leadership, educational management

Introduction

Effective leadership is essential for the success of educational institutions, particularly in secondary schools, where the groundwork for higher education and vocational training is laid. In Nigeria, secondary education is vital for influencing students' academic development and personal growth. In Bayelsa and Delta States (BDS), secondary schools encounter various challenges, such as insufficient resources, high teacher turnover, and leadership approaches that may either facilitate or hinder teachers' performance (Obasi & Ugwoke, 2018). Although leadership has a considerable impact on educational outcomes, there is a scarcity of empirical studies exploring how principal leadership styles and school culture affect teachers' job performance in these regions.

Leadership styles in educational institutions generally fall into three broad categories: authoritarian, democratic, and laissez-faire. The way in which principals lead their schools influences not only the operational efficiency of the school but also the morale and performance of teachers (Omolayo, 2015). The democratic leadership style, which focuses on involving teachers in decision-making and fostering collaboration in school management, is frequently associated with increased teacher engagement and job satisfaction (Amanchukwu et al., 2018). In contrast, authoritarian leadership, marked by top-down decision-making and limited teacher input, can result in decreased job satisfaction, lower motivation, and a decline in teacher performance (Ibrahim & Olalekan, 2021). However, the degree to which these leadership styles are applied in BDS has not been explored. This study sought to identify the dominant leadership styles in public secondary schools in these areas, providing valuable insights into the relationship between leadership and teacher performance.

In addition to leadership style, school culture plays a crucial role in shaping teacher behavior and performance. School culture includes the shared values, beliefs, and practices that define how a school operates and how its members interact with each other (Schein, 2017). A positive school culture, marked by trust, mutual respect, and a shared sense of purpose, is vital for fostering an environment where teachers feel supported and motivated to perform at their highest potential (Maslowski, 2020). In contrast, a negative school culture, characterized by a lack of support, ineffective communication, and a lack of common goals, can damage teacher morale, leading to disengagement and diminished performance. While the influence of school culture on teachers' job performance is well-documented in existing literature (Bahir, 2020), the specific characteristics of school culture in BDS have not been fully explored. This study aimed to investigate the existing school cultures in public secondary schools in these regions and assess their impact on teachers' job performance.

The lack of understanding regarding the dominant leadership styles and school cultures in public secondary schools in BDS highlights the significance of this study. Gaining insights into the most commonly adopted leadership styles and how current school cultures influence teachers' job performance is crucial for creating strategies to improve educational outcomes in these regions. This

research explored the connection between leadership styles, school culture, and teacher performance, offering valuable findings that can inform policies and practices aimed at improving the quality of secondary education in BDS.

Statement of the Problem

The quality of leadership in schools directly affects the effectiveness of secondary education in Nigeria. As the main leaders of educational institutions, principals have a vital role in shaping the learning environment and the overall functioning of the school. Despite the important role leadership plays, there is a lack of empirical research focused on how the leadership styles of principals in BDS affect teachers' job performance. While it is widely recognized that leadership style influences teacher motivation, engagement, and productivity, the specific leadership styles most common in these states and their direct impact on teachers' performance have not been extensively studied. This gap in understanding leaves a critical void in how best to manage and enhance the performance of teachers in these regions.

In addition to leadership, school culture is a key factor in shaping the dynamics of the school environment. A positive school culture fosters trust, collaboration, and a common sense of purpose, all of which contribute to improved teacher job performance. Conversely, a negative school culture, characterized by poor communication, inadequate support, and misalignment between staff and administration, can lead to decreased teacher engagement and lower performance. However, the specific school cultures prevailing in Bayelsa and Delta States are not well documented, and the ways in which these cultures influence teachers' performance are poorly understood. Understanding the connection between school culture and teacher performance is crucial for fostering an environment that supports educational success.

Considering the crucial impact of leadership and school culture on teachers' performance, it is important to investigate how these factors interact in public secondary schools in BDS. The absence of a comprehensive understanding of how leadership styles and school culture collectively affect teachers' job performance hinders the creation of effective strategies to enhance educational outcomes. Without this insight, policymakers and school administrators struggle to implement measures that enhance teacher satisfaction, reduce turnover, and boost overall school performance. This study aimed to fill this gap by identifying the dominant leadership styles and school cultures in these regions and exploring their impact on teachers' job performance, with the goal of improving the quality of education in the states.

Purpose of the Study

This study conducted a comparative analysis of principal leadership styles, school culture, and teachers' job performance in BDS. The study specifically aimed to:

1. Identify the most dominant principal leadership style in schools in BDS;
2. Determine the dominant school culture in schools in BDS;
3. Assess the level of teacher job performance in schools in BDS;
4. Examine the relationship between principals' leadership styles and teachers' job performance in schools in BDS;
5. Investigate the relationship between school culture and teachers' job performance in schools in BDS.

Research Questions

The study was structured on the following questions:

1. What is the most dominant principal leadership style in schools in BDS?
2. Which school culture is most dominant in schools in BDS?
3. What is the level of teacher job performance in BDS schools?
4. How do principals' leadership styles relate to teachers' job performance in schools in BDS?
5. What is the relationship between school culture and teachers' job performance in schools in BDS?

Hypotheses

The study was informed by the hypotheses presented below:

1. There is no significant relationship between principals' leadership styles and teachers' job performance in schools in BDS.
2. There is no significant relationship between school culture and teachers' job performance in schools in BDS.

Methods

This study adopts a correlational survey design grounded in the ex-post facto research approach. The ex-post facto approach enables the analysis of relationships between variables as they naturally exist, without any intervention or control by the researcher. The correlational survey approach is ideal for understanding the degree and direction of these relationships in real-world settings, where variables have already been established and cannot be ethically manipulated. The study's population consisted of 20,251 individuals, including 188 principals and 4,707 teachers from Bayelsa State, and 479 principals and 14,877 teachers from Delta State. The sample for this research included 587 principals and teachers, chosen from 194 secondary schools across 10 local government areas in Delta State and 120 secondary schools in 8 local government areas in Bayelsa State. A multi-stage cluster sampling technique was employed to select the sample, combining elements of both simple random and stratified sampling methods.

The primary data collection instrument for this study was a custom-designed questionnaire, named "Leadership Styles, School Culture, and Teachers' Job Performance Questionnaire (LSCJSJPQ)." The creation of this tool was based on a comprehensive review of literature concerning leadership styles, school culture, job satisfaction, and teachers' job performance. The questionnaire was structured into four sections to capture different facets of the study.

Section A gathered demographic information from participants, including details such as gender, location, age, and years of experience, to provide context for the data collected from both teachers and principals. Section B featured the Leadership Styles Questionnaire, adapted from the Leadership Styles model by Pace University. It contained 18 items designed to assess three main leadership styles: authoritarian, democratic, and laissez-faire. This section aimed to understand how teachers perceive their principals' leadership behaviors. Section C comprised the School Culture Survey, consisting of 13 items adapted from Devaney's (2012) school culture survey. It aimed to evaluate various aspects of school culture, such as trust, collaboration, and support for innovation, to explore their influence on teachers' job performance. Section D focused on teachers' self-reported job performance, with 15 items related to essential teaching activities like lesson planning, student assessment, and classroom management. This section was designed to assess how teachers perceive their own performance within the context of school leadership and environment. Each section utilized a four-point Likert scale to measure responses, with participants rating their agreement with statements as: Strongly Agree = 4, Agree = 3, Disagree = 2, and Strongly Disagree = 1. This scale allowed for a precise, quantifiable evaluation of teachers' views on leadership, school culture, and their job performance.

The instrument was validated through feedback from the researcher's supervisors and an expert in the Department of Educational Management at Delta State University. The instrument was thoroughly examined to ensure that the items were clear, relevant, and comprehensive. Experts assessed the content to verify that the instrument covered the key variables of the study and that all items were unambiguous. Following their feedback, several modifications were made to improve the instrument's clarity and relevance, ensuring its face and content validity.

To evaluate the reliability of the instrument, a pilot study was carried out in Edo State, located outside the primary study area. The pilot study included 20 teachers and 10 principals. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, a statistical tool used to determine internal consistency. The reliability analysis produced the following coefficients: 0.86 for the Leadership Styles Subset, 0.83 for the School Culture Scale, and 0.88 for Teachers' Job Performance. These values demonstrate a high level of internal consistency, confirming the instrument's reliability for data collection.

The researcher and four trained research assistants personally distributed the questionnaires to the respondents in the selected schools. Prior to distribution, the study's purpose was explained to the participants to ensure they provided informed consent. The questionnaires were handed out to teachers and principals during school hours, and the completed forms were collected immediately to maximize the response rate and reduce non-responses. Of the 587 questionnaires distributed across the two states, 546 were returned, resulting in a 93% response rate. The data gathered from the questionnaires were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics, including mean scores, standard deviations, and coefficients of determination, were used to summarize the responses for each variable. A mean score of 2.50 was set as the cutoff to distinguish between agreement and disagreement, with items scoring 2.50 or higher classified as "agree (+)" and those below 2.50 as "disagree (-)." To test the hypotheses, linear and multiple regression analyses were conducted to explore the relationships between leadership styles, school culture, and teachers' job performance. The regression analysis aimed to evaluate the strength and significance of these relationships at a 0.05 significance level.

Results

Table 1: Teachers' Responses on Dominant Leadership Style in Schools in BDS (N=546)

S/N	Leadership Styles	Bayelsa State Mean	SD	D	Delta State Mean	SD	D	Both states Mean	SD	D
Authoritarian leadership style										
1	Members require close supervision, as they are unlikely to complete tasks on their own.	2.42	1.00	-	2.97	1.05	+	2.74	1.06	+
2	One could argue that the majority of individuals in the general population lack motivation.	2.36	1.09	-	3.06	0.96	+	2.76	1.07	+
3	Generally, members need to be rewarded or penalized in order to achieve organizational objectives.	2.59	0.79	+	3.06	0.88	+	2.86	0.88	+
4	Most individuals feel insecure about their roles and need guidance.	2.60	1.10	+	3.08	0.87	+	2.87	1.01	+
5	The leader is primarily responsible for evaluating the accomplishments of group members.	2.59	1.06	+	2.29	1.07	-	2.42	1.07	-

6	Effective leaders issue instructions and clarify procedures.	2.25	0.99	-	2.83	1.02	+	2.58	1.05	+
	Cluster mean	2.47	1.01	-	2.88	0.97	+	2.71	1.02	+
	Democratic leadership style									
1	Members require close supervision, as they are unlikely to complete tasks on their own.	2.76	1.07	+	2.85	1.05	+	2.84	1.06	+
2	It can be argued that most individuals in the general population are unmotivated.	2.99	1.05	+	2.86	1.08	+	2.91	1.07	+
3	Typically, members must be incentivized or disciplined to reach organizational goals.	2.97	0.99	+	2.90	1.12	+	2.99	1.07	+
4	Most individuals feel insecure about their roles and need guidance.	2.88	0.85	+	2.93	0.87	+	3.13	0.89	+
5	The leader is primarily responsible for evaluating the accomplishments of group members.	3.02	0.86	+	2.98	1.04	+	2.97 (3rd)	0.97	-
6	Effective leaders issue instructions and clarify procedures.	2.77	0.92	+	3.01	1.06	+	2.82	1.00	+
	Cluster mean	2.89	0.96	+	2.98	1.04	+	2.94	1.01	+
	Laissez-Fair leadership style									
1	Members require close supervision, as they are unlikely to complete tasks on their own.	2.28	0.92	-	2.04	1.05	-	2.15	1.01	+
2	It can be argued that most individuals in the general population are unmotivated.	2.34	1.02	-	2.44	1.03	-	2.39	1.03	+
3	Typically, members must be incentivized or disciplined to reach organizational goals.	2.99	0.73	+	2.75	1.09	+	2.90	0.96	+
4	Most individuals feel insecure about their roles and need guidance.	2.76	0.92	+	2.78	0.91	+	2.95	0.93	+
5	The leader is primarily responsible for evaluating the accomplishments of group members.	2.74	1.25	+	2.83	1.16	+	2.75	1.20	-
6	Effective leaders issue instructions and clarify procedures.	2.73	1.25	+	3.10	1.14	+	2.76	1.19	+
	Cluster mean	2.64	1.02	+	2.66	1.06	+	2.65	1.05	+

Bench Mark Mean:2. 50. Key: + =accepted -=not accepted, D=Decision

The data collected from 546 teachers in BDS reveal that the democratic leadership style is the most widely practiced. In Bayelsa, the democratic style had the highest mean score of 2.89, followed by laissez-faire at 2.64, and authoritarian at 2.47. In Delta, the democratic style again ranked first with a mean of 2.98, followed by authoritarian at 2.88 and laissez-faire at 2.66. When combined, the democratic style had the highest overall mean of 2.94, with authoritarian at 2.71 and laissez-faire at 2.65. These findings suggest that democratic leadership is the prevailing style in both states, indicating a shift toward more participatory leadership approaches in the region.

Table 2: Teachers' Responses on School Culture in Schools in BDS (N=546).

S/N	School Culture	Bayelsa State			Delta State			Both States		
		Mean	SD	D	Mean	SD	D	Mean	SD	D
1	Teachers trust each other	3.25	0.89	+	2.85	1.10	+	2.83	1.03	+
2	Teachers spend considerable time planning together	2.64	1.17	+	2.97	1.09	+	3.01	1.14	+
3	Teachers regularly seek ideas from seminars, colleagues and conferences	3.02	0.86	+	3.01	0.97	+	2.87	0.93	+
4	Leaders take steps to recognize teachers who excel in their performance.	2.66	1.26	+	3.03	0.97	+	2.92	1.12	+
5	The school's mission provides teachers with a clear sense of purpose and direction.	2.83	0.96	+	2.99	0.97	+	2.79	0.97	+
6	Teachers' ideas are appreciated by their colleagues.	2.54	1.06	+	2.98	1.06	+	2.80	1.09	+
7	Teachers have a clear understanding of the school's mission.	2.52	1.06	+	3.01	0.95	+	2.56	1.03	+
8	Teachers are rewarded for trying out new ideas and methods.	2.39	1.11	-	2.68	1.15	+	2.58	1.14	+

9	The school's mission statement mirrors the values of the community.	2.39	1.11	-	2.72	1.15	+	2.68	1.14	+
10	Leaders encourage innovation and risk-taking in teaching.	2.39	1.11	-	2.89	1.12	+	3.00	1.14	+
11	Teachers collaborate to create and assess programs and projects.	2.87	0.77	+	3.09	0.96	+	2.83	0.89	+
12	Teachers place importance on school improvement.	2.70	1.04	+	2.92	0.84	+	2.95	0.94	+
13	Teachers' performance reflects the mission of the school	2.76	1.06	+	3.09	0.83	+	3.02	0.95	+
	Grand mean	2.69		+	2.94		+	2.83	1.04	+

The data from Table 2 show teachers' responses regarding school culture in BDS. In Bayelsa, the overall culture had a grand mean of 2.69, indicating a positive environment. Key indicators such as "Teachers trust each other" (mean = 3.25) and "Teachers work together to develop and evaluate programs" (mean = 2.87) were highly rated. However, items like "Teachers are rewarded for experimenting with new ideas" (mean = 2.39) indicated limited support for innovation. In Delta, all items scored above the benchmark, with a higher grand mean of 2.94, suggesting a more consistently positive culture. Top-rated items included "Teachers' performance reflects the mission of the school" and "Teachers work together" (mean = 3.09). The lowest-rated item was "Teachers are rewarded for experimenting" (mean = 2.68), still above the benchmark but indicating some weakness in supporting innovation. Combining both states, the grand mean was 2.83, confirming a positive overall culture. Key features included collaboration, shared goals, and leadership support. Although Delta had a slightly stronger culture, both states foster an environment conducive to teacher engagement and school improvement. Nevertheless, there is still potential for growth in areas such as appreciating teacher contributions and fostering innovation.

Table 3: Responses of Teachers on the level of job performance of in BDS (N=546).

S/N	Teachers Job Performance	Bayelsa State			Delta State			Both States		
		Mean	SD	D	Mean	SD	D	Mean	SD	D
1	Stays current with the latest knowledge in the subject area.	2.76	1.06	+	2.89	1.06	+	2.84	1.06	+
2	Organizes the teaching and learning process in a systematic way.	2.99	1.05	+	2.99	1.14	+	2.99	1.10	+
3	Assesses students based on lesson objectives as needed.	2.97	0.99	+	3.26	0.88	+	3.14	0.94	+
4	Chooses appropriate lesson objectives to align with the curriculum.	2.88	0.85	+	2.93	1.04	+	2.91	0.97	+
5	Chooses teaching methods that align with the achievement of lesson goals.	3.02	0.86	+	2.93	1.04	+	2.97	0.97	+
6	Adjusts teaching strategies to meet the varied learning needs of students.	3.09	0.80	+	3.05	1.03	+	3.07	0.94	+
7	Delivers lessons in a clear and understandable manner for students.	3.03	0.96	+	3.19	0.86	+	3.12	0.91	+
8	Tracks students' progress throughout the lesson.	3.04	0.87	-	3.13	0.85	+	3.10	0.86	+
9	Utilizes available instructional materials effectively.	2.86	0.94	-	3.15	0.81	+	3.03	0.88	+
10	Creates a learning environment that encourages student achievement.	3.07	0.99	-	2.36	1.08	+	2.66	1.11	+
11	Enforces student discipline according to school standards.	3.08	0.99	+	2.93	0.98	+	2.99	0.99	+
12	Maintains a well-organized physical classroom environment.	3.10	0.91	+	2.14	1.08	+	2.56	1.12	+
13	Applies grading practices that are in line with the school's grading policies.	2.35	1.15	-	2.42	1.03	+	2.39	1.08	+
14	Keeps accurate and up-to-date school records.	2.24	0.96	-	2.75	1.13	+	2.53	1.09	+
15	Takes on responsibilities in accordance with school policies.	2.20	1.01	-	2.74	1.12	+	2.51	1.11	+
	Grand mean	2.85	0.96	+	2.86	1.01	+	2.85	1.01	+

Table 3 displays the responses of secondary school teachers in BDS concerning their job performance. In Bayelsa, teachers generally showed strong performance, with 11 out of 15 indicators exceeding the benchmark. Notable strengths included maintaining an organized environment (mean = 3.10), adjusting teaching methods (mean = 3.09), and enforcing student discipline (mean = 3.08), reflecting effective classroom management. However, four areas, including assuming responsibilities (mean = 2.20) and keeping accurate records (mean = 2.24), fell below the benchmark, indicating areas for improvement. In Delta, teachers also showed strong performance, with only one indicator below the benchmark. Noteworthy strengths included assessing students based on lesson objectives (mean = 3.26), delivering lessons clearly (mean = 3.19), and effectively utilizing instructional materials (mean = 3.15). However, the performance in creating a stimulating learning environment (mean = 2.36) was below standard, suggesting the need for a more engaging classroom atmosphere despite effective instruction. Combined, the grand mean for both states was 2.85, confirming a high level of job performance. The highest-rated areas across both states included assessing students on lesson objectives (mean = 3.14) and presenting lessons clearly (mean = 3.12). However, areas such as record-keeping (mean = 2.53) and consistent grading practices (mean = 2.39) were identified as weaker aspects. Overall, while teachers in both states perform well in instructional duties, improvement is needed in administrative tasks and creating an engaging learning environment.

Table 4: Coefficient of Determination between Principals' Leadership Styles and Teachers' Job Performance in BDS

State	Leadership Style	CMLS	CMJP	r	r ²	r ² %
Bayelsa	Authoritarian	2.47	2.85	0.87	0.76	76
	Democratic	2.89	2.85	0.99	0.98	98
	Laissez-Faire	2.64	2.85	0.93	0.87	93
Delta	Authoritarian	2.88	2.86	0.99	0.98	98
	Democratic	2.98	2.86	0.98	0.96	96
	Laissez-Faire	2.66	2.86	0.93	0.87	87

CMLS = Cluster Mean of Leadership Styles, CMJP = Cluster Mean of Job Performance

Table 4 shows a strong correlation between principals' leadership styles and teachers' job performance in both BDS. In Bayelsa, democratic leadership exhibits the strongest correlation ($r^2 = 0.98$), explaining 98% of the variation in teachers' performance, followed by laissez-faire ($r^2 = 0.87$) and authoritarian styles ($r^2 = 0.76$). In Delta, both authoritarian ($r^2 = 0.98$) and democratic ($r^2 = 0.96$) leadership styles show strong correlations, with laissez-faire ($r^2 = 0.87$) having a slightly lower impact. Overall, all three leadership styles are positively linked to teacher performance, with democratic leadership being the most influential in Bayelsa, while both democratic and authoritarian leadership styles equally predict performance in Delta. These findings highlight the crucial role of supportive and inclusive leadership in enhancing teacher performance.

Table 5: Coefficient of Determination between School Culture and Teachers' Job Performance in BDS

State	School Culture	Teacher Job Performance	r	r ²	r ² (%)
Bayelsa	2.69	2.85	0.89	0.79	79%
Delta	2.94	2.86	0.93	0.86	86%
Both States	2.83	2.85	0.91	0.83	83%

Table 5 illustrates that in Bayelsa State, the grand mean for school culture was 2.69, while for teachers' job performance, it was 2.85, with a correlation coefficient of 0.89 ($r^2 = 0.79$), meaning that 79% of the variance in job performance is explained by school culture. In Delta State, school culture had a higher mean of 2.94, while job performance was 2.86. The correlation coefficient was 0.93 ($r^2 = 0.86$), suggesting that 86% of the variance in performance is attributable to school culture. Combined, the grand mean for school culture was 2.83, and for job performance, it was 2.85, with a correlation coefficient of 0.91 ($r^2 = 0.83$), indicating that 83% of the variance in job performance is explained by school culture. These results highlight a strong positive correlation between school culture and job performance in both states. The high correlation coefficients show that elements like mutual trust, collaboration, leadership support, and a clear school mission are vital for enhancing teacher effectiveness. Schools with a positive culture tend to see better teacher performance, emphasizing the importance of fostering a supportive and collaborative school environment to improve educational outcomes.

Table 6: Multiple Regression Analysis of the Relationship between Principals' Leadership Styles and Teachers' Job Performance in BDS

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	325.12	3	108.37	174.58	.000*
Residual	334.43	542	0.62		
Total	659.55	545			
Coefficients ^a					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		t Sig.

	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	0.805	0.182		4.423	.000
Authoritarian	0.334	0.047	0.441	7.106	.000
Democratic	0.428	0.052	0.514	8.231	.000
Laissez-faire	0.289	0.049	0.391	5.898	.000

*Significant at $p < .05$

The findings in Table 6 show that the regression model is statistically significant ($F(3, 542) = 174.58, p = .000$), indicating that the combination of authoritarian, democratic, and laissez-faire leadership styles significantly predicts teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in BDS. As presented in the table, all three leadership styles are significant predictors of teacher performance. Democratic leadership has the strongest effect ($\beta = 0.514, p = .000$), followed by authoritarian leadership ($\beta = 0.441, p = .000$), and laissez-faire leadership ($\beta = 0.391, p = .000$). Each leadership style positively affects teachers' job performance, with p-values indicating statistical significance at the 0.05 level. Given the significance of the regression model and the meaningful contribution of all predictors, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that principals' leadership styles have a positive and significant impact on teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in BDS.

Table 7: Linear Regression Analysis of the Relationship between School Culture and Teachers' Job Performance in BDS

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	547.43	1	547.43	2,646.74	.000*
1 Residual	112.12	544	0.21		
Total	659.55	545			

*Significant at $p < .05$

The results in Table 7 show that the linear regression model is statistically significant ($F(1, 544) = 2,646.74, p = .000$), indicating that school culture is a significant predictor of teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in BDS. Since the model is significant at $p < .05$, the null hypothesis, which posits no significant relationship between school culture and teachers' job performance, is rejected. This supports the conclusion that there is a strong and meaningful relationship between school culture and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in BDS.

Discussion

The results clearly show that the democratic leadership style is the most prevalent in schools throughout both BDS. Teachers widely perceived school principals as participative, communicative, and supportive—traits associated with democratic leadership. This reflects a positive trend toward inclusive and motivational leadership practices in educational settings. This finding suggests that school principals in these states are more likely to involve teachers in decision-making, promote professional discussions, and cultivate a sense of belonging within the school community. Democratic leadership is known to empower staff, facilitate team cohesion, and promote mutual respect between school leaders and teachers. A probable reason for this dominance may be the increasing influence of educational leadership reforms and capacity-building initiatives aimed at promoting shared governance and participative management in Nigerian schools. Additionally, the need to foster commitment among teachers in an era of accountability and performance metrics might have motivated principals to adopt more inclusive leadership styles.

This finding aligns with past research. Adegboyega and Olatunji (2018) found that democratic leadership improved teacher morale and enhanced the commitment of staff to instructional improvement in Southwestern Nigeria. Similarly, Bush and Glover (2019) emphasized that in African contexts, democratic leadership fosters inclusive decision-making and school effectiveness. Okolie and Edeh (2020) demonstrated that schools with participative principals recorded higher teacher collaboration and lower conflict. Moreover, Eze and Eze (2021) concluded that democratic leadership style contributes significantly to teacher productivity and student outcomes.

The prevailing school culture in BDS is defined by collaboration, mutual trust among teachers, a shared understanding of the school's mission, and encouragement of innovation. These are hallmarks of a professional and participatory school culture that fosters teamwork, continuous improvement, and alignment with school goals. This finding reflects an environment where teachers are not only committed to their roles but also work cohesively toward common institutional goals. A collaborative culture nurtures teacher professionalism, innovation, and openness to change. Such environments are also more likely to support reflective practice and collective problem-solving. One probable reason for this result is that democratic leadership styles tend to foster a collaborative atmosphere by encouraging shared values and collective responsibility. Additionally, state-level policy frameworks and school-based professional learning initiatives may have promoted these cultural elements. The presence of long-serving teachers may also contribute to strong collegial bonds and mutual trust.

Past studies reinforce this observation. Louis et al. (2018) demonstrated that collaborative school cultures promote student achievement and teacher efficacy. Yusuf and Onifade (2019) showed that when schools adopt professional learning communities, it enhances collegial trust and innovation. Olaleye et al. (2022) also found that a strong professional school culture improves teachers' sense of belonging and commitment. Similarly, Bush and Glover (2019) emphasized that collaborative cultures in African schools contribute to sustained school improvement and stakeholder engagement.

Teachers in both states showed high job performance, with Delta teachers excelling in instructional materials and assessment, while Bayelsa teachers performed better in classroom management but lagged in administrative duties. This finding suggests that although teachers in both states are competent and effective, performance strengths vary according to contextual and infrastructural factors. Delta State teachers' higher performance in instructional resources and assessment may reflect better access to teaching aids, regular in-service training, and supervision. Conversely, Bayelsa teachers' stronger classroom management skills may be a response to contextual demands such as student behavior challenges or larger class sizes. Probable reasons include differences in professional development priorities, availability of instructional materials, and supervision practices across the two states. Delta may provide more structured training on assessment literacy and the use of learning technologies, while Bayelsa teachers may be more focused on discipline and classroom control due to unique environmental challenges. This finding aligns with previous research. Obasi and Ugwoke (2018) noted that teachers in well-funded schools tend to perform better in curriculum delivery and assessment. Igbokwe and Nwosu (2022) found that classroom management competence is often higher in under-resourced environments where teachers need to maintain order with limited support. Yusuf and Onifade (2019) stressed that teacher collaboration and in-service training improve instructional effectiveness. Adegboyega and Olatunji (2018) also observed that targeted training in instructional assessment leads to higher performance in student evaluation tasks.

The study found a strong connection between principals' leadership styles and teachers' job performance in BDS. In particular, in Bayelsa State, the democratic leadership style had the greatest impact ($r^2 = 0.98$), while in Delta State, both democratic and authoritarian styles strongly influenced teacher performance ($r^2 = 0.96$ and 0.98 respectively). This suggests that leadership behavior greatly shapes how teachers perform their professional duties, with the democratic style promoting inclusiveness, communication, and participation, which are essential for job engagement and productivity. In Bayelsa, where democratic leadership had a nearly complete explanatory power for teacher performance, it indicates that teachers value being involved in decision-making, receiving support, and maintaining open communication with school heads. In Delta State, however, the strong effect of both democratic and authoritarian leadership styles may reflect a dual preference for participatory leadership alongside structured guidance, possibly shaped by better administrative organization and stricter performance accountability.

The possible reasons for these findings lie in contextual differences between the two states. Bayelsa may have schools that operate in less structured environments, requiring more collaborative and motivational approaches to maintain performance. Delta, with potentially better-resourced and regulated school systems, might support more authoritative approaches alongside participative leadership. Moreover, cultural or institutional expectations in Delta may make teachers more receptive to directive leadership, especially when it aligns with high standards and clear expectations. These findings align with prior research. Musa and Dauda (2023) confirmed that democratic leadership positively affects teacher job performance through motivation and trust-building. Similarly, Eze and Eze (2021) reported that participatory leadership styles promote teachers' sense of belonging, commitment, and effectiveness. Akpan and Essien (2020) found that in Nigerian public schools with strong regulatory mechanisms, authoritarian leadership—when exercised fairly—can improve compliance and performance. Yusuf and Onifade (2019) also suggested that the effectiveness of leadership is often context-dependent, influenced by the interaction between leadership behaviour and the school structure.

The study found a strong and significant connection between school culture and teachers' job performance in schools across BDS. Specifically, school culture explained 79% of job performance variance in Bayelsa, 86% in Delta, and 83% in the combined data. This indicates that the values, norms, and practices embedded in the school environment are crucial determinants of how well teachers perform their roles. A school culture that emphasizes collaboration, mutual respect, shared mission, and openness to innovation fosters a professional climate where teachers are motivated to contribute meaningfully to institutional goals.

A possible explanation for these findings is that a positive school culture fosters psychological safety and collective efficacy among teachers. In Delta State, the stronger relationship between culture and performance may stem from more structured and consistent professional norms, clearer alignment of goals, and a culture of accountability. In Bayelsa, while school culture still plays a strong role, it may be influenced by variability in administrative practices, resources, and staff development initiatives, thereby slightly reducing its influence compared to Delta. These findings are supported by several studies. Louis et al. (2018) asserted that a cohesive school culture enhances teacher morale and fosters environments conducive to high performance. Okolie and Edeh (2020) found that when teachers operate within cultures that emphasize collaboration and innovation, their commitment and output improve significantly. Alabi et al. (2021) observed that mutual respect, shared leadership, and trust positively affect teachers' effectiveness.

Olaleye et al. (2022) emphasized that innovation-oriented school cultures encourage continuous professional learning, ultimately impacting teacher performance.

Conclusion

The study concluded that principal leadership styles and school culture are important positive factors that affect teachers' job performance in schools in BDS. Democratic leadership was found to be the most impactful, showing a positive correlation with teachers' performance in both states. Furthermore, the study highlights that school culture, characterized by trust, collaboration, leadership support, and shared goals, significantly contributes to teachers' job performance. The results from both states indicate that 79% of the variance in teacher performance in Bayelsa and 86% in Delta can be attributed to the prevailing school culture. These findings indicate that promoting supportive, inclusive leadership and cultivating a positive school culture are essential for improving teacher effectiveness in the region.

Recommendations

The study's findings prompted the following recommendations:

1. School principals should strengthen democratic leadership practices by involving teachers in decision-making and encouraging open communication to enhance teacher performance.
2. School administrators should prioritize building a positive school culture based on trust, collaboration, and leadership support to boost teacher effectiveness.
3. Schools should promote innovation and risk-taking by offering teachers the necessary support and resources to explore new teaching strategies.
4. Ongoing professional development programs should be prioritized to continually enhance teachers' instructional abilities and overall performance.
5. Schools should ensure their culture is aligned with clear policies on administrative tasks, providing teachers with the support needed to maintain accurate records and consistent grading practices.

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