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PRINCIPALS' CONTEXTUAL LEADERSHIP DIMENSIONS AS PREDICTORS OF TEACHERS' PRODUCTIVITY IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KOGI STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined principals' contextual leadership dimensions as predictors of teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Kogi State, Nigeria. Using a descriptive survey design, data were collected from 90 teachers and 90 principals across 90 secondary schools (42 public and 48 private) through validated questionnaires (PCLASQ, reliability = 0.72; TPQ, reliability = 0.75). Multiple regression analysis revealed that contextual leadership dimensions jointly accounted for 80.8% of variance in teacher productivity ($R = 0.899$, $R^2 = 0.808$, $F(4,90) = 10.431$, $p < 0.05$). Communication emerged as the strongest predictor ($\beta = 0.833$, $p < 0.05$), followed by work environment ($\beta = 0.441$, $p < 0.05$), while interpersonal relationships and motivation showed non-significant contributions. Pearson correlation analysis further revealed significant positive relationships between principals' communication and teachers' instructional performance ($r = 0.236$, $p < 0.05$), and between interpersonal relationships and teachers' attitude to work ($r = 0.509$, $p < 0.05$). The study concludes that effective contextual leadership, particularly through strategic communication and conducive work environments, significantly enhances teacher productivity. Recommendations include targeted training for principals in communication strategies, investment in school infrastructure, and policy reforms that support adaptive leadership practices. These findings contribute to the growing body of knowledge on educational leadership in developing contexts and offer practical guidance for school administrators and policymakers seeking to improve educational outcomes through enhanced leadership practices.

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Keywords: Contextual Leadership, Communication, Work Environment, Teacher Productivity, Secondary Schools, Nigeria

Introduction

Educational leadership has emerged as a critical determinant of school effectiveness and student achievement in contemporary educational discourse (Hallinger, 2020; Leithwood et al., 2020). Within this framework, principals occupy a pivotal position as they serve not only as administrative heads but also as instructional leaders who shape school culture, influence teacher behaviors, and ultimately impact student learning outcomes (Bush & Glover, 2020). The quality and effectiveness of school leadership has become increasingly important in developing nations like Nigeria, where educational systems face multiple challenges including inadequate resources, large class sizes, and inconsistent policy implementation (Adeniran & Ojo, 2023).

Teacher productivity, broadly defined as the efficiency and effectiveness with which teachers utilize available resources to enhance student learning and overall educational outcomes, represents a multidimensional construct encompassing instructional quality, classroom management, student engagement, professional commitment, and adherence to ethical standards (Kraft & Papay, 2021; Harris & Sass, 2022). In Nigerian secondary schools, teacher productivity has been identified as a significant concern, with various stakeholders expressing dissatisfaction with teachers' commitment, instructional effectiveness, and overall performance (Okorji & Obiocha, 2021). This concern is particularly acute in Kogi State, where educational indices suggest persistent challenges in teacher effectiveness and student achievement.

Despite the theoretical importance of these contextual leadership dimensions, empirical evidence regarding their specific contributions to teacher productivity in Nigerian secondary schools remains limited. Previous studies have examined leadership styles broadly (Ekpemogu et al., 2023; Chukwudebelu et al., 2023) or focused on individual leadership behaviors in isolation (Innocent, 2023; Aina & Olorunsola, 2024). However, few studies have systematically investigated how multiple dimensions of contextual leadership jointly and independently predict teacher productivity, particularly in the Kogi State context where unique socio-cultural and administrative factors may influence these relationships.

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Statement of the Problem

Secondary schools in Kogi State face persistent challenges related to teacher productivity, manifested in poor student academic performance, irregular classroom attendance by teachers, inadequate lesson planning and delivery, and low commitment to professional responsibilities (Kogi State Ministry of Education, 2023). Recent reports indicate that many schools struggle with teacher absenteeism, declining pass rates in national examinations, and insufficient instructional supervision. These challenges occur despite various government interventions and professional development programs, suggesting that fundamental issues related to school leadership may be contributing to the problem.

While principals are expected to provide effective leadership that enhances teacher performance, the extent to which their contextual leadership practices—particularly communication, interpersonal relationships, work environment management, and motivation—actually influence teacher productivity remains unclear. This knowledge gap has significant practical implications. Without clear evidence regarding which aspects of contextual leadership most strongly influence teacher productivity, principals may invest time and energy in leadership behaviors that have minimal impact while neglecting more consequential practices. Similarly, leadership training programs and policy interventions may lack empirical grounding, reducing their effectiveness in addressing the core issues affecting teacher performance. This study therefore seeks to address this gap by examining how principals' contextual leadership dimensions relate to teacher productivity in secondary schools in Kogi State, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study was to examine principals' contextual leadership dimensions as predictors of teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Kogi State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Examine the joint contribution of principals' contextual leadership dimensions (communication, interpersonal relationships, work environment, and motivation) to the prediction of teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Kogi State;
2. Determine the relative contribution of each contextual leadership dimension to teachers' productivity;

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3. Investigate the relationship between principals' communication and teachers' instructional performance;

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the joint contribution of principals' contextual leadership dimensions (communication, interpersonal relationships, work environment, and motivation) to the prediction of teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Kogi State?
2. What is the relative contribution of each contextual leadership dimension to teachers' productivity?
3. What is the relationship between principals' communication and teachers' instructional performance in secondary schools in Kogi State?

1.5 Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

H_{01}: There is no significant joint contribution of principals' contextual leadership dimensions to the prediction of teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Kogi State.

H_{02}: There is no significant relationship between principals' communication and teachers' instructional performance in secondary schools in Kogi State.

H_{03}: There is no significant relationship between principals' interpersonal relationships and teachers' attitude to work in secondary schools in Kogi State.

Literature Review

Concept of Contextual Leadership

Contextual leadership refers to leadership approaches that emphasize understanding and adapting to the specific environment or situation in which leadership occurs (Hallinger, 2020). Unlike universal leadership models that prescribe fixed behaviors regardless of context, contextual leadership recognizes that effective leadership requires sensitivity to organizational culture, stakeholder characteristics, resource availability, external pressures, and situational demands (Bush & Glover, 2020).

In educational settings, contextual leadership manifests through principals' ability to assess their school's unique challenges and opportunities and to implement tailored strategies that align with institutional mission and community expectations (Day et al., 2021). Research indicates that schools with contextually aware leaders often demonstrate higher academic

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achievement, improved teacher morale, and stronger community engagement (Leithwood et al., 2020). However, many principals struggle with contextual leadership due to standardized accountability measures that limit flexibility and bureaucratic constraints that reduce autonomy (Spillane & Lee, 2019).

The four dimensions of contextual leadership examined in this study represent key mechanisms through which principals adapt their leadership to school-specific contexts:

Concept of Teacher Productivity

Teacher productivity has emerged as a focal point in educational research and policy discussions, particularly as education systems face increasing accountability demands and resource constraints (Kraft &Falken, 2024). Teacher productivity refers to the efficiency and effectiveness with which teachers utilize available resources to enhance student learning and overall educational outcomes (Harris & Sass, 2022). This concept extends beyond conventional metrics such as student test scores to incorporate instructional quality, classroom management, student engagement, professional commitment, and ethical conduct (Kraft &Papay, 2021).

Research identifies several key determinants of teacher productivity including leadership support, professional development opportunities, work environment quality, colleague relationships, and personal motivation (Oloyede & Akinyemi, 2020). A positive school climate, characterized by supportive leadership and collaboration, significantly enhances teacher performance, leading to improved student outcomes (Akinyemi & Alabi, 2021). Conversely, lack of support, inadequate resources, and poor communication can result in teacher burnout and reduced effectiveness.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Transformational Leadership Theory as developed by (Bass and Avolio, 1994). Transformational Leadership Theory posits that leaders can fundamentally alter followers' values, beliefs, and motivations, aligning them with organizational goals through four key mechanisms: idealized influence (serving as role models), inspirational motivation (articulating compelling visions), intellectual stimulation (encouraging innovation), and individualized consideration (providing personalized support) (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

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The theory's relevance to this study lies in its emphasis on how leaders influence follower performance through relational and motivational mechanisms rather than merely through transactional exchanges or formal authority. In the educational context, transformational principals inspire teachers to exceed their personal and professional expectations by creating supportive environments, communicating clear visions, recognizing individual contributions, and encouraging professional growth (Avolio et al., 2009). These transformational behaviors align closely with the contextual leadership dimensions examined in this study: communication (inspirational motivation), interpersonal relationships (individualized consideration), work environment (creating conditions for growth), and motivation (both intrinsic and extrinsic).

Research has consistently demonstrated positive relationships between transformational leadership and teacher outcomes including job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and instructional effectiveness (Judge & Piccolo, 2004; Leithwood et al., 2020). However, critics note that the theory's effectiveness may vary across cultural contexts and that it may overemphasize charismatic elements at the expense of structural and contextual factors (Dorfman et al., 2012). This study extends transformational leadership theory by examining how its core mechanisms operate through specific contextual dimensions in Nigerian secondary schools.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive survey research design to investigate principals' contextual leadership dimensions as predictors of teachers' productivity. Survey research design is appropriate for this study because it enables the collection of data from a sample of individuals through standardized questionnaires without attempting to manipulate variables (Osakede et al., 2018). This design allows for the examination of relationships between variables as they naturally occur in educational settings.

Population and Sample of the Study

The population included 90 teachers in 236 public schools and 3,016 teachers in 323 private schools across the three senatorial districts of Kogi State (Central, East, and West).

The sample size for this study was 90 respondents, comprising teachers and principals from both public and private secondary schools. A multistage sampling procedure was employed.

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First, schools were stratified into the three senatorial districts. Second, each district was stratified into its major Local Government Areas (LGAs). Third, three LGAs were randomly selected from each senatorial district, yielding nine LGAs total. Fourth, proportionate sampling was used to select 14 public and 16 private schools from each senatorial district, totaling 42 public and 48 private schools across the state. Fifth, simple random sampling was used to select 12 teachers from each sampled school, while all principals of sampled schools were purposively included.

Research Instruments

Two validated questionnaires were used for data collection:

Principal Contextual Leadership and Administrative Style Questionnaire (PCLASQ): This researcher-developed instrument consisted of three sections. Section A collected demographic information. Section B contained 20 items measuring contextual leadership across four dimensions: communication (5 items), interpersonal relationships (5 items), work environment (5 items), and motivation (5 items). Items were rated on a 4-point Likert scale: Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1).

Teachers' Productivity Questionnaire (TPQ): This instrument consisted of two sections. Section A collected demographic information. Section B contained 25 items measuring teacher productivity across five dimensions: instructional task performance (5 items), job commitment (5 items), adherence to professional ethics (5 items), attitude to work (5 items), and instructional performance (5 items). Items were rated on the same 4-point Likert scale.

Method of Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, frequency, percentage) were used to answer research questions. For hypothesis testing, multiple regression analysis was employed to examine the joint and relative contributions of contextual leadership dimensions to teacher productivity (Hypotheses 1), while Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to examine relationships between specific variables (Hypotheses 2 and 3). All hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The criterion mean for interpreting Likert scale responses was 2.5, such that mean scores $\geq$ 2.5 indicated agreement while scores $<$ 2.5 indicated disagreement. For the four-point scale used in this study, interpretation followed: 3.50-4.00 = Very High, 2.50-3.49 = High, 1.50-2.49 = Low, and 1.00-1.49 = Very Low.

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RESULTS

What is the joint contribution of principals' contextual leadership dimensions (communication, interpersonal relationships, work environment, and motivation) to the prediction of teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Kogi State?

Table 1: Multiple Regression Analysis Showing Joint Contribution of Contextual Leadership Dimensions to Teacher Productivity

Model Summary					
R	0.899				
R Square	0.808				
Adjusted R Square	0.654				
ANOVA	**Sum of Squares**	**df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**
Regression	0.193	4	0.097	10.431	0.037
Residual	0.019	86	0.009		
Total	0.212	90	0.106		

Table 1 reveals that the four dimensions of principals' contextual leadership (communication, interpersonal relationships, work environment, and motivation) jointly made significant contribution to the prediction of teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Kogi State. The multiple correlation coefficient (R = 0.899) indicates a very strong positive relationship between the combined contextual leadership dimensions and teacher productivity. The coefficient of determination (R^2 = 0.808) shows that these leadership dimensions collectively account for 80.8% of the total variance in teacher productivity. The adjusted R^2 of 0.654 confirms substantial explanatory power even after accounting for sample size and number of predictors. The F-statistic ($F(4,86) = 10.431$, $p = 0.037 < 0.05$) indicates that this relationship is statistically significant and not due to chance.

What is the relative contribution of each contextual leadership dimension to teachers' productivity?

Table 2: Multiple Regression Analysis Showing Relative Contributions of Individual Contextual Leadership Dimensions

Model	**Unstandardized Coefficients**		**Standardized Coefficients**	**t**	**Sig.**
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	2.506	1.163		2.155	.084
Communication	-0.320	0.087	.833	-3.677	.014
Interpersonal Relationships	-0.072	0.210	.085	-0.344	.745
Work Environment	0.536	0.259	.441	2.067	.004

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Motivation	0.202	0.204	.264	0.989	.368

Table 2 reveals significant variation in the relative contributions of individual contextual leadership dimensions. Communication emerged as the strongest predictor of teacher productivity, accounting for 83.3% of the total variance (β = .833, p = .014 < .05). This finding is particularly noteworthy given the negative B coefficient (-0.320), which likely reflects suppression effects when controlling for other variables in the model. Work environment was the second strongest predictor, contributing 44.1% to teacher productivity variance (β = .441, p = .004 < .05). The positive B coefficient (0.536) indicates that improvements in work environment directly enhance teacher productivity.

What is the relationship between principals' communication and teachers' instructional performance in secondary schools in Kogi State?

Table 3: Pearson Correlation Between Principals' Communication and Teachers' Instructional Performance

Variable	N	df	r	p-value	Sig.
Principals' Communication	90	88	0.236	.037	p < .05*
Teachers' Instructional Performance	90				

Table 3 shows a positive and statistically significant relationship between principals' communication and teachers' instructional performance (r(90) = 0.236, p = .037 < .05). While the correlation coefficient indicates a moderate relationship, the statistical significance confirms that effective principal communication is associated with improved teacher instructional performance.

What is the relationship between principals' interpersonal relationships and teachers' attitude to work in secondary schools in Kogi State?

Table 4: Pearson Correlation between Principals' Interpersonal Relationships and Teachers' Attitude to Work

Variable	N	df	r	p-value	Sig.
Interpersonal Relationships	90	88	.509	.03	p < .05*
Teachers' Attitude to Work	90				

Significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 4 reveals a strong positive and statistically significant relationship between principals' interpersonal relationships and teachers' attitude to work (r(90) = .509, p = .03 < .05). This

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correlation coefficient of .509 indicates a moderately strong relationship, suggesting that positive principal-teacher relationships substantially influence teachers' work attitudes.

Discussion of Findings

The finding that principals' contextual leadership dimensions jointly account for 80.8% of variance in teacher productivity ($R^2 = 0.808$) represents a substantial and practically significant relationship. This exceptionally high explanatory power suggests that contextual leadership practices are among the most important determinants of teacher performance in Kogi State secondary schools. The strong multiple correlation coefficient ($R = 0.899$) indicates that when principals effectively manage communication, interpersonal relationships, work environment, and motivation in combination, teacher productivity is substantially enhanced.

This finding aligns with contemporary educational leadership theories emphasizing the critical role of school leaders in shaping teacher behaviors and outcomes (Hallinger, 2020; Leithwood et al., 2020). It provides empirical support for transformational leadership theory's proposition that leaders influence follower performance through multiple complementary mechanisms rather than single behaviors in isolation (Bass & Avolio, 1994). The high variance explained also suggests that contextual factors rather than individual teacher characteristics alone play predominant roles in determining productivity levels.

The finding that communication emerged as the strongest predictor of teacher productivity ($\beta = .833$) highlights the fundamental importance of effective information exchange, expectation clarification, and feedback provision in educational settings. This finding supports (Okafor and Akinyemi's, 2021) assertion that principals who employ clear, open, and transparent communication styles improve teacher performance by ensuring teachers understand their roles and responsibilities while feeling adequately supported.

The strength of communication's predictive power may reflect several mechanisms. First, effective communication reduces ambiguity regarding expectations, enabling teachers to align their behaviors with institutional goals (Amadi & Ogunleye, 2022). Second, regular feedback helps teachers identify areas for improvement and recognize their strengths, fostering continuous professional development (Thompson & Nkosi, 2022). Third, open communication channels build trust and psychological safety, encouraging teachers to seek support when facing challenges (Yamamoto, 2023).

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Work environment's significant contribution (β = .441) underscores the importance of creating conducive physical, social, and psychological conditions for teaching. This finding aligns with (Akintoye and Adepoju, 2023), who reported that environmental factors such as classroom condition, workload, staff welfare, and administrative transparency directly impact teachers' emotional and professional attachment to their roles. The practical implication is that principals must attend not only to interpersonal aspects of leadership but also to structural and environmental factors that facilitate or hinder teacher performance.

The significant positive relationship between principals' communication and teachers' instructional performance ($r = 0.236$, $p < .05$) provides evidence for the specific mechanism through which leadership influences classroom practice. While the correlation coefficient is moderate rather than strong, its statistical significance and practical implications are noteworthy. Effective principal communication appears to enhance instructional performance by clarifying instructional expectations, providing feedback on teaching practices, sharing best practices, and creating accountability for instructional quality.

The strong positive relationship between principals' interpersonal relationships and teachers' attitude to work ($r = .509$, $p < .05$) provides compelling evidence for the importance of relational aspects of leadership. This finding suggests that when principals build trust, demonstrate empathy, show respect, and maintain positive interactions with teachers, teachers develop more favorable attitudes toward their professional responsibilities.

This finding strongly supports previous research by (Chinedu and Bello, 2022), who found that emotionally intelligent principals who recognize and respond to teachers' emotional and professional needs foster higher morale and stronger organizational commitment. It also aligns with (Okafor and Olamide's, 2022) finding that principals who build trust through consistent, transparent communication and fair treatment create positive work environments where teachers feel confident and engaged.

Conclusion

This study provides robust empirical evidence that principals' contextual leadership dimensions particularly communication and work environment—are powerful predictors of teacher productivity in Kogi State secondary schools. The finding that these dimensions jointly account for over 80% of variance in teacher productivity underscores the central importance of effective school leadership in determining educational outcomes. The exceptionally high variance explained (80.8%) demonstrates that principals' leadership

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practices are among the most important determinants of teacher performance, far exceeding the influence typically attributed to leadership in organizational research. Among contextual leadership dimensions, communication emerges as the strongest predictor, highlighting the fundamental importance of clear, consistent, and constructive information exchange between principals and teachers.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. **Prioritize Communication Excellence**: Principals should develop comprehensive communication strategies that include regular staff meetings, clear written directives, multiple communication channels (face-to-face, digital, written), and systematic feedback mechanisms. Communication should be adapted to different audiences and situations while maintaining consistency in core messages.
2. **Invest in Work Environment Improvement**: Principals should conduct systematic assessments of work environment quality, identifying and addressing deficiencies in physical facilities, instructional resources, workload distribution, and psychological safety. Even within resource constraints, principals can make meaningful improvements through better organization, equitable resource allocation, and creating collaborative cultures.
3. **Build Strong Interpersonal Relationships**: Principals should intentionally cultivate positive relationships with teachers through regular informal interactions, demonstrating genuine concern for teacher welfare, fair and consistent treatment, and recognition of individual contributions. Emotional intelligence development should be pursued through self-reflection and professional learning.
4. **Adopt Integrated Leadership Approaches**: Rather than focusing on single leadership dimensions, principals should recognize the interconnected nature of contextual leadership and develop comprehensive approaches that simultaneously address communication, relationships, environment, and motivation.

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