

IMPACT OF SELF-EFFICACY ON LEADERSHIP PERFORMANCE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN SOUTH WEST, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigated “impact of self-efficacy on leadership performance of secondary school principals in south-West, Nigeria”. Eight purpose of the study, eight research questions and six hypotheses were raised to guide the study. The review of related literature was done. The descriptive survey research design was employed for the study. The population of the study comprised of 2,273 public secondary school principals in South-West, Nigeria. A total of 327 Public Secondary school principals were sampled for the study, using stratified and simple random sampling techniques for both descriptive and inferential statistics were used in the study, while Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient, t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test the hypotheses. Findings revealed that public senior secondary school principals in South-West, Nigeria demonstrate very strong self-efficacy and strong leadership performance, there is a significant relationship between self-efficacy and leadership performance of senior secondary school principals, no significant difference between the self-efficacy of male and female secondary school principals, there is no significant difference between the leadership performance of male and female secondary school principals in South-West, Nigeria. The study recommended, among others that secondary school principals should be encouraged to engage in regular reflective practice and self – assessment tools such as leadership journals, feedback forms, and structured self-evaluation instruments can help principals critically assess their leadership experiences, recognize achievements, and identify areas for growth.

Keywords: Self-efficacy, performance, Principals.

Introduction

Self-efficacy is important in the life of every person and their way of thinking, relationships and emotions. Self-efficacy is the conviction that one can achieve in a certain circumstance. These ideas influence people's thoughts,
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actions, intentions and emotions (Ezeonwumelu *et al.*, 2022), and is a significant component of human motivation and behavior and self-efficacy beliefs that impact decisions that have the potential to affect an individual's life. The belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations (Williams & Williams 2016).

Anywhere there are groups, whether at home, school, or in other social contexts, leadership is evident. It is essential to any organization because it provides direction and emphasis for achieving collective objectives. Most of the time, employees look up to their bosses with hopes of learning from and succeeding under them. According to Nwaorgu (2021), effective leadership has become crucial in the rapidly evolving 21st century. He asserts that modern leaders are required to inspire, involve, and retain staff members. A modern leader's to-do list also includes cultivating good attitudes and establishing a sense of significance and purpose. Effectively, new difficulties are presented to leaders on a regular basis, and a great leader needs to be flexible.

In order to achieve the goals of the secondary school system, effective administrators and school leadership are required to demonstrate a great deal of concern for the human elements (both staff and students) and material resources within the system as well as for the accomplishment of the school goals. These leaders must inspire other staff members to achieve their highest levels of performance and be adaptable and responsive to changes. Additionally, they must make wise, intelligent and timely decisions, utilize the full potential of their schools by fostering a sense of teamwork, foster a sense of responsibility in their staff and students, and ensure that tasks are understood, supervised, and completed through effective communication (Iyanda, 2015).

Secondary school principal serves as the system's arrowhead, influencing others' ideas and sentiments in a subtle way to advance the goals and desires of the students, staff, and leadership. Because they are expected to oversee and manage the entire school, principals and vice principals are essential members of the social process in every secondary school as members of the school leadership team. Principals play a crucial role in the growth of secondary schools, especially when it comes to the educational standards of the institutions (Iyanda, 2015). Goals set within a school environment by principals could influence teachers' and students' performance. Gidado *et al* (2025) highlighted that having strong goal orientation contribute to higher academic achievement in students.

Consequently, the secondary school leadership jobs, for many years, have been described as a stressful position and the degree of stress appears to be increasing with time. School administrators are under more pressure due to several changes in recent years that have increased the variety, scope and demands of the position. Time constraint, conflicting desires and needs of various stakeholders, work overload and lack of role clarity, among other things, are potential sources of increased job-related stress among secondary school leadership (Whitaker, 2015). This is in addition to students' discipline, excessive bureaucracy, conflicting internal and external expectations, deteriorating and overcrowded facilities, community and dissatisfaction of special interest groups as well as teachers' shortages. All these could lead to increased levels of stress-related illness among principals of public secondary schools.

The school principal is charged and overloaded with expectations to the point that if the school were to meet them all, he or she would actually risk burnout. The role of school principal makes him to be vulnerable to stress, which may be mild or major, depending on the environment as well as permeability of

the principal. As those who have to make things work in the school, principals are exposed to a lot of stressful events especially that their duties are performed within a given time frame and are quite demanding irrespective of their levels of job experience.

This wearing out of school principals includes high staff turnover, absenteeism and poor performance in terms of productivity and quality of work. It can also produce devastating results for the schools as well as for the principals, as it may lead to lower job satisfaction, low level of organisational commitment. Occupational stress can become overwhelming among school principals, as it may place so much impact on body and mind. They may experience grave consequences, such as physical and mental exhaustion, lack of concentration, exploitation, depression, frequent absenteeism, low productivity and greater work expense (Iyanda, 2015). World Health Organization (WHO) reported that about half of the entire working population are unhappy with their jobs and as many as 90 percent may be spending much of their energy and time in a work that brings them closer to their goals in life.

Self-efficacy is the belief that arises from having confidence in the ability he has in carrying out a job. Confidence relates to the drive that principals have to be more confident and have confidence in their own abilities (Alwisol, 2019). Self-efficacy is needed in principals, by increasing the ability to do the tasks given so that the organization runs optimally and principal leadership performance will increase. Self-efficacy is needed to make principals work well and have high performance (Alwisol, 2019). Research by Mustafa *et al.* (2019), Kappagoda (2018), Kostagiolas *et al.* (2019), Fahmi *et al.* (2019), Ingusci *et al.* (2019), Cherian & Jacob (2018), Ballen *et al.* (2017), Nuutila *et al.* (2020) and Lisbona *et al.* (2018) shows that self-efficacy has a significant effect on leadership

performance, in contrast to research conducted by Mangi *et al.* (2019) who indicated that self-efficacy has no significant effect on principals performance.

The views of Alwisol (2019) provide a deeper understanding of the importance of self-efficacy in improving leadership performance. Self-efficacy, as an individual's belief in his or her ability to complete tasks, plays an important role in motivating principals and improving their performance. This creates a strong drive for individuals to behave proactively and put a lot of effort into achieving organizational goals. The empirical research cited also provides an overview of variations in the relationship between self-efficacy and leadership performance. Findings from Mustafa *et al.* (2019), Kappagoda (2018) confirm that self-efficacy has a significant influence on leadership performance. However, there are also studies that find different results, such as those conducted by Mangi *et al.* (2019), which revealed that self-efficacy does not have a significant effect on leadership performance. This difference may be due to the different contextual and methodological factors in the study, as well as the characteristics of the sample used. Also, Gidado *et al.* revealed a significant positive relationship between self - esteem and academic achievement among respondents. Despite the trend that point to self-efficacy contributing positively to leadership performance, the relationship was not considered statistically significant in the study. This suggests complexities in the dynamics between self-efficacy and leadership performance that may be influenced by a variety of contextual factors which need to be considered in further research. The practical implication of available literature is that it is important for organizations to pay attention to and strengthen principals' self-confidence through various self-development strategies, so as to effectively improve their performance.

The findings of the Oduma and Unachukwu (2021) revealed that there is a positive relationship between principals' self-efficacy and their work performance in secondary schools in Delta State. Furthermore, the findings revealed that there is a significant relationship between principals' self-efficacy and their work performance in secondary schools in Delta State. This implies that principals' self-efficacy has positive influence on their performance in secondary schools in Delta State. This is related to the findings of Balanlay (2017) who revealed that principal's personal beliefs regarding their ability to affect student achievement and his/her determination to pursue this ability even at difficult times may be responsible for the variance in school effectiveness and the overall performance of the students. For this reason, school leaders must possess a strong self- efficacy that will allow them to lead teachers, staff and students to academic gains. School leaders who believe in their personal efficacy and possess strong determination will nurture teachers and students capable of unlimited academic advances. Big things are accomplished by talented people who believe they will accomplish them. A study on impact of self - efficacy on leadership styles by Disha *et al.*, (2024) indicate that self-efficacy has little impact on devolved leadership behaviours. The findings highlight the importance of self-efficacy in propagating active leadership styles and have implications for how leadership training programs are designed for educational settings.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the goals of secondary school education in Nigeria. Secondary school principals function as leaders who preside over and manage the entire school. Teachers, students, parents, governments and other stakeholders look up to them for the attainment of the set goals of the secondary school education. This makes public secondary school principals to have a lot of responsibilities and

expectations loaded on them. They strive willingly to attain these set goals of secondary education; consequently, are involved in a number of daily routines which bring about occupational stress. This, however, has a lot of consequences on both school principals and the school system.

Arising from the associated stress in the course of performing these routine jobs, the public secondary school principals, therefore, could exhibit unwanted feelings and behaviours such as low morale, loss of self-confidence, fear, depression, anxiety, emotional fatigue, premature retirement, alcohol intake, poor health, lateness to work and absenteeism. There are reported inverse cases of serious indiscipline among staff and students, violence in schools and poor performance of students at both internal and external examinations, poor communication and relationship with staff, students, parents, communities, supervisors, ministry officials and the government. This is a situation that needs urgent attention by all stakeholders in the educational sector. This is what the researcher saw and intended to carry out research on the impact of self-efficacy on the leadership performance of Secondary School Principals in South-West, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of self-efficacy on leadership performance of public secondary school principals in South-Western, Nigeria. The specific objectives were to find out:

1. the self-efficacy of public senior secondary school principals in South-Western, Nigeria.
2. the leadership performance of public senior secondary school principals in South-Western, Nigeria.

3. the relationship between self-efficacy and leadership performance of senior secondary school principals in South-Western, Nigeria.
4. the self-efficacy of male and female senior secondary school principals in South-Western, Nigeria.
5. the leadership performance of male and female senior secondary school principals in South-Western, Nigeria.
6. the self-efficacy of rural and urban senior secondary school principals in South-West, Nigeria.
7. the self-efficacy of senior secondary school principals on the basis of their years of experience in South-West, Nigeria.
8. the leadership performance of senior secondary school principals on the basis of their years of experience in South-West, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide this study:

1. What is the self-efficacy of public senior secondary school principals in South-West, Nigeria?
2. What is the leadership performance of public senior secondary school principals in South-West, Nigeria?
3. What is the relationship between self-efficacy and leadership performance of senior secondary school principals in South-West, Nigeria?
4. What is the self-efficacy of male and female senior secondary school principals in South-West, Nigeria?
5. What is the leadership performance of male and female senior secondary school principals in South-West, Nigeria?
6. What is the self-efficacy of rural and urban senior secondary school principals in South-West, Nigeria?

7. What is the self-efficacy of senior secondary school principals based on the years of experience in South-West, Nigeria?
8. What is the leadership performance of senior secondary school principals based on the years of experience in South-West, Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses will be tested at 0.05 level of significance.

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between self-efficacy and leadership performance of senior secondary school principals in South-West, Nigeria.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference between the self-efficacy of male and female senior secondary school principals in South-West, Nigeria.

H₀₃: There is no significant difference between the leadership performance of male and female senior secondary school principals in South-West, Nigeria.

H₀₄: There is no significant difference between the self-efficacy of rural and urban senior secondary school principals in South-West, Nigeria.

H₀₅: There is no significant difference between the self-efficacy of senior secondary school principals based on years of experience in South-West, Nigeria.

H₀₆: There is no significant difference between the leadership performance of senior secondary school principals and the years of experience in South-West, Nigeria.

Methods

The descriptive survey design was employed for this study. This research design, according to Ali (2015) noted that descriptive survey design uses sample data in an appraisal to document, describe and explain what is in existence or non-existent, or present the status of existence of the phenomenon under investigation. The purpose of the survey research design is to get information from a representative sample and make generalizations of the result to a larger

population. The descriptive survey design was therefore appropriate for this study since it allowed for the collection of valid data from respondents on variables of interest as they exist in their natural setting.

The target population of this study consists of public secondary school principals in South West, Nigeria, namely; Ekiti, Lagos, Oyo, Ondo, Osun and Ogun. The total population of all Principals in South West Nigeria is 2,273 (two thousand, two hundred and seventy-three). South-West, State Ministry of Education, Nigeria (2025).

The six (6) states in South West, Nigeria were sampled for this study. The choice of all states in South West, Nigeria is because the Public Senior Secondary School Principals in these states gives a true reflection of what is obtainable all over Nigeria. A total of 327 Public Senior Secondary School Principals were selected for the study using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sampling table to determine the sample size for each state. This was done by calculating the proportion of Public Senior Secondary School Principals in each state in relation to the total population. Then each proportion was multiplied by the overall sample size to obtain the sample size for each state. This ensured that the sample size was allocated proportionately to each stratum, based on its representation in the population. Stratified and simple random sampling technique was used to draw samples from the population.

The instruments used for this study was self-structured Self-Efficacy Scale (SES), and adopted questionnaire Nzomo's (2012) cited in Nwaorgu (2021). The instrument was titled, Educational Leadership Performance Scale (ELPS). However, it was restructured to suit the purpose of the study. The instrument was design along four- point- scale, which has four options, Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD).

Results

Research Question Two: What is the self-efficacy of public secondary school principals in South-West, Nigeria?

**Table 8: Self-efficacy of public secondary school principals in South-West, Nigeria
N=327**

| S/N | Items | Mean | Std. Dev. | Decision |
|------------------------------|--|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| As a school principal | | | | |
| 1 | i am confident of what people will think about my school leadership. | 3.42 | 0.57 | Agreed |
| 2 | i do not always feel nervous in my workplace because I do not fear that I may perform below expectation. | 3.35 | 0.63 | Agreed |
| 3 | i encouragement and learning from colleagues enhance my personal belief in my ability to be a successful school principal. | 3.57 | 0.51 | Agreed |
| 4 | i always feel confident in setting targets or goals in my job. | 3.50 | 0.53 | Agreed |
| 5 | decision to become a school principal was self-motivated. | 3.24 | 0.71 | Agreed |
| 6 | desire to be a successful school principal was influenced by my determination to work hard and my personal belief in myself. | 3.56 | 0.57 | Agreed |
| 7 | i have confident to seek assistance from my colleagues. | 3.33 | 0.53 | Agreed |
| 8 | i believe and work for anything I want in life. | 3.41 | 0.55 | Agreed |
| 9 | feedback from supervisors serves as a check and motivation for me. | 3.45 | 0.52 | Agreed |
| 10 | stressors involved in my job bring out the best performance in me. | 3.06 | 0.71 | Agreed |
| Grand Mean | | 3.89 | 0.58 | Agreed |

As shown in table 8, self-efficacy of public secondary school principals in South-West, Nigeria was presented. The table show a sectional mean score of 3.89. This shows the agreement of all items in the table. The result indicates that public senior secondary school principals in South-West, Nigeria demonstrate very strong self-efficacy.

Research Question Three: What is the leadership performance of public secondary school principals in South-West, Nigeria?

**Table 9: The leadership performance of public secondary school principals in South-West, Nigeria
N=327**

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| S/N | Items | Mean | Std. Dev. | Decision |
|---|--|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| As a school principal, I engage in the following | | | | |
| 1 | communicate and build relationship. | 3.71 | 0.46 | Agreed |
| 2 | demonstrate passion for students learning. | 3.63 | 0.48 | Agreed |
| 3 | possess a professional code of ethics. | 3.53 | 0.57 | Agreed |
| 4 | foster, shared vision and purpose with my staff. | 3.48 | 0.54 | Agreed |
| 5 | develop relationship with parents and community. | 3.41 | 0.57 | Agreed |
| 6 | conduct goal setting and evaluation with teachers. | 3.40 | 0.53 | Agreed |
| 7 | keep staff focused on closing the achievement gap. | 3.41 | 0.57 | Agreed |
| 8 | maximize students learning time. | 3.48 | 1.74 | Agreed |
| 9 | use technology to increase students learning. | 3.21 | 0.67 | Agreed |
| 10 | focus on the value of diversity. | 3.25 | 0.50 | Agreed |
| 11 | identify, prioritize and solve problems that arise in the school. | 3.56 | 0.54 | Agreed |
| 12 | manage the school facilities. | 3.55 | 0.53 | Agreed |
| 13 | maximize human resources to meet target. | 3.61 | 1.71 | Agreed |
| 14 | apply principle of financial management and creative resource utilization. | 3.41 | 0.52 | Agreed |
| 15 | encourage others' participation in school affairs. | 3.39 | 0.57 | Agreed |
| 16 | give constructive feedback to teachers and students. | 3.45 | 0.52 | Agreed |
| 17 | always available to serve teachers and students. | 3.54 | 0.51 | Agreed |
| 18 | monitor teachers' and students' satisfaction. | 3.44 | 0.55 | Agreed |
| 19 | find it expedient to improve working environment at the school. | 3.36 | 0.61 | Agreed |
| 20 | depend only on my strength in managing the school. | 2.00 | 0.97 | Disagreed |
| Sectional Mean | | 3.39 | 0.68 | Agreed |

As shown in table 9, leadership performance of public secondary school principals in South-West, Nigeria was analysed. The table shows that the respondents agreed to all the items in the table and disagreed with item number 20. This shows a sectional mean score of 3.39 which confirms that public senior secondary school principals in South-West, Nigeria demonstrate strong leadership performance.

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between self-efficacy and leadership performance of senior secondary school principals in South-West, Nigeria.

Table 1: Correlation between self-efficacy and leadership performance of senior secondary school principals in South-West, Nigeria

| Variables | N | r-cal | P-value | Decision |
|--|-----|-------|---------|----------|
| Self-efficacy and Leadership Performance | 327 | 0.565 | 0.000 | Rejected |

As shown in table 1, the correlation between self-efficacy and leadership performance of senior secondary school principals was carried out. The computed correlation coefficient indicates a moderate relationship between self-efficacy and leadership performance of senior secondary school principals with r-value of 0.565, which shows a positive relationship. The probability value of <0.000 shows a statistical relationship between the two variables with $p < 0.05$, hence the null hypothesis was rejected.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference between the self-efficacy of male and female secondary school principals in South-West, Nigeria.

Table 13: t-test on Difference between the self-efficacy of male and female secondary school principals in South-West, Nigeria

| Gender | Number | Mean | S.D. | t-value | Df | Sig(2-tailed) | Decision |
|--------|--------|------|------|---------|-----|---------------|----------|
| Male | 159 | 3.38 | 0.15 | -.710 | 325 | .478 | Accepted |
| Female | 168 | 3.39 | 0.14 | | | | |

As shown in table 13, t-test analysis to determine the significant difference between the self-efficacy of male and female secondary school principals in South-West, Nigeria was carried out. The table revealed a mean score of 3.38 with standard deviation of 0.15 for male principals and the mean score of 3.39 with standard deviation of 0.14 for female principals. The table also indicated a calculated t-value of -.710 at 325 degree of freedom with a two - tailed significant of .478 more than 0.05 significant level. This shows that there is no significant

difference between the self-efficacy of male and female secondary school principals in South-West, Nigeria. This clearly shows that both male and female secondary school principals in South-West, Nigeria has the same level of self-efficacy and hence no significant difference between gender and self-efficacy.

Therefore, the null hypothesis which state that there is no significant difference between the self-efficacy of male and female secondary school principals in South-West, Nigeria is hereby accepted.

H₀₃: There is no significant difference between the leadership performance of male and female secondary school principals in South-West, Nigeria.

Table 14: t-test on Difference between the leadership performance of male and female secondary school principals in South-West, Nigeria

| Gender | Number | Mean | S.D. | t-value | Df | Sig(2-tailed) | Decision |
|--------|--------|------|------|---------|-----|---------------|----------|
| Male | 159 | 3.39 | 0.36 | -.421 | 325 | .674 | Accepted |
| Female | 168 | 3.40 | 0.31 | | | | |

As shown in table 14, t-test analysis to determine the significant difference between the leadership performance of male and female secondary school principals in South-West, Nigeria was carried out. The table revealed a mean score of 3.39 with standard deviation of 0.36 for male principals and the mean score of 3.40 with standard deviation of 0.31 for female principals. The table also indicated a calculated t-value of -.421 at 325 degree of freedom with a two - tailed significant of .674 more than 0.05 significant level. This shows that there is no significant difference between the leadership performance of male and female secondary school principals in South-West, Nigeria. This clearly shows that both male and female secondary school principals in South-West, Nigeria has the same level of leadership performance and hence no significant difference between gender and leadership performance.

Therefore, the null hypothesis which state that there is no significant difference between the leadership performance of male and female secondary school principals in South-West, Nigeria is hereby accepted.

H₀₄: There is no significant difference between the self-efficacy of rural and urban secondary school principals in South-West, Nigeria.

Table 20: t-test on Difference between the self-efficacy of rural and urban secondary school principals in South-West, Nigeria

| Gender | Number | Mean | S.D. | t-value | Df | Sig(2-tailed) | Decision |
|--------|--------|------|------|---------|-----|---------------|----------|
| Rural | 104 | 3.40 | 0.14 | 1.058 | 325 | .291 | Accepted |
| Urban | 223 | 3.38 | 0.15 | | | | |

As shown in table 2, t-test analysis to determine the significant difference between the self-efficacy of rural and urban secondary school principals in South-West, Nigeria was carried out. The table revealed a mean score of 3.40 with standard deviation of 0.14 for principals in rural areas and the mean score of 3.38 with standard deviation of 0.15 for principals in urban areas. The table also indicated a calculated t-value of 1.058 at 325 degree of freedom with a two - tailed significant of .291 more than 0.05 significant level. This revealed that there is no significant difference between the self-efficacy of rural and urban secondary school principals in South-West, Nigeria. This clearly revealed that both rural and urban secondary school principals in South-West, Nigeria has the same level of self-efficacy and hence no significant difference between the school location and self-efficacy. Therefore, the null hypothesis which state that there is no significant difference between the self-efficacy of rural and urban secondary school principals in South-West, Nigeria is hereby accepted.

H₀₅: There is no significant difference between the self-efficacy of secondary school principals and the years of experience as a school principal in South-West, Nigeria.

Table 22: One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) on Difference between the self-efficacy of secondary school principals and the years of experience as a school principal in South-West, Nigeria.

| Years of experience | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. | Decision |
|---------------------|----------------|-----|-------------|------|------|----------|
| Between Groups | .019 | 3 | .010 | .439 | .645 | Accepted |
| Within Groups | 7.158 | 324 | .022 | | | |
| Total | 7.177 | 327 | | | | |

As shown in table 22, One-way analysis of variance on difference between self-efficacy of secondary school principals and the years of experience as a school principal in South-West, Nigeria was carried out. The table show a mean square of .010 for between groups and mean of .022 for within groups; with an F value of .439. The table further show a significant value of .645 (more than the 0.05 level of significance) indicates that there is no significant difference. Senior secondary school principals in South-West, Nigeria, therefore, did not differ significantly in their self-efficacy on the basis of years of experience as a school principal in South-West, Nigeria. Therefore, the null hypothesis which state that there is no significant difference between the self-efficacy of secondary school principals and the years of experience in South-West, Nigeria is hereby accepted.

H₀₆: There is no significant difference between the leadership performance of secondary school principals and the years of experience as a school principal in South-West, Nigeria.

Table 19: One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) on Difference between the leadership performance of secondary school principals and the years of experience as a school principal in South-West, Nigeria.

| Years of experience | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. | Decision |
|---------------------|----------------|-----|-------------|------|------|----------|
| Between Groups | .024 | 3 | .012 | .102 | .903 | Accepted |
| Within Groups | 37.575 | 324 | .116 | | | |
| Total | 37.599 | 327 | | | | |

As shown in table 19, One-way analysis of variance on difference between leadership performance of secondary school principals and the years of experience as a school principal in South-West, Nigeria was carried out. The table show a mean square of .012 for between groups and mean of .116 for within groups; with an F value of .102. The table further show a significant value of .903 (more than the 0.05 level of significance) indicates that there is no significant difference. Senior secondary school principals in South-West, Nigeria, therefore, did not differ significantly in their leadership performance on the basis of years of experience as a school principal in South-West, Nigeria. Therefore, the null hypothesis which state that there is no significant difference between the leadership performance of secondary school principals and the years of experience in South-West, Nigeria is hereby accepted.

Discussion of Findings

The finding further revealed that public senior secondary school principals in South-West, Nigeria demonstrate strong self-efficacy. This finding is in agreement with the earlier finding by Bellemans *et al.* (2024) who found that Flemish (Belgian) secondary principals with strong self-efficacy experienced significantly less burnout during the COVID-19 pandemic. This finding is consistent with the earlier finding by Mahfouz and Richardson (2021) found that U.S school principals who engaged in mindfulness and reflective leadership practices exhibited greater self-efficacy in managing stress and complex environments.

Finding revealed that public senior secondary school principals in South-West, Nigeria demonstrate very strong leadership performance. This is supported by the earlier findings by Mehdinezhad and Mansouri (2016) found principals who showed individualized consideration and inspiration had teachers with

higher motivation and job satisfaction. Also, Yahaya and Ibrahim (2021) showed that secondary school principals who articulated a clear vision and motivated teachers significantly improved school effectiveness. This is in agreement with the earlier findings by Ontai-Machado (2016) found that secondary principals who implemented clear, strategic visions saw improvements in student performance and staff engagement. Furthermore, Sebastian *et al* (2016) found principals who shared leadership responsibilities with teachers saw gains in instruction quality and learning.

The study found that there is a significant relationship between self-efficacy and leadership performance of senior secondary school principals in South-West, Nigeria. The finding is consistent with the earlier finding by Ramchunder (2014) who found that there is a significant relationship between self-efficacy and effective leadership. However, there were negative correlations between Self-Efficacy and certain leadership subscales. A step further into statistical findings, self-efficacy was positively correlated to the effectiveness leadership subscale at a significant level and this is important for the purpose of this research. On the basis of the theory of self-efficacy, it is expected that leaders with greater self-efficacy are more effective leaders, because they are inclined to expend greater efforts to fulfil their leadership roles and to persevere longer when faced with difficulties.

This study found that there is no significant difference between the self-efficacy of male and female secondary school principals in South-West, Nigeria. The finding is not agreement with the earlier finding by Ahmed *et al.*, (2024) who found significant difference in self-efficacy of male and female secondary school principals. This finding is contrary to the finding of Debeş (2021) which shows that there was significant difference between the self-efficacy of male and female

secondary school principals. Debes findings shows that the perception of females principals on self efficacy was significantly higher than male principals.

Finding revealed that there is no significant difference between the leadership performance of male and female secondary school principals in South-West, Nigeria. The finding is in agreement with the finding of Obiekwe *et al.* (2021) who found that there is no significant gender related difference in leadership behaviour of male and female principals. The study also found out that there is no significant difference between male and female principals in terms of their performance in supervision of instruction in the school. Teachers' perceptions of the performance of male and female principals in terms of supervision of instruction in the school were the same. Also this finding is consistent with the earlier finding by Obiekwe *et al.*, (2021) that male principals were not significantly better in supervision of instruction than their female counterpart. The finding is in line with the finding of Shanmuga and Vasimalairaja (2017), Ntide (2014) who revealed that no significant difference between the male and female school headmasters in their leadership behavior. Both male and female heads of schools were found with the same amount of task oriented leadership behavior.

The finding revealed that there is no significant difference between the self-efficacy of rural and urban secondary school principals in South-West, Nigeria. The finding is contrary with the earlier finding by Hartijasti and Afzal (2016) who found significant differences in various aspects such as interpersonal skills, discipline, and knowledge in Pakistan. Urban principals were perceived to have stronger interpersonal skills and knowledge, while rural principals were seen as more disciplined and honest.

This study found that there is no significant difference between the self-efficacy of secondary school principals and the years of experience as a school principal in South-West, Nigeria. The finding is in line with the earlier finding of Fisher (2020) who found that Israeli principals' self-efficacy during their first year was significantly higher than the principal's self-efficacy with two to six and six to ten years of experience. Also Fisher (2020) revealed that perceived principal self-efficacy levels increased with experience.

The finding of this study revealed that there is no significant difference between the leadership performance of secondary school principals and the years of experience as a school principal in South-West, Nigeria. The finding is in agreement with that of Fashiku *et al.* (2021), who posited that principals' years of experience were significantly correlated with their job performance in public primary schools in Ghana. The finding contradicts Phyllis (2021) finding which shows that there is statistically significant differences in principals' instructional leadership behaviours when they are grouped according to their level of experience (number of years spent as principals).

Conclusion

Arising from the findings of this study, the following conclusions are drawn: Based on the findings from the study, it has been established that public senior secondary school principals in South-West, Nigeria demonstrate strong self-efficacy and leadership performance, there is a significant relationship between self-efficacy and leadership performance of senior secondary school principals in South-West, Nigeria, both male and female principals possess similar level of self-efficacy and leadership performance which is crucial for effective leadership, there is no significant difference between self-efficacy of rural and urban senior secondary school principals in South-West, Nigeria and

there is no significant difference between self-efficacy and leadership performance of senior secondary school principals based on the years of experience in South-West, Nigeria.

Recommendations

The researcher made the following recommendations based on the chronological findings of the study:

1. Government should design principal evaluation frameworks that focus on progress, problem-solving, and reflective practices rather than only accountability metrics.
2. Government should create opportunities for high performing principals to lead professional development, mentor emerging leaders, or participate in leadership academies.
3. Secondary school principals should be encouraged to engage in regular reflective practice and self – assessment tools such as leadership journals, feedback forms, and structured self-evaluation instruments can help principals critically assess their leadership experiences, recognize achievements, and identify areas for growth.
4. Since Self-Efficacy levels vary among principals, training programs should be tailored to address specific areas where individual principals' feel less confident include instructional leadership, conflict resolution, or staff management.
5. Since leadership performance does not differ by gender, selection, promotion, and evaluation of principals should be based solely on merit, qualifications, and demonstrated effectiveness not gender.
6. With Self-Efficacy not varying by location, efforts should concentrate on addressing context-specific challenges such as infrastructure in rural

schools or student population pressure in urban schools to better support principals in their unique environments.

7. Given that self-efficacy levels can vary regardless of experience; principals should undergo regular self-efficacy assessments to identify specific areas where they may need additional support or coaching. This can help provide more personalized and effective leadership development.
8. Since leadership performance does not automatically improve with experience, schools should prioritise ongoing professional development programs that focus on enhancing leadership skills, such as communication, decision-making and conflict resolution for all principals, regardless of their tenure.

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