Relationship between leadership style and committee effectiveness in secondary schools

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Abstract

This study explores how leadership styles, particularly the principal's approach, influence organisational effectiveness in secondary schools, arguing that structured and supportive leadership fosters committee effectiveness, while laissez-faire or free-reign leadership may undermine collaboration, motivation, and decision-making, ultimately impacting school performance. A quantitative descriptive research design approach was employed. The study used a multistage sampling technique to select 313 participants from secondary schools in Zamfara State, Nigeria. The data collected was analysed using percentage and linear multiple regression analysis to test the hypotheses formulated at a 0.05 significance level. It was found that leadership styles (participatory and free-reign) had a significant negative relationship with the committee system effectiveness, while directive leadership style and committee system effectiveness did not have a significant relationship. Policymakers and educational authorities should address the resource constraints that limit the availability of welfare and feeding committees. School leaders should also adopt balanced management styles that incorporate clear directives and controls while allowing some level of participation and flexibility to foster a positive and effective committee system.

Keywords: *committee system, school leadership, effectiveness, leadership styles*

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1. Introduction

In recent years, the role of committees has gained significant attention due to the complexity of school governance, community engagement, inclusivity and diversity, the need to build collaboration, the emphasis on transparency and accountability, corporate governance and oversight and digital transformation (Aryanti & Suhardan, 2020; Ayu et al., 2022; Puri & Chhetri, 2024). Like many other organisations, schools adopt a committee system to get their enormous duties delivered. However, effectiveness of committee system in schools has been the subject of scrutiny in social sciences research (i.e. Ferriswara et al., 2024; Owusu-Addo et al., 2024).

Committee effectiveness, characterised by positive response to committee efforts and actions, positively influences school policies, decision-making, and general educational outcomes. In this context, effectiveness is measured by the ability of a committee to foster collaboration, inclusivity and transparency when making informed decisions for the benefit of the entire school community. Despite notable progress, there remains a critical gap in understanding the effectiveness of committees in achieving the primary objectives in secondary schools in Nigeria (Maina et al., 2020; Ogwuike & Iheonu, 2021; Agi & Igwe, 2023), which has implications for both theory and practice. School principals are saddled with many leadership responsibilities that cannot be achieved in isolation from others (Hoque & Raya, 2023). School principals, therefore, need to engage other staff members for optimal performance, efficiency, satisfaction, and development (Suleiman, 2023). One of the ways principals engage other staff in the school's administrative process is through the committee system. The committee system simplifies the functions and activities that school principals must perform to achieve school and educational goals. Therefore, there is a need for committees to make and take valuable decisions in the general interest of the schools. However, as many factors influence day-to-day school management, the main purpose of establishing a committee in school is compromised. One of the identified factors is the leadership style of the school principals (Hafeez & Akhtar, 2022; Fortune, 2020).

As an administrator, the school principal has the arduous task of leading efficiently and effectively in developing and managing school resources (Jaiyeoba & Ojewumi, 2021, p. 254). In all the management functions, the school principal leadership style has a more significant role in coordinating the activities of other supporting members of school management committees (Aryanti & Suhardan, 2020). For instance, the influence of leadership style on

teachers' effectiveness cannot be over-emphasized. An effective teacher could be rendered ineffective if the principal leadership style conflicts with the tasks or roles of the teacher (Agustin et al., 2022; Bada et al., 2024). If the principal leadership style is appropriate, the way and manner the principal disciplines the staff, the human relations and feelings, the consideration to the members of staff, the inspiration to staff and the way of handling staff welfare, it is likely to affect teacher effectiveness (Oyuga, 2023).

Empirical studies on the secondary schools in Zamfara State, Nigeria highlight some negative administrative practices (Sodangi et al., 2023; Dahiru & Almustapha, 2024; Usman et al., 2023; Muhammad & Ashiru, 2021), implying appropriateness of leadership styles in relation to the performance of teachers. Similarly, evidence showed a necessity of re-examining the implementation of committee systems in schools (Ojewumi & Jaiyeoba, 2022; Maina et al., 2020; Aselebe, 2024; Nnebedum et al., 2018). Therefore, it is essential to re-examine both the leadership styles and the committee systems in schools. In addition, there is limited research on the relationship between leadership style and the effectiveness of committee system. Hence, this study explores the relationship between leadership styles and committee systems within secondary schools in Zamfara State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study aims to determine the relationship between participatory, directive, and free-reign leadership styles with the committee system in secondary schools. It seeks to address the research gap by employing quantitative methods to explore the relationships between the leadership style adopted by school principals and the effectiveness of committees in secondary schools.

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

2.1. Theoretical Framework

This study is hinged on distributed leadership theory, which views leadership as a shared and collective process and emphasises the empowerment of various stakeholders within an organisation. In the context of secondary schools, principals who adopt distributed leadership style delegate responsibilities to committee members, recognising and utilising their unique skills and expertise. This empowerment leads to a more dynamic and effective committee system, as it capitalises on its members' collective intelligence and strengths (Spillane, 2006). By distributing leadership roles, principals encourage active participation and engagement, fostering a sense of ownership and commitment among committee members. This inclusive approach ensures that decisions are well-informed and supported by those who will

implement them, enhancing the overall effectiveness and responsiveness of the committee system.

Collaboration and shared decision-making are also fundamental aspects of distributed leadership. Principals who promote these values within their committee systems create an environment where diverse perspectives are valued and integrated into the decision-making process (Leithwood et al., 2009). Open communication channels and encouraging idea exchange among committee members lead to more comprehensive and innovative solutions. In secondary schools, this collaborative culture ensures that decisions reflect the collective insights and experiences of the school community, making them more relevant and practical. By fostering a collaborative environment, principals can enhance the problem-solving capabilities of their committees, ensuring that decisions are made with a broader understanding of the issues at hand and the needs of the stakeholders.

Another critical component of distributed leadership is the emphasis on shared accountability and collective responsibility. When leadership is distributed, all committee members share the responsibility for the outcomes of their decisions (Timperley, 2005). This shared accountability ensures that each member is equally invested in the success of the committee's initiatives, leading to greater commitment and effort from all involved. In secondary schools, this can result in more robust and reliable committee systems, as members feel a stronger sense of duty and ownership over their collective decisions. Principals who cultivate this sense of shared responsibility create a more cohesive and motivated committee, where each member is accountable not only to the principal but to their peers as well. This collective approach enhances the reliability and effectiveness of the committee's work.

Furthermore, distributed leadership also promotes innovation and adaptability within committee systems. By leveraging various committee members' diverse talents and perspectives, principals can foster a culture of continuous improvement and creativity (Harris & Spillane, 2008). This adaptability is crucial in secondary schools, where educational challenges and opportunities constantly evolve. A distributed leadership approach allows committees to be more flexible and responsive to changes, ensuring that the school remains proactive and forward-thinking in its strategies and policies. Including multiple viewpoints and expertise leads to more innovative solutions and practices, as committee members bring different experiences and ideas to the table. This culture of innovation enhances the committee system's effectiveness and contributes to the school's overall growth and improvement.

Distributed leadership theory provides a valuable framework for understanding how principals' leadership styles can impact the effectiveness of committee systems in secondary schools. Distributed leadership fosters a more inclusive, dynamic, and effective decision-making environment by emphasising empowerment, collaboration, shared accountability, and innovation. This approach not only improves the functionality of committees but also contributes to the overall success and adaptability of the school, ensuring that it can meet the diverse needs of its students and stakeholders in an ever-changing educational landscape.

2.2. Hypotheses Development

While Distributed Leadership Theory provides a valuable framework for understanding the relationship between leadership styles and committee systems in secondary schools, it is not without its challenges. The theory's strengths in promoting collaboration, empowerment, and innovation are significant. However, the potential risks of overemphasising shared decision-making, cultural resistance, and the dilution of leadership authority must be carefully managed.

The relationship between the principal's directive leadership style and committee effectiveness in secondary schools has been a topic of significant interest in educational leadership research. Directive leadership, characterised by clear instructions, close supervision, and a top-down approach, is often seen as a way to ensure task completion and maintain order within educational institutions. Recent studies have explored the impact of this leadership style on various organisational outcomes, including the effectiveness of committees, which play a crucial role in decision-making and policy implementation in schools.

Research by Biloa (2023) highlights that directive leadership can positively influence committee effectiveness by providing clear goals and expectations. Their study, conducted in a sample of secondary schools, found that committees led by principals who adopt a directive style were more likely to meet deadlines, achieve set objectives, and maintain high-performance levels. This is particularly relevant in schools where a clear direction is necessary to navigate complex administrative tasks and ensure alignment with school-wide goals. The authors argue that the predictability and structure provided by directive leadership can lead to more efficient and effective committee operations. However, not all findings point to a universally positive relationship. Semedo et al. (2022) suggest that while directive leadership can enhance task efficiency, it may also stifle creativity and reduce the autonomy of committee

members. Their research indicates that committees under directive leadership may become overly dependent on the principal's decisions, which can limit the input from other members and reduce the diversity of ideas. This potential drawback suggests that while directive leadership may drive immediate results, it may also hinder long-term committee effectiveness by suppressing innovation and collaboration.

Diuno (2018) argues that the effectiveness of directive leadership on committees may depend on the context and specific tasks at hand. The study showed that in situations requiring quick decision-making, complex tasks or strict adherence to protocols, directive leadership can be highly effective. Conversely, a more participative leadership style might be preferable in scenarios where creativity, member engagement, and consensus-building are paramount. This perspective aligns with the idea that leadership effectiveness is contingent upon the situation, suggesting that the benefits of a directive approach may vary depending on the nature of the committee's work. Further supporting this contextual approach, Post et al. (2022) emphasise the importance of balancing directive leadership with elements of participative management. Their research on secondary school committees indicates that while a directive style can ensure clarity and accountability, incorporating opportunities for input from committee members can enhance commitment and satisfaction. They propose a hybrid leadership model, where principals can adjust their leadership style based on the committee's needs, fostering both efficiency and member engagement.

The findings of Kongnyuy (2020) and Masaku et al. (2018) showed that some principals were unwilling to delegate and involve teachers in decision-making, while other teachers were not delegated any task at all with the perceptions that some responsibilities are sensitive and making a wrong decision may have severe implications to the smooth running of the school, for example, in cases of examination malpractices and insecurity, the activities of committee members on discipline and security should be conducted in secrecy and strict confidentiality. Nkeobuna and Ugoani (2020) stressed that some matters should not be delegated to just anyone or a committee. This accounted for why many school committees are reduced to mere advisory bodies. Against this background, this study was carried out to examine leadership styles and committee system effectiveness in schools from a conceptual approach. This study therefore hypothesise that:

H1: There is a positive relationship between the directive leadership style and the committee system in secondary schools in Zamfara state, Nigeria.

The relationship between a principal's participatory leadership style and committee effectiveness in secondary schools has garnered significant attention in recent educational leadership research. Participatory leadership, characterised by shared decision-making, collaboration, and active involvement of stakeholders, is believed to enhance the effectiveness of committees by fostering a sense of ownership and commitment among members. Several studies have explored the impact of this leadership style on school governance, indicating that principals who engage in participatory practices often see improved organisational outcomes, including increased committee effectiveness (Bush, 2020; Northouse, 2019). These findings highlight the importance of leadership approaches that prioritise inclusivity and empowerment in fostering effective school committees.

Bush and Glover (2018) emphasise the role of participatory leadership in improving decision-making processes within schools. Their research shows that when principals actively involve teachers, staff, and other stakeholders in decision-making, committees are more likely to effectively achieve their goals. The involvement of various perspectives in decision-making enhances the quality of decisions, leading to better outcomes for the school. This collaborative approach to leadership improves the functioning of committees and promotes a positive school culture where members feel valued and motivated to contribute meaningfully to the school's success. Moreover, Leithwood and Azah (2017) highlight that participatory leadership in schools contributes to higher levels of trust and cooperation among committee members. When principals encourage participation and input from all members, it fosters a culture of trust and collaboration, which is crucial for effective committee work. Their study suggests that this leadership style leads to more cohesive and committed committees, which are better able to navigate challenges and work towards common goals. As committee members feel empowered and trusted, they are more likely to be engaged and productive, ultimately enhancing their effectiveness.

Recent researches by Harris and DeFlaminis (2016) and Mpuangnan et al. (2024) also support the positive relationship between participatory leadership and committee effectiveness, particularly in secondary schools. Their study found that schools with principals who practice participatory leadership see more effective committees that can better implement school policies and programs. This is because participatory leadership allows for a more democratic decision-making process, where diverse viewpoints are considered, leading to more well-rounded and effective decisions. As a result, committees are better equipped to address the

complex issues facing secondary schools and implement solutions that are widely supported by the school community. Generally, the literature consistently supports the notion that a principal's participatory leadership style positively impacts committee effectiveness in secondary schools. By fostering a culture of inclusivity, trust, and collaboration, participatory leadership enhances the decision-making processes and overall functioning of school committees. This review suggests that principals who engage in participatory leadership practices are likely to see more effective and cohesive committees, which contribute to the overall success of the school. Thus, a hypothesis is developed that:

> *H2: participatory leadership is positively associated with committee effectiveness in secondary schools in Zamfara state, Nigeria*

Free-reign leadership, also known as laissez-faire leadership, is characterised by minimal interference from leaders, allowing subordinates considerable autonomy in their decision-making. Recent studies emphasise that leadership style plays a crucial role in determining the effectiveness of teams or committees. According to Bush and Glover (2014), school leadership is central to shaping organisational outcomes, including the performance of committees and other school groups. When principals adopt an effective leadership style, it fosters collaboration, clear communication, and goal alignment among committee members, which is crucial for success. However, free-reign leadership is often associated with a lack of direction and support, which can hinder committee effectiveness (Bwambale et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2023). This indicates that when principals adopt a hands-off approach, it may negatively affect the performance of committees that require clear guidance and coordination. The literature further suggests that free-reign leadership can lead to ambiguity in roles and responsibilities, negatively impacting decision-making processes within committees. In their study on educational leadership, Zhang et al. (2023) found that laissez-faire leadership often results in disorganised teams, as members are left to operate without clear directives. This lack of leadership presence can lead to inefficiencies and conflicts among committee members, as decisions are made without a unified vision or coordination. In the context of secondary schools, where committees handle important tasks such as curriculum development and student welfare, this leadership style can be detrimental to achieving desired outcomes.

Several studies highlight the relationship between leadership style and the motivation of team members. Research by Allen et al. (2015) and Sokolic et al. (2024) indicate that free-

reign leadership often leads to lower levels of motivation and engagement among team members. In school committees, this disengagement can manifest as decreased participation, lack of accountability, and ultimately reduced effectiveness. When committee members feel unsupported by their principal, they may struggle to meet the expectations placed upon them, further weakening the committee's overall performance. On the other hand, some studies suggest that free-reign leadership may allow for creativity and innovation in certain contexts where team members are highly skilled and require less supervision (Hughes et al., 2018; Kalkan et al., 2020) . In secondary school settings, however, where committees often consist of diverse members with varying expertise, this leadership style might not be appropriate. Committees typically require coordination and a clear direction from the principal to navigate complex issues, making a more involved leadership style preferable to free-reign leadership. The reviewed literature indicates that a principal's free-reign leadership style is likely to negatively impact the effectiveness of committees in secondary schools. The lack of direction, engagement, and coordination often associated with this style can hinder the committee's ability to achieve its objectives. Therefore, we hypothesise that:

> *H3: Principal's free-reign leadership style has a negative relationship with committee effectiveness in secondary schools in Zamfara state, Nigeria.*

2.3. Conceptual Framework

The framework in this study explains the relationship between leadership styles (independent variable) and committee system effectiveness (dependent variable).

Figure 1

The research framework
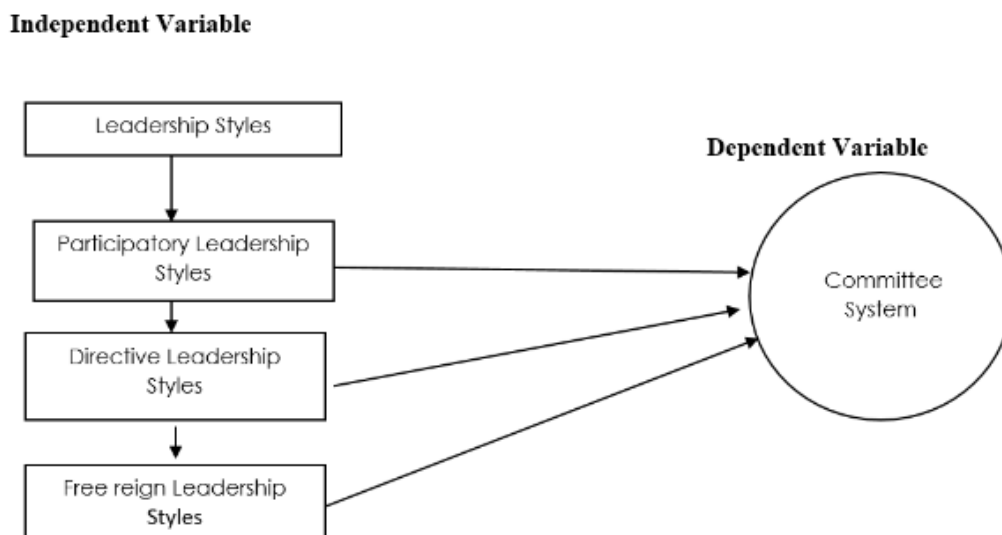
This study conceptually explains the connection between leadership styles and committee system effectiveness. As depicted in figure 1, leadership styles determine committee system effectiveness and vice versa. This implies that leadership style correlates with committees' effectiveness, even in a school system. This indicates that man is a gregarious animal; no leader is an island and cannot succeed in isolation. Decision-making and innovative approaches must be held by more than those in formal leadership roles. Therefore, this study establishes a relationship between leadership styles and committee system effectiveness. However, a leader as a factor can encourage or frustrate group members, subordinates, or staff in achieving assigned responsibilities.

3. Methods

This study adopted a quantitative research design of cross-sectional type. This design is chosen to determine the relationship between principals' leadership styles and the effectiveness of the committees in Zamfara state of Nigeria.

The population comprised teaching and non-teaching staff of public secondary schools in Zamfara state. A multistage sampling technique was used to determine the study sample. At first, a stratified technique was used to categorise the respondents into two strata (academic staff and non-academic staff). Afterwards, a simple random sampling technique was used to select 313 respondents for the two strata using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size determinant table. Initially, 400 participants were proposed, but only 313 responded.

Table 1

Participants' demographic characteristics

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	163	52.0
	Female	150	47.9
Rank	Academic	253	80.8
	Non-academic	60	19.1
Year of Experience	<10 years	125	40.0
	>10 years	188	60.0

Table 1 displays that a total of 313 participants were included in the study, with 163 (52.0%) identifying as male and 150 (47.9%) as female. Regarding their professional roles,

most of the participants, 253 (80.8%), held academic positions, while 60 (19.1%) held non-academic roles within the educational institutions. The distribution of participants based on years of experience revealed that 125 participants (40.0%) had less than ten years of experience in their respective roles, while 188 participants (60.0%) had more than ten years of experience. This information provides insights into the gender distribution and the professional experience of the individuals who took part in the study. The inclusion of non-academic staff and more females in various committee implies principals' inclusive leadership and gender sensitivity. This will also allow for cross fertilisation of ideas and experiences.

The study used researcher-designed "Leadership Styles and Committee System Effectiveness Questionnaire (LSCSEQ)" questionnaire to collect data. Part A of the questionnaire contained participants' demographic information, while part B contained items to measure leadership styles and committee system effectiveness. The instrument was constructed, and the content was validated with the help of educational management and leadership professionals. At the same time, its reliability was ascertained through the Cronbach Alpha reliability procedure, which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.84, 0.82, and 0.83 for each of the independent variables (participatory leadership style, directive leadership style and free reign leadership styles) and committee system effectiveness yielded 0.77.

To ensure adherence to research ethics, permission was sought from the school principals to access the teachers. The participants' informed consent was sought, and their anonymity was assured before participating in the study. In addition, the participants were asked to read and understand the instructions on the questionnaire. They were allowed to withdraw from the study at any stage.

The data collected for the study was analysed with a statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) IBM version 29. While descriptive analyses (percentage and mean score) were conducted to answer the research questions, inferential statistics (linear multiple regression analysis) was employed to test the hypotheses formulated at a 0.05 significance level.

4. Findings and Discussion

In table 2 presents data related to the existing committees in secondary schools in Zamfara State, Nigeria. This table overviews the participants' perceptions of the various committees. Notably, the committees on admission, sport, and disciplinary committee received relatively high levels of availability with 87%, 93% and 90%, respectively. Similarly, the

Parents Teachers Association (PTA) committee, and examination committees have 76 and 75% availability, respectively. In contrast, the feeding committee and welfare committee faced higher levels of disagreement, with 66% and 62%, respectively because many of the schools in this study did not have these two committees. This could be due to insufficient resources at the disposal of schools.

Table 2

Existing committees in secondary schools in Zamfara State, Nigeria

S/N	Committees	Available		Not available	
		F	%	F	%
1	Admission Committee	271	87	42	13
2	Examination Committee	234	75	79	25
3	Welfare Committee	118	38	195	62
4	Sport Committee	292	93	21	7
5	Feeding Committee	106	34	207	66
6	PTA Committee	237	76	76	24
7	Disciplinary Committee	281	90	32	10

Table 3

Multiple regression analysis of effectiveness of committee system in secondary schools in Nigeria

Variable	Standardised Coefficient Beta	Odds Ratio	P	95% Confidence Interval for B	
				Lower bound	Upper bound
(Constant)			<.001	4.910	6.638
Directive	0.006	1.006	.912	-.193	.215
Participatory	-0.141	0.868	.018	-.411	-.040
Free-Reign	-.299	0.742	<.001	-.979	-.424

Notes: a Dependent Variable: Effectiveness

R^2=.142, F (3, 313) = 17.070, P< .001

As shown in table 3, linear multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the best linear combination for principals' directive, participatory, and free-reign leadership styles for associating with committee system effectiveness among secondary teachers. This combination of variables significantly predicted committee system effectiveness, F (3, 313) = 17.070, P< .001. It accounted for approximately 14.2% of the variance in the effectiveness,

with only two variables (participatory leadership style and free-reign leadership style) significantly associating with committee system effectiveness.

The directive leadership style had a positive but non-significant effect on effectiveness ($\beta=0.006, t=0.111, p=0.912$). The confidence interval for B (-0.193 to 0.215) includes zero, suggesting that this leadership style does not significantly impact effectiveness within this model. For every unit increase in the beta coefficient of 0.006 corresponds to an odds ratio of 1.006 for directive leadership, the odds of the outcome increase by about 0.6%. This means that with each additional unit increase in directive leadership, the odds of achieving committee effectiveness increase by approximately 0.6%. This small but positive increase suggests that a directive leadership style slightly enhances the likelihood of committee effectiveness in secondary schools. Although the impact may appear modest, it implies that as school leaders employ more directive leadership, characterised by clear guidance, structured decision-making, and specific instructions, the committees they oversee are incrementally more likely to be effective. Thus, while the effect of directive leadership on committee effectiveness is not overwhelmingly large, it is positive, indicating that leadership strategies emphasising direction and control can contribute to the successful functioning of school committees.

Meanwhile, the participatory leadership style had a significant negative effect on effectiveness ($\beta= -0.141, t= -2.387, p= 0.018$). The confidence interval for B (-0.411 to -0.040) does not include zero, indicating a significant negative impact. This result suggests that as participatory leadership increases, effectiveness decreases. For every unit increase in the beta coefficient of -0.141 for participatory leadership, the odds ratio is approximately 0.868. An odds ratio of less than 1 suggests a negative relationship between participatory leadership and the likelihood of the outcome, which in this case is committee effectiveness. Specifically, this odds ratio indicates that for each unit increase in participatory leadership, the odds of achieving committee effectiveness decrease by approximately 13.2%.

This means that as the degree of participatory leadership increases, the likelihood of committee effectiveness decreases. In other words, in secondary schools, a more participatory leadership style, where leaders involve committee members more in decision-making processes, is associated with a reduction in the effectiveness of these committees. This could

suggest that involving more people in decision-making might introduce complexities or inefficiencies that hinder the committee's overall effectiveness.

Similarly, the free-reign leadership style also had a significant negative effect on effectiveness ($\beta= -0.299$, t= -4.980, p<.001\beta= -0.299, t= -4.980, p< .001\beta= -0.299, t= -4.980, p<.001). The confidence interval for B (-0.979 to -0.424) does not include zero, indicating a strong negative impact. This suggests that higher levels of free-reign leadership are associated with lower effectiveness. The relationship between free-reign leadership style and committee effectiveness in secondary schools can be interpreted by examining the provided beta coefficient and its corresponding odds ratio. A beta coefficient of -0.299 indicates a negative relationship between free-reign leadership and committee effectiveness. Specifically, the odds of achieving committee effectiveness decrease for every unit that increases in the free-reign leadership style (as measured by the beta coefficient). The odds ratio associated with this beta coefficient is approximately 0.742, which means that for each additional unit increase in free-reign leadership, the likelihood of committee effectiveness drops to 74.2% of what it would be without that increase.

To put it differently, the odds of committee effectiveness decrease by about 25.8% with each unit increase in free-reign leadership. This suggests that the more a leader in a secondary school adopts a free-reign leadership style, the less likely it is that their committee will be effective. The free-reign leadership style, which typically involves minimal direction and a high degree of autonomy for group members, may lead to reduced coordination and effectiveness in committee work within the secondary school context.

Discussion

This study examined the relationship between principal leadership styles and committee system effectiveness in secondary schools. The findings reflect a varied emphasis on different aspects of school management and student welfare. The high availability of sports committees is consistent with studies highlighting the importance of physical education in schools (Bang et al., 2020). They found that participation in sporting activities improves self-esteem, and self-esteem reduces depression. The lower availability of welfare and feeding committees aligns with research indicating resource constraints in Nigerian schools (Nwarie & Nwakudu, 2019).

The variation in the availability of committees in Zamfara State secondary schools highlights differences in priorities, resource availability, and policy requirements. The high

availability of committees focused on admissions, examinations, sports, and discipline indicates a strong emphasis on academic and extracurricular activities and maintaining order. The substantial presence of admission and examination committees aligns with the emphasis on academic standards and processes in Nigerian secondary schools (Adewale, 2017). However, the limited availability of welfare and feeding committees suggests potential gaps in holistic student support, which could affect general student well-being and academic performance (Johnson & Afolabi, 2019). The strong presence of PTA and disciplinary committees suggests active community involvement and a focus on maintaining discipline, which is crucial for creating conducive learning environments (Eze, 2015).

The findings suggest that the type of committee system employed significantly influences the effectiveness of the committee system in secondary schools. The directive leadership style of the principals did not have any significant relationship with the effectiveness of the committee system in secondary schools. Clear instructions and close supervision characterize directive leadership. While this can ensure tasks are completed as specified, it may stifle creativity, reduce motivation, and hinder the flexibility needed for committee members to address issues dynamically. Committee members need to be autonomous and motivated to function effectively (Sarmah et al., 2022). The non-significant effect of the directive committee system suggests that simply having a directive approach does not necessarily enhance the effectiveness of the committee system. This may be due to the potential rigidity and lack of flexibility associated with directive management, as noted by Adeyemi (2017).

The negative impact of participatory and free-reign committee systems aligns with studies highlighting decentralised management's challenges in educational settings. For instance, studies have reported that overly participatory approaches can lead to inefficiencies and conflicts, which may explain the negative association observed (Grace & Oladejo, 2020; Wang et al., 2022). Moreover, the significant negative effect of the free-reign committee system is consistent with research by Emmanuel (2022), which emphasised that lack of structure and control in school management often results in poor organisational performance and unethical behaviour of teachers and students. The strong negative beta coefficient for the free-reign system underscores the importance of having clear directives and controls in place.

5. Conclusion

This study concludes that leadership styles have a significant relationship with the committee system in terms of meetings, quality of decisions and level of decision-making and implementation. Also, leadership styles and school committee systems had a positive significant relationship. Different committees existed, but they needed to be more effective in secondary schools of Zamfara State, Nigeria, based on leadership styles in place. This study also concludes that non-availability of feeding and welfare committees in many schools calls for concern. It is therefore important to further investigate the rationale behind it, probably due too insufficient resources.

5.1. Limitations and suggestions for further studies

A quantitative approach was used in the study. Thus, further research can be conducted using a qualitative approach to have an in-depth understanding of leadership styles and the use of committee systems. Other analyses can be conducted to strengthen the constructs of the leadership styles model and committee system effectiveness used in this study. The conceptual framework of leadership styles and the use of the committee system in this study can be used to correlate overall school effectiveness. Similarly, future research can be done to establish the nexus between the leadership styles and the use of committee system effectiveness with the moderating effect of the school type. In addition, in order to provide more actionable insights, further studies should use qualitative study to explore the root causes of resource constraints to welfare and feeding committees in Zamfara State, Nigeria. This will enable policymakers and educational authorities to offer specific strategies for improvement.

5.2. Theoretical implications

The study's results contribute to the existing body of knowledge by highlighting the differential impact of various management styles on committee effectiveness. The negative effects of participatory and free-reign management systems underscore the need for balanced approaches that combine structure with some level of flexibility. This aligns with contingency management theories, which posit that management styles' effectiveness depends on the context and specific circumstances (Shala et al., 2021).

The varying availability of committees, particularly the lower availability of welfare and feeding committees, suggests a theoretical alignment with the organisation's resource-based views (RBV). This perspective emphasises that the availability of resources significantly influences organisational structure and processes (Mwai et al., 2018). The findings support the

RBV by demonstrating that resource constraints in Nigerian schools limit the formation and operation of specific committees.

The significant negative effect of the free-reign committee system supports organisational control theories, which argue that a lack of structure and control can lead to poor performance and unethical behaviour (Klein et al., 2019). This finding reinforces the theoretical understanding that effective management must balance autonomy and control to maintain organisational integrity and performance.

5.3. Practical implications

School administrators should prioritise establishing and maintaining structured committees, such as admission, examination, PTA, and disciplinary committees, which are shown to be prevalent and essential for maintaining academic standards, discipline, and community involvement. These committees are critical for ensuring a well-organized and disciplined school environment. Policymakers and educational authorities should address the resource constraints that limit the availability of welfare and feeding committees. Ensuring schools have the necessary resources to support student welfare can enhance student well-being and academic performance. This may involve increased funding, resource allocation, and support from government and non-governmental organisations.

While participatory and free-reign management approaches may seem appealing in promoting inclusivity and autonomy, the findings suggest that these approaches can lead to inefficiencies and conflicts. School leaders should adopt balanced management styles that incorporate clear directives and controls while allowing some level of participation and flexibility to foster a positive and effective committee system. There should be continuous professional development for school leaders and committee members on effective management practices. Training programmes with integration of more females in committees (Adewale & Potokri, 2023) can focus on the importance of structured management, the pitfalls of overly participatory or free-reign approaches, and strategies for resource optimisation. The strong presence of PTA and Disciplinary Committees indicates the importance of active community involvement. Schools should continue to engage parents and the broader community in school management processes to create a supportive and collaborative environment that enhances student outcomes. The study's implications suggest that policymakers and educational authorities should address resource constraints, particularly concerning welfare and feeding committees.

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