

Influence of Digital Leadership and Strategic Skills as Determinants of Public Primary School Teachers' Job Performance in Oyo State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Being a digital leader is not enough in this century to accomplish educational objectives. Though little is known about digital leadership and strategic skills, and researchers have investigated other elements such as leadership styles among others. Strategic Transformational Leadership Theory was used to buttress the title. The purpose of this study was to examine Oyo State's public primary school teachers' job performance. Oyo State has nineteen thousand and twenty-nine (19,029) qualified public primary school teachers and two thousand four hundred and fifty-four (2,454) public primary schools. The study employed a descriptive research design. A mixed-method approach consisting of a multi-stage sampling procedure was employed. Face-to-face and content validities were used to validate the teachers' questionnaire (TQ) and the school administrators' interview guide (SAIG). While SAIG's dependability and consistency was assessed through data comparison, TQ's reliability test was determined by internal consistency, yielding a rating of 0.985. At 5% level of significance, a multiple linear regression analysis was used. The results of the test of hypotheses showed that the job performance of public primary school teachers in Oyo State is significantly impacted by the school administrators' digital leadership and strategic skills ($F_{(3,1108)} = 1056.694$; $p < 0.05$). The study concluded that digital leadership and strategic skills have a favourable effect on the job performance of public primary school teachers in Oyo State. To enhance teachers' job performance, it was recommended that school administrators integrate digital leadership and strategic skills towards improving public primary school teachers' job performance in Oyo State.

Keywords: Digital leadership, strategic skill, teachers' job performance

Word Count: 249

1.1 Introduction

Teachers' performance in public primary schools reflects on the pupils' academic performance. Performance refers to a person's ability to carry out a specific function in an organisation. For instance, in the educational sector, teachers can use various teaching methodologies to improve pupils' performance. One of the qualities that can be used to assess teachers' job performance is designing learning experiences for pupils (Atif et al., 2020; Elujekwute et al., 2021). The curriculum can be used to guide pupils' learning experiences. Therefore, teachers should be involved in curriculum design and development, completing each task in line with the subject matter expected and societal aspirations in the curriculum. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject matter is another quality (Atif et al., 2020; Elujekwute et al., 2021). Thus, teachers must be aware of the subject matter (teacher quality). This can be through additional qualifications and research experience, among others (Chavan, 2014). Strategies or methodologies for facilitating learning among learners (Atif et al., 2020; Elujekwute et al., 2021). This is how teachers develop methods to transfer knowledge to the pupils in developing their job performance. Among them are access to technologies and retrieving information on current and important issues (Chavan, 2014). The development of teachers' teaching-learning is not left behind. It is the teaching combined process whereby a teacher identifies and uses the understanding needs of the pupils (Atif et al., 2020; Elujekwute et al., 2021). Digital leadership skills are techniques or special abilities used by digital leaders to enhance organisational growth. It involves a keen eye for the right digital tools, communication in a whole team mindset, and the ability to inspire team members (Mooncamp, 2022; Waldron, 2021). Having a keen eye for the right digital tools means that such a leader needs to identify the right digital tool (s) and solutions that improve processes, productivity, efficiency, and competitiveness, which are, of course, at the heart of any digital transformation. For example, Google Analytics and Tableau, among others (James, 2020). The school administrator, being a digital leader, can cultivate a culture of collaboration through communication. This collaboration can be among leaders of his kind or his subordinates in the organisation. The ability to inspire team members is another indicator of digital leadership skills. This is the ability of the digital leader to influence and motivate the behaviour of the subordinates in the organisation towards achieving the organisational goals. This can be achieved through setting clear goals and supporting team members or subordinates, just to mention a few (Raiyani, 2022). Connecting with subordinates,

communicating honestly and openly, fostering professional and personal development with subordinates, maintaining a positive outlook for the organisation's growth, educating employees rather than issuing commands, establishing clear goals and expectations for feedback, and many other strategic skills are all important for digital leaders to have in order to accomplish a specific goal (Schoemaker et al., 2013).

Digital leadership strategic skills are the skills that school administrators use with their subordinates to achieve organisational goals (Indeed Editorial Team, 2022). It includes the leader's ability to interpret information and circumstances, anticipate, and align his/her subordinates' goals with the organisation (Indeed Editorial Team, 2022). An administrator's capacity to imagine a desired future state for the organisation is implied by a leader's capacity for anticipation. This state can be achieved through engaging in a dialogue with other educational stakeholders, such as teachers, to fully understand competitors' viewpoints and estimate their likely responses towards a novel project, visualise multiple futures, and be ready for the unexpected (Indeed Editorial Team, 2022). A leader's ability to interpret is another index of leadership strategic skills. This is the ability of the school administrator to interpret the circumstances and situations surrounding the organisation. School administrators, when analysing data, can assemble information, give possible explanations on the results and findings, invite other stakeholders, draw conclusions, and make some recommendations. Leaders align his/her subordinates' goals with the organisation. A strategic leader can use his / her special skills to ensure that subordinates' goals align with the organisational goals by reaching a common ground and buy-in of the subordinates. This can be achieved through early communication of the organisational goals with the subordinates, and determining the most important internal and external stakeholders, to mention a few. This paper could be explained using strategic transformational leadership theory.

Strategic Transformational Leadership Theory

This theory posits that leaders seek ways to inspire and motivate their subordinates to achieve potential and exceed their own self-interests for the growth of the organisation. It suggests that school administrators being digital leaders will create significant change by leveraging on fostering an environment of innovation, trust, and collaboration among the educational stakeholders (Khan et al., 2020).

Some studies, such as Managerial capabilities as facilitators of Digital Business Model Transformation (DBMT) was examined (Heubec, 2023). This study builds on dynamic managerial capabilities theory to argue that managerial human capital, composed of leadership and entrepreneurial skills, is a critical facilitator of DBMT and resultant firm performance. The study finds that the benefits of managers' human capital for DBMT are contingent on its form: entrepreneurial skills facilitate digital transformation integral for firm performance, while leadership skills have no impact on firm performance, neither directly nor indirectly through DBMT.

Examinations of school principals was conducted (Ozdemir et al., 2022). The study aimed to examine the relationship between school principals' 21st-century skills and their strategic leadership according to teachers' opinions. As a result of the research, it was revealed that information literacy, technology literacy, accountability, leadership, and responsibility were significant predictors of managerial leadership behaviour. A recent study on digital leadership and employee creativity: the role of employee job crafting and person-organisation fit was carried out (Zhu et al., 2022). It looked at when and how employee creativity is impacted by digital leadership. The job demands-resources model and person–organisation fit theory were integrated to create a model that tested how and when digital leadership influences employee creativity, and fills in the theoretical gap in the study. The study claimed that leaders must acknowledge the fact that their work environment and expectations are evolving as a result of digitalisation. They are now more than just assigning assignments to their subordinates and keeping an eye on their accomplishment; they are actively involved in fostering an environment that fosters team members' creative potential through cooperation and ongoing education (Zhu et al., 2022).

Another paper was assessed in Laguna on secondary school heads' technology leadership skills (Lambot & Yango, 2023). The goal of the study was to ascertain the secondary school heads' technology leadership skills, educational motivation, and teachers' techno-pedagogical competence in the Schools Division of Laguna. Findings revealed that there was a multiple correlation between the level of secondary school heads' technology leadership skills and the level of educational motivation, taken singly or in combination, with the level of techno-pedagogical competency.

In Oyo State, Nigeria, a recent study was conducted on digital leadership, communication, and decision-making styles as determinants of public primary school teachers' job performance

(Oredein & Obadimeji, 2022). Oyo State public primary school administrators were found to be moderately digitalized. Public primary school administrators becoming digital leaders is not sufficient in this digital age to improve teachers' job performance.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

From experience as a classroom teacher, teachers' job performance seems dwindling, especially during the COVID-19 lockdown when all schools were shut down by the Federal Government of Nigeria in 2020. Even after the lockdown, teachers' job performance is still not encouraging, as some public primary school teachers in Oyo State could not use adequate and relevant instructional materials during teaching-learning activities (Oredein & Obadimeji, 2022). This can be due to reasons, such as some teachers not being digitally inclined, and classroom environmental factors other factors. It is possible that some school administrators do not create a conducive environment to engage educational stakeholders in the school digitally, which will also invariably affect pupils' academic performance. Improving pupils' academic performance implies improving the quality of education and having an adequate number of well-prepared teachers at the public primary school level (UNICEF/UBEC, 2023). This can be achieved if school administrators become digitalized, create a conducive environment to foster digitalization, and actively engage educational stakeholders in the integration of technology in the school. Becoming digital leaders in this era is not sufficient, but it is necessary to achieve the educational goals stated in the National Policy of Education (NPE). The developed world, like the USA and Germany, just to mention a few, seeks ways of improving teachers' job performance (IEA, 2023). Studies have been carried out on digital leadership and leadership styles, just to mention a few (Cooper, 2023; Oredein & Obadimeji, 2022). However, not much work has been carried out on digital leadership and strategic skills vis-à-vis teachers' job performance in Oyo State public primary schools. To this end, this study investigates the influence of digital leadership and strategic skills on public primary school teachers' job performance in Oyo State, Nigeria.

1.3 Aim and Objectives of the Study

This study investigated the influence of digital leadership, and strategic skills on public primary school teachers' job performance in Oyo State. The specific objectives were to:

- i. examine the combined influence of public primary school administrators' digital leadership and strategic skills on public primary school teachers' job performance in Oyo State; and
- ii. analyse the relative influence of public primary school administrators' digital leadership and strategic skills on public primary school teachers' job performance in Oyo State.

1.4 Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were poised in a null form:

H₀1: There will be no combined significant influence of public primary school administrators' digital leadership and strategic skills on public primary school teachers' job performance in Oyo State.

H₀2: There will be no relative significant influence of public primary school administrators' digital leadership and strategic skills on public primary school teachers' job performance in Oyo State.

1.5 Significance of the Study

Education is a lifelong process. School administrators being digital leaders is still not enough for the primary stakeholders in education (pupils). For any effective result, a school administrator being a digital leader will need to reflect on such digital leadership and strategic skills for influencing the teachers' job performance towards achieving the educational goals. In so doing, the school administrators will empower the public primary school teachers. With this, other educational stakeholders, aside from school administrators, such as the government, teachers, pupils, community, and parents, will experience school administrators' digital leadership and strategic skills in the school towards achieving the educational goals. Understanding which skills have the greatest impact allows training programs to be tailored to specific needs, ensuring school administrators are well-prepared to support their teachers. The outcome of this study will be published for all educational stakeholders.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The scope of this study is within its context and geographical location.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study used a descriptive survey research design.

2.2 Selection of Participants

There are two thousand four hundred and fifty-four (2,454) public primary school administrators, nineteen thousand and twenty-nine certified teachers (19,029) in Oyo State primary schools (Oredein & Obadimeji, 2022). Purposive and proportionate sampling techniques were employed in a multi-stage sampling procedure for the quantitative method to pick the sample size of the participants. Each senatorial district has seven chosen local government districts that were established in 1991 under the previous Military President's administration. Ibadan North, which has 458 teachers, North-east, which has 477 teachers, North-west, which has 376 teachers, South-east, which has 477 teachers, South-west, which has 451 teachers, Ogo-Oluwa, which has 299 teachers, and Ogbomosho North which has 260 teachers, having a total of 2,690 teachers, are among the local government areas.

In the second stage, a survey tool known as a standardised Raosoft sampling calculator (with a 5% margin of error, a 95% confidence level, a 50% response distribution, and the number of teachers) was used to calculate the sample size in each of the state's purposefully selected local government areas. In the third stage, 1,336 teachers were selected as research participants using a proportionate sampling technique.

2.3 Validity of the Research Instruments

Content and face validity were used on the research instruments. The instruments were validated by specialist in the field of education.

2.4 Reliability of the Research Instruments

A pilot survey was carried out to determine the reliability of the instruments. In the course of the quantitative study, Cronbach's alpha (internal consistency reliability) was used to determine the score of individual items on the instrument, having a reliability of 0.985. This suggests that the items have an excellent internal consistency. For the qualitative study, a comparison of data was

used to determine the reliability of the instrument titled School Administrators Interview Guide (SLIG) for consistency of responses among the selected public primary school administrators.

2.5 Administration of the Research Instruments

The research instruments were administered physically to the respondents

2.6 Methods of Data Collection

A mixed-method was used to elicit information from the respondents. A self-structured Teachers' Questionnaire (TQ) and School Administrators' Interview Guild (SAIG) were used among the public primary school teachers and school administrators, respectively.

2.7 Methods of Data Analysis

Since this study used a mixed-method approach, each technique employed a unique data analysis procedure. In the quantitative study, descriptive statistics such as frequency, mean, standard deviation, and percentage were used to measure sections A and B of the structured questionnaire. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis, an inferential statistical tool, was used to evaluate whether the hypotheses poised were accepted or rejected at the 5% level of significance. For the qualitative study, a comparison of data was used on SAIG.

2.8 Ethical Consideration

Ethical guidelines relating to data collection, analysis, and interpretation of research, as specified by Lead City University, were strictly adhered to. The ethical guidelines are steps used in the data collection, analysis, and interpretation of research, and it includes getting an approval letter from the Department of Arts and Social Science Education to the Chairman, Oyo State Universal Basic Education Board, for the respondents' data and an approval from the Chairman of OSUBEB to administer the research instruments to the selected respondents. The instruments were administered to the respondents, retrieved, analysed and interpreted accordingly.

3. Results and Discussion of Findings

3.1 Test of Hypotheses (Results)

Ho1: There will be no combined significant influence of public primary school administrators' digital leadership and strategic skills on public primary school teachers' job performance in Oyo State.

Table 1: Summary of Regression Model Showing the Combined Significant Influence of Public Primary School Administrators' Digital Leadership and Strategic Skills on Public Primary School Teachers' Job Performance in Oyo State

Model Summary

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|-------|--------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | 0.859 ^a | 0.738 | 0.737 | 2.52255 |

a. Predictors: (Constant), Strategic Skill, Digital Leadership Skill

ANOVA^a

| Model | | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|-------|------------|----------------|------|-------------|----------|--------------------|
| 1 | Regression | 19878.250 | 2 | 9939.125 | 1561.950 | 0.000 ^b |
| | Residual | 7063.240 | 1110 | 6.363 | | |
| | Total | 26941.490 | 1112 | | | |

a. Dependent Variable: Public primary school teachers' job performance in Oyo State

b. Predictors: (Constant), Strategic Skill, Digital Leadership Skill

Fieldwork, 2024

Where “R” is the correlation coefficient value of 0.859

R² is the coefficient of determination of 0.738

Adjusted R square (Adj R²) is the adjusted version of R² of 0.737

Std. Error of the Estimate of 2.52255

Table 1 clarifies that the F-test value of 1561.950 is significant ($p < 0.05$); thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. In other words, the table above shows that there is a combined significant influence of public primary school administrators' digital leadership and strategic skills on public primary school teachers' job performance in Oyo State. Table 1 reveals that $R^2 > \text{adj } R^2$. The proportion of variance of the dependent variable (public primary school teachers' job performance) that can be explained by the independent variables (digital leadership and strategic skills) (R^2) = 0.738. The same table reveals that the adjusted R^2 value = 0.737. This implies that approximately 74% of the data fit the regression model. The study reveals that school administrators who provide subordinates with a supportive environment that inspires them to work and communicate the organisational goals with the subordinates early will improve public primary school teachers' job performance in Oyo State. Hence, there is a combined significant influence of public primary school administrators' digital leadership and strategic skills on public primary school teachers' job performance in Oyo State.

H₀2: There will be no relative significant influence of public primary school administrators' digital leadership and strategic skills on public primary school teachers' job performance in Oyo State.

Table 2: Summary of Regression Model Showing the Relative Significant Influence of Public Primary School Administrators' Digital Leadership and Strategic Skills on Public Primary School Teachers' Job Performance in Oyo State

| Model | Coefficients ^a | | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|------------|--------------|--------|-------|
| | Unstandardised | | Standardised | | |
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | T | Sig. |
| 1 (Constant) | 2.157 | 0.441 | | 4.888 | 0.000 |
| Digital Leadership Skill | 0.440 | 0.050 | 0.311 | 8.826 | 0.000 |
| Strategic Skill | 0.505 | 0.043 | 0.466 | 11.796 | 0.000 |

a. Dependent Variable: Public primary school teachers' job performance in Oyo State

Fieldwork, 2024

Table 2 analyses the relative significant influence of public primary school administrators' digital leadership and strategic skills on public primary school teachers' job performance in Oyo State. It reveals that the values of all the independent variables X (digital leadership and strategic skills) are significant ($p < 0.05$). From the unstandardised coefficients, where the dependent variable Y (public primary school teachers' job performance) is being influenced by the independent variables X, beta (β) in each of the independent variables reveals the effect of a unit change of the independent variables of X (digital leadership skill=0.440 and strategic skill =0.505). This implies that a change in digital leadership skill on the dependent variable gives the result as 0.440 and so on.

However, the standardised coefficient reveals that the two independent variables X have a very low measure of strength and direction on the dependent variable. It shows that the leadership strategic skill, with $\beta = 0.466$, is the most important independent variable of public primary school administrators on public primary school teachers' job performance in Oyo State. More so, the table indicates that the independent variables are significant on the dependent variable. Nevertheless, leadership strategic skill, is predominant. Table 2 shows that the t-value of each variable is higher than the critical values from a confidence level of 95%. This indicates that the coefficient is statistically significant. In other words, there is a relatively significant influence of public primary school administrators' digital leadership and strategic skills on public primary school teachers' job performance in Oyo State.

3.2 Discussion of Findings

Recall that this study used a mixed-methods (qualitative and quantitative) approach to elicit information from the respondents. The structured interview guide was administered to the public primary school administrators in Oyo State to validate responses derived from the copies of the filled questionnaire. Findings reveal some comparisons between the structured interview guide by the public primary school administrators in Oyo State and the filled-out public primary school teachers' questionnaire from each sampled school.

Hypothesis one, which states that there will be no combined significant influence of public primary school administrators' digital leadership and strategic skills on public primary school teachers' job performance in Oyo State, was rejected. It implies that there is a combined significant influence of public primary school administrators' digital leadership and strategic skills on public

primary school teachers' job performance in Oyo State. Table 1 shows the combined significant influence of public primary school administrators' digital leadership and strategic skills on public primary teachers' job performance in Oyo State. This implies that school administrators can use specific digital leadership and strategic skills to improve teacher job performance. It implies that such a school administrator can use a combination of appropriate digital leadership skills (a keen eye for the right digital tools, communication in a team mindset, and the ability to inspire team members) and strategic skills (anticipating, interpreting information, and aligning vision with subordinate goals). The study reaffirmed the importance of managers' dynamic capabilities for strategic change, which DBMT enables, as well as the performance benefits (Heubec, 2023). It is also believed that the 21st-century skills of education managers (school administrators) are a significant predictor of their strategic leadership behaviors.

The second null hypothesis, which states that there will be no relative significant influence of public primary school administrators' digital leadership and strategic skills on public primary school teachers' job performance in Oyo State, was rejected. This implies that there is a relatively significant influence of public primary school administrators' digital leadership and strategic skills on public primary school teachers' job performance in Oyo State. This simply means that there exists a relationship between school administrators' digital leadership skills and public primary school teachers' job performance. It also implies that there exists a relationship between school administrators' strategic skills and public primary school teachers' job performance in Oyo State. Digital leadership skills are the abilities required for school administrators to be digital leaders and fulfill their roles in the organisation, particularly in the use of technology and digital tools. Examples include effective communication and decision-making, among others. This study backs up the finding that leaders must acknowledge that their work environment and expectations are changing as a result of digitalization (Zhu et al., 2022). It also supports the Laguna study on secondary school principals' technological leadership skills (Lambot & Yango, 2023).

Table 2 shows that strategic skills has a β -standardized coefficient of 0.466. It implies that the predictor's direction and strength concerning the dependent variable are positive and good. This implies that school administrators' strategic ability to influence public primary school teachers' job performance is good. This lends support to the strategic leadership theory, which emphasises the roles of top-level management or leaders in establishing an organization's long-

term success through the effective integration of its resources, abilities, and external opportunities (Schoemaker et al., 2013).

4. Conclusion

The study on digital leadership and strategic skills as determinants of public primary school teachers' job performance in Oyo State, Nigeria, attested that there was a combined significant influence of public primary school administrators' digital leadership and strategic skills on public primary school teachers' job performance in Oyo State.

It confirmed that there was a relatively significant influence of public primary school administrators' digital leadership and strategic skills on public primary school teachers' job performance in Oyo State.

5. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following were recommended:

1. To enhance head teachers' digital capacity, the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) and State Universal Basic Education Boards (SUBEBs) should train school head teachers in digital leadership; the government should create digitally clustered schools to improve head teachers' digital literacy; the government should work with telecom companies to offer schools subsidized internet service; and the government, through UBEB, should provide a school with at least one digital learning room that is furnished with digital devices such as projectors, laptops/desktops, and a reliable power source.
2. Through the incorporation of digital pedagogy and strategic classroom planning into teacher training programs, the National Teachers' Institute (NTI) and Teachers' Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) should promote ongoing professional development. The training should emphasize the use of digital practical classroom tools such as Google Classroom, Google Meet, Whatsapp, and Scratch (for coding), among others.

6. Contribution to Knowledge

This study seeks to investigate the influence of digital leadership and strategic skills on teacher job performance. The study provided the following contribution:

1. Empirically. This study provides empirical evidence on the specific ways that school administrators' skills influence teachers' job performance in Oyo State public primary schools. By focusing on digital leadership and strategic skills, the study adds depth to the existing literature by identifying some other factors that influence teachers' job performance.
2. Development of Programs. This study emphasises the relationship between school administrators' skills and teachers' job performance. The study informs the development of programs to train leaders and provides a framework for educational authorities to design initiatives that improve school leaders' skills, thereby promoting better educational practices.

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