Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine principals’ leadership practices in secondary schools using Kouzes and Posner Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) in view of the enormous impact global changes and the consequent reforms and restructuring going on in education is having on principals’ leadership behaviours. Population of the study was all the 21 principals and 281 teachers in Aguata Local Government Area of Anambra State. Guided by two research questions and one null hypothesis, a 30-item Kouzes and Posner LPI, which examines the leadership practices in five areas based on a 10-point scale, was used for the study as a tool for measuring perceptions of leadership practices. Although the validity and reliability of the instrument have been established by Kouzes and Posner (2002a), the researcher repeated it to ensure psychometric properties of the questionnaire in Anambra State situation and culture. The internal consistency measures of reliability were computed for the instrument using Cronbach Coefficient Alpha. As a result, the internal consistency rating for the five sub-scales were .78 - .88. Therefore, the researcher assumed the instrument to be reliable for the present study. Data was analyzed using Means, Standard Deviation, and t-tests. Findings showed that while principals self-reported that they more frequently use their leadership behaviours, teachers observed that they are less regular in the use of the leadership behaviours as measured by Kouzes and Posner LPI. However, it was recommended among others that workshops should be conducted for the principals to train them practically on effective leadership practices, especially as postulated by Kouzes and Posner.

Key words: Principal, leadership, Kouzes and Posner Leadership Practices Inventory.

The current phase of evolution in the society today is characterized by changes in technology, economics, social, political, and cultural aspects of the world. Globally, these changes have imposed changes and forced reforms on many countries’ educational systems and Nigeria is not an exception. Nigeria, to that effect has initiated reform movements and is comprehensively reviewing and restructuring her education systems to effectively meet the challenges of the modern time; reflecting the national vision of attaining global economic relevance by 2020 and national framework on education etc (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2008). Thus, there have been reforms in the pre-primary, basic education, post basic education tertiary education levels. Teacher professional development, principalship, curriculum development, and improving students learning have become the main reform issues. With the aforementioned dimensions of reform and restructuring, comes the expanded role for education as an investment for economic, social, technology, and political development; a tool of empowerment; an effective means of developing the full capacities and potentials of the human resources as well as the development of a competent work force through the acquisition of practical life skills relevant to the
world of work; and as a veritable means of developing sound intelligent learning societies (FRN, 2008:IX)

No doubt, the reforms and restructuring in education will have enormous impact on educational leadership. One of the obvious effects will be the fact that societies will increasingly expect the educational leaders to cope with the increasingly difficult and complex challenges that arise irrespective of the persistent gaps in education policy provision and implementation in Nigeria. They will also, require principals to uphold core principles of social transformation (e.g. social justice, equity etc) as well as demonstrate visionary capacity, boundary-breaking entrepreneurialism, new professional skills, and crisis management (Scott & Webber, 2008), which inevitably, will necessitate the emergence of the needed change and school improvement. It therefore, means that school principals must adopt appropriate leadership skills and behaviours to promote the improvement of school climate and culture towards achievement of the education reform goals. Norton (2002) had earlier found that principal leadership influences the climate of a school and in turn the achievement of its teachers and students. Fullan, his cotemporary, also noted that a principal’s success stems from his/her values, character and leadership styles creating an atmosphere where everyone is working towards goal achievement (Fullan, 2002).

Admittedly, the vital key for successful implementation of education reform hinges on how the education main actors such as, principals and teachers perceive their roles; the meanings and opportunities the reform can offer during the reform process to maximize its potential benefits. Gareis and Tschannen-Moran (2004) observed that it is widely accepted that good principal are at the centre of good schools and that without good leadership that guides the improvement of student success, schools cannot succeed. No wonder Ike (2011) connects students’ achievement on tests to principal’s evaluation. While, Goewey (2012) emphasis that student test results and performance have the potential to designate failing or succeeding principals. Raw (2012) consistently said that student achievement test should be a mandatory component for principal evaluation without regard to such criteria as student disability and other barriers. At the same time, however, leadership has invariably been viewed as critical to the success of the school reform and can exhibit tremendous influence. Leadership provides the catalyst for these reform and restructuring efforts. Researchers on educational reform have viewed principal leadership of utmost importance in achievement of excellence in school (Parrish, 2001). Successful reform efforts have focused on principal leadership style as a solution to improve student learning and teacher professional growth. Principal’s sense of efficacy has been studied in research as well. A principal’s sense of efficacy is his/her perceived ability to structure a course of action in order to produce the outcome that is desired (Bandura, 1997). Throughout history, research studies have shown that leadership style makes a difference.

According to Beatty and Buzzotta (2010), a study by Psychological Associates revealed that one of the biggest factors in determining executive success is leadership style. The assumption that the principal is one of the most influential persons in the school warrants the examination of leadership practices. Principals need to understand leadership practices and be skillful in executing leadership behaviors to achieve desired results. While several studies suggest relationship between principal leadership style and school success, Deciman, Mackey & Pitcher (2006) specifically talked on the link between characteristics of principals and actual test scores; that principals need to be instructional leaders and exhibit characteristics of strong leadership. However, many researchers have studied leadership practices, and the impact of effective leadership styles on school climate, teacher satisfaction, and student achievement (Norton, 2002; Louis &Wahlstrom, 2008). But, Bowles and Bowles, (2000) identified the work of two leading researchers, Kouzes and Posner for establishing a set of leadership practices that are widely accepted. Although, Kouzes and Posner leadership assessment models based on leading by example have been successfully applied in business and nursing section, it is not known the extent it can successfully applied in secondary education system in Nigeria with a view to prepare principals to succeed within the school and support student achievement; and essentially turn around lowest achieving schools; recruit, develop, reward and retain effective teachers. This study therefore sought to investigate the extent of principals’ leadership practices using the Kouzes and Posner LPI.
Conceptual Framework
Principal

In Nigeria, principal is a person that manages a secondary school. Secondary school is the second level of education in Nigeria’s education system. Wehmeier (2001) defined principal as person with highest authority in an organization and Hornby (2001) saw it as the person in charge of a school or college. The secondary school principal of today evolved from the headmaster in the early 19th Century during the unification of all schools departments under a single principal master or teacher. When the student enrolment increased, there grew the need for a change in the ‘one-room-school-house’ concept. Consequently, the need for managing and controlling of the whole school affairs arose and led to the emergence of the principal. With the growth of schools in numbers and in proportion with the population it serves, there has been a parallel increase in the authority/leadership and responsibility of the principal.

Today, the principal undertakes professional tasks involving the leadership of quality instruction, student-personnel administration, staff-personnel administration, as well as the community towards the significant purpose of youth education in the Nigeria dynamic and complex society. Principal as a leader is an agent of change and he makes things happen. His leadership effectiveness significantly impacts on achievement of the school and specifically, in supporting teachers and students’ achievement. No wonder the principal is held accountable for improvement and sustainability of positive student learning outcomes as well as failures in the school.

Leader/Leadership Styles

In education system, a leader is in an authority and makes things to happen in the school. He is in a unique position to set the tone of the school; he influences others to act in a particular way by directing, encouraging, sensitizing, motivating, supervising and supporting the group members towards achieving educational goals. No institution can function effectively without a leader.

Leadership is the ability or state of being a leader. It implies the ability to get things done with the assistance and cooperation of others within the school system. Azubuike (2009) saw leadership as the process by which a person exerts influence over other people and inspires, motivates and directs their activities enthusiastically towards achieving goals. This concept, leadership, therefore can by analyzed to imply not only the willingness to work, but also the willingness to work with zeal and confidence. This zeal reflects the earnestness and intensity in the execution of jobs, while confidence reflects experience and technical ability.

Nevertheless, the actions of the principal; the way he behaves in the school as he works is determined by his leadership style. Leadership effectiveness is a function of the leadership style. Different leadership styles have been found effective at different situations. One style is to make decisions autocratically without consulting subordinates; one democratically, consults before making a decision; while the laissez- faire/ anarchic i.e. free-rein leadership style lets subordinates make decisions. Finally, there is a leader that has powerful personal quality that attracts and impresses other people to enthusiastically follow him/her, which is the charismatic leadership style. Leadership style is important to organizational climate and helps to shape members of the organization (Norton, 2012). Also, Beatty and Buzzotta (2010), in their Psychological Associates study revealed that one of the biggest factors in determining executive success is leadership style.

Theoretical Framework

With the challenge of current education reform and restructuring today, there is significant emphasis on principal leadership style. Leadership from time immemorial has been very important to the human society. Leadership is a dynamic concept which deals with characteristics and behaviour of the leader, followers and the situation (Onah, 2008). Although it has been a topic of interest, it was only
around the turn of the 20th century that scientific studies began with the work of sociologist, Max Weber, who in his study of leadership, stated that leadership can be divided into three stages. Each stage can be characterized by prominent research strategy and focus of interest. The earliest stage attempted to identify traits of leaders, and the next stage focused on the behaviour of leaders. The third stage centers on the fit between leadership style and the situation a leader faces (Tirimizi, 2002).

However, inconsistent findings and methodological problems resulted in increasing dissatisfaction with trait, behavioural, contingency-based leadership. Research set the stage for a paradigm shift. Leadership theories in this new paradigm differ from earlier theories in that they seek to explain extraordinary leadership and performance beyond expectations (Paul, Costley, Howelly & Dorfman, 2002). According to Barnett, McCormick & Conners (2001), this shift was catalyzed by the publication of an influential book titled, ‘leadership’, which conceptualized the differences between ordinary (transactional) leaders and extraordinary (transformational) leaders.

Bass & Avolio (1994) presented a formal theory of transformational and transactional leadership, as well as models and measurements of their factors in leadership behaviour. These models were later refined, which led to the development of the Full Range Leadership Model-FRLM. The FRLM contains components of leadership behaviour, which includes four behavioural components of transformational leadership, two behavioural components of transactional leadership, and laissez-faire leadership or the absence of leadership.

Although transformational leadership has generally been defined as including the four leadership characteristics of idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bass & Avolio, 1994), a number of new leadership studies have attempted to refine our understanding of the notion. Kouzes and Posner (1995) for example, have emphasized the importance of what they called exemplary leadership for producing the leader-follower trust that is central for transformational leadership. Kouzes and Posner (2002) stated that leading by example is visible management. Visibility enhances accessibility and promotes the values and principles advocated by the leader. Leaders who lead by example serve as visible models for those committed to the course of action in the organization. According to Hoer (2005:191), “leadership is characterized by the leader’s ability to make others better, to help them grow, to support and challenge and learn from and with them” also, effective principals must be able to assess and evaluate the impact and perceptions of their leadership (Kelley, Thornton & Daughtery, 2005). Self evaluation increases leaders’ capacity for increased effectiveness because he/she will by self analyze and adjust self leadership practices and behaviours based on accurate self-perceptions. Also, a well presented and analyzed observed perception of leaders’ behaviour increases the effective leaders’ effectiveness. The Kouses and Posner LPI can serve such purposes. Effective principals understand the importance of enhancing their strengths as well as improving their weaknesses and how to use both as tools for greater effectiveness.

Kouzes and Posner’s Model of Assessment of Leadership Practices

This study was based on Kouzes and Posner LPI. Kouzes and Posner, in a research they conducted twenty decades ago developed a highly respected and used Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI), which measures leadership behaviours. In the Kouzes and Posners’ Leadership Challenge, the inventory consists of the LPI-self and observer covering the following five leadership practices that makes leaders to be successful: model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encourage the heart (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). These practices focus mainly on development, maintenance and improvement of an organization and serves as guidance for leaders to accomplish their achievements or ‘to get extraordinary things done’ (Kouzes and Posner, 1995:9). According to Kouzes and Posner leadership is not a position, but a collection of practices and behaviours. In the words of Taylor (2002), these practices seem to be essential components of the concept of transformational leadership. They were developed through intensive research on current leadership
practices and have been recognized by many researchers as truly representative of highly effective leadership practices. For a better understanding in this study the five practices are explained one by one thus;

**Model the Way**
For modelling the way, an effective principal develops, knows, and articulates his morals, values, and beliefs. A leader who models the way demonstrates a strong work ethic while modeling a commitment to mission, vision and goals. He sets examples for those with whom he works. While modelling the way, effective leader cultivates and facilitates a culture where people are loyal, credible and committed to the organization. He takes pride in his work and the work of their co-workers.

**Inspire a Shared Vision**
Great leaders use the power of energy and motivation to inspire those around them. They work long hours and sometimes endure personal sacrifice to inspire those around them to do the same in the name of a shared vision. Effective leaders share their personal beliefs while working with colleagues to build and nurture a shared vision that focuses on the future and not just the present. These leaders are passionate examples of collaboration and hope. ‘They are able to develop an ideal and unique image of the future for the common good (Kouzes & Posner, 2007:105).

**Challenge the Process**
Great leaders look for innovative and creative ways to make change and improve the organization. Challenging the process is a skill that great leaders have. These leaders have no fear of taking chances when opportunity for success is within reach. Challenging the process involves reevaluating, questioning, and not accepting what is the norm. As leaders take risks, they encourage their employees to do the same. Great leaders set higher expectations than what is already achieved in the organization. Leaders must build a commitment to the challenge of reaching new heights while supporting their constituents during the journey (Kouzes & Posner, 2002).

**Enable Others to Act**
Effective leaders enable those around them to take the initiative with a spirit of collaboration and shared vision. They believe that there is power in building on the strength of each other. Kouzes and Posner (2002: 242b) stated that “collaboration is the critical competency for achieving and sustaining high performance. These leaders establish and model a climate of trust and this fosters a culture of interdependence.

**Encourage the Heart**
As the leader focuses on the shared vision and initiatives in the school, the recognition of the accomplishments and contributions of those in the school is so important. While encouraging the heart, effective leaders are in tune with the needs, efforts and success of those around them. With an emphasis on the shared vision and goals of the organization, these leaders celebrate victories and the contributions of others. These celebrations symbolically represent the strength of the organization and create fond memories that create loyalty to the organization and a dedication to those shared goals and vision (Kouzes & Posner, 2002).

**Statement of the Problem**
There is a general paucity of research information on extent of secondary school principals’ leadership practices using Kouzes and Posner LPI in Nigeria. These leadership practices according to Kouzes and Posner (1995:9), focus mainly on development, maintenance and improvement of an organization and serves as guidance for leaders to accomplish their goals or ‘to get extraordinary things done’. Many developed countries are widely using the leadership practices and their principals are achieving positive results. Application of Kouzes and Posner practice model therefore, becomes an
imperative especially now that Nigeria hopes to be among other developed nations in technology, social, political, economics, and cultural aspects of the world, through education and almost every school is engaged in some type of reform. This study therefore, sought to determine secondary school principals’ leadership practices using Kouzes and Posner LPI in Nigeria with a view to help principals self-manage and improve their leadership practices for effective teaching and learning process in the schools.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent of secondary school principals’ leadership practices in Nigeria using the Kouzes and Posner LPI. Specifically, the study sought to assess;

i) the secondary principals’ perception of their leadership practices using Kouzes and Posner LPI.

ii) teachers’ perception of principals’ leadership practices using Kouzes and Posner LPI.

**Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

i) How do secondary school principals perceive their leadership practices using Kouzes and Posner LPI?

ii) How do secondary school teachers perceive leadership practices of their principals using Kouzes and Posner LPI?

**Research Hypothesis**

Ho: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the perceived leadership practices using Kouzes and Posner LPI.

**Significance of the Study**

This study is of both theoretical and practical significant to knowledge, policy makers, educational administrators, teachers, principals, researchers, government and the general public. Theoretically, with the current reforms and restructuring efforts in Nigeria, this study will determine the leadership practices of principals using Kouzes and Posner LPI. In other words, the LPI should serve as basis for school principals to assess their leadership strengths and weaknesses. It will also, present further information on the leadership behaviours of principals through the teachers that observe them in the schools as well as expose such behaviours which principals tend to hide. In other words, it will address the ‘Halow Effect’ of self reporting. Moreover, it will contribute to a greater understanding by scholars and practitioners as to which practices enhance leadership. It will also be seen as a starting point for research in Kouzes and Posner’s leadership practices in Nigerian schools therefore stimulating further research to provide valuable insight for both academicians and practitioners.

Practically, this study will enhance the teaching learning environment in the school, which promotes student achievement. Principals will benefit from knowledge of Kouzes and Posner’s five leadership practices and utilize such knowledge to self-manage their behavior and professional growth. Obtaining this body of knowledge will allow principals to increase their effectiveness by reflecting upon their leadership practices and seek the feedback of others. Barbuto and Burbach (2006) revealed that leaders who are self aware are often self-critical and spend more time trying to improve.

The management of Anambra State Education Commission will benefit from the present study because it will present them with the perceptions of both principals and teachers on principals’ leadership practices. This will help them appropriately on the ways to effectively supervise and monitor principals as they accomplish educational goals.

The general public will also benefit from the study. Education settings do not exist in isolation; they exist for the public. Thus, the findings of this study will provide useful information on the principals’ leadership practices and offer suggestion for improvement.
Method

A survey research design was used for the study. The study adopted a survey research design because of its nature. It involves the use of questionnaire to determine principal leadership practices with the aim to promote the improvement of school culture in Nigeria. According to Ojo (2001), survey is the best technique for obtaining the necessary data from a group through the use of questionnaire. Stressing the effectiveness of survey design, Ogbazi and Okpala (1994) maintained that it involves the use of questionnaire and or intention to determine the opinion, preference, attitudes or perceptions of people about a particular situation.

Population of the study was all the 21 principals and 281 teachers in Aguata Local Government Area of Anambra State (Post Primary Education Board, Awka, 2014). There was no sampling. This was because the population can be studied conveniently.

A 30-Item Kouzes and Posner LPI, which examines the leadership practices in five areas, was used for the study based on a 10-Point Likert Scale. The ten point scale represents: 1. Almost never do what is described in this statement, 2. Rarely, 3. Seldom, 4. Once in a while, 5. Occasionally, 6. Sometimes, 7. Fairly Often, 8. Usually, 9. Very Frequently, 10. Almost always demonstrate what is described in this statement. The 30 behaviors are categorized into five leadership practices: Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, Encourage the Heart. Six questions addressed each of the five leadership practices (Kouzes and Posner, 2003).

Originally, validity and reliability of the inventory was carried out by Kouzes and Posner, that developed the inventory (Kouzes & Posner, 2002b). Validity refers to what extent an instrument measures what it claims to measure. Regarding face validity, Kouzes and Posner (2002b) indicated that individuals who have completed the LPI found the instrument to correspond with their beliefs about excellent leadership practices, while Reliability infers the extent that an instrument yields the same result across time and items. Generally, reliability coefficients that is higher than 0.80 show that the instrument is reliable. (Kouzes & Posner, 2002b). The LPI has a reliability coefficient (Cronbach alpha) that ranges from 0.75 to 0.87. Many researchers have used the LPI with similar reliability (Kouzes & Posners, 2002b). As a result, the internal consistency rating for the five sub-scales was (.79) Model the Way, (.88) Inspire a Shared Vision, (.78) Challenge the Process, (.87) Enable Others to Act and (.80) Encourage the Heart. As a result of the high internal consistency rating, the LPI was assumed to be an appropriate and reliable instrument for the present study and the researcher, therefore, reproduced the inventory by typing.

The researcher personally administered the instrument on the respondents to minimize potential self-report bias and to ensure complete return of the questionnaire copies.

Means, Standard Deviation, and t-test were utilized in this study to help to determine the most practiced leadership practices in schools. The mean of the 10-Point Likert Scale (5.5) was determined such that < 5.5 = less regular use of the behavior and > 5.5= more frequent use of the behavior. A t-test statistics was used to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question One: To what extent do secondary school principals self-perceive their leadership practices using Kouzes and Posner LPI?

Research question one addressed extent of secondary school principals’ self perceived leadership practices using Kouzes and Posner LPI. Responses of principals on their perceived leadership practices were used to answer research question one. Summary of the mean ratings and standard deviations were shown in Table 1 below:
Table 1: Means and Standard Deviation of the five Dimensions of the LPI Scale (Principals’ Responses on their Self Perceived Leadership Practices)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Means</th>
<th>Standard Deviation (SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model the Way</td>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>0.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspire a Shared Vision</td>
<td>7.72</td>
<td>0.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenge the Process</td>
<td>6.02</td>
<td>0.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enable Others to Act</td>
<td>6.40</td>
<td>0.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage the Heart</td>
<td>5.80</td>
<td>0.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LPI Grand Mean</strong></td>
<td><strong>6.58</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.58</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From Table 1, all the five dimensions of the leadership scale have means above the acceptable means of 5.5 with a grand mean of 6.58 and SD of 0.58. This is an indication that the principals perceived that they are more frequent in the use of the leadership practices as measured by Kouzes and Posner LPI.

Research Question Two: To what extent do secondary school teachers perceive leadership practices of their principals using Kouzes and Posner LPI?

Responses of teachers on their perceived leadership practices of their principals were used to answer research question two. Summary of the mean ratings and standard deviations were shown in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Means and Standard Deviation of the five Dimensions of the LPI Scale (Teachers’ Responses on Observed Leadership Practices of Principals)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Means</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model the Way</td>
<td>5.16</td>
<td>0.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspire a Shared Vision</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenge the Process</td>
<td>5.92</td>
<td>0.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enable Others to Act</td>
<td>5.39</td>
<td>0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage the Heart</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>0.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LPI Grand Mean</strong></td>
<td><strong>5.11</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.70</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Analysis in Table 2 revealed that Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Enable Others to Act and Encourage the Heart scored less than 5.5. Only Challenge the Process scored (5.92) which is above the acceptable mean of 5.5. Based on the above mean ratings and the grand mean of 5.11 (<5.5) it means that teacher perceived their principals’ observed leadership practices to be less regular using Kouzes and Posner LPI.

Research Hypothesis

H01: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the perceived leadership practices using Kouzes and Posner LPI.

t-test was used to test whether the differences between the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the perceived leadership practices using Kouzes and Posner LPI is significant. Summary of the t-test analysis for the mean ratings and standard deviations were shown in Table 3 below:

Table 3: Summary of the t-test Analysis for Significant Difference Between the Mean Ratings and SD of the Perceived Leadership Practices of Principals and Teachers in each LPI Dimensions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>-</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>t-cal</th>
<th>t-crit</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>x Principals</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>6.58</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>8.16</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>5.11</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3 showed that there is a significant difference between the mean ratings and standard deviations of the perceived leadership practices of principals and teachers in each LPI dimensions using Kouzes and Posner LPI. This is evidenced by the calculated t value of 8.16 which is independently more than the critical t value of 1.96 at 300 degree of freedom. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference between the perception of principals and teachers on the extent of perceived leadership practices using Kouzes and Posner LPI is rejected. The deduction here was that while the principals perceived that they more frequently use the leadership practices, teachers perceived them as less regular.

**Discussions**

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent of secondary school principals’ leadership practices in Nigeria using the Kouzes and Posner LPI. Data, which addressed research question one, as presented on Table 1 indicated that principals in secondary schools in Aguata Local Government Area in this study believed their leadership practices to be more frequent in each scale of the leadership practices as measured by Kouzes and Posner LPI with their mean ratings between 7.72-5.80 and a grand mean of 6.80. This finding is consistent with Kouzes and Posner (2003), Shannon (2008) and Etheridge (2009), who found high self-reported principals leadership ratings in each of their leadership studies. It would be interesting to conduct a similar study in which a comparative analysis will be done to examine the similarities and differences in the leadership practices of principals in other local government areas of Anambra State.

While researchers like Tirimizi (2002); Kouzes and Posner (2003) found Inspire a Shared Vision to be the lowest of the self-reported norms based on the general population, the findings of the present study showed that principals rated their leadership practices favourably in areas of Inspire a Shared Vision (7.72). By implication, they did not see it as a task which is a welcome development. Moving from an individual vision to a shared vision can be a difficult task for school leaders. According to Kelley, Thornton, and Daughtery (2005:17), “Skilled leaders correctly envision future needs and empower others to share and implement that vision” Notably, leaders who exemplify Inspire a Shared Vision practice are able to develop an ideal and unique image of the future and as they model the way, ‘they say and do what they believe and share valuable information’ (Goewey, 2012). This they do towards high organizational expectations and consequently achieve goals. Shared vision gives people a real sense of purpose that promotes focus (Abu-Tineh, Khasawneh & Omary, 2009). Encourage the Heart was rated lowest (5.80), an indication that the principals do not always help subordinates to feel passionate about their jobs and its importance. It follows that they occasionally exemplify the practice this result is consistent with vitality of Encourage the Heart and should not be studied and not neglected. When leaders encourage their subordinates through recognition and celebration, they inspire them to perform better (Kouzes and Posner, 1995; 2003)

Research question two addressed how teachers perceived their principals’ leadership practices. Their scores for leadership had a grand mean rate of 5.11, which is below 5.5 mean decision point of a 10-point scale. While Challenge the Process had the highest mean rating (5.92), Encourage the Heart had the lowest mean rating (4.10) out of the five areas of leadership practices measured by Kouzes and Posner LPI. Based on the overall mean of the five leadership practices, the teachers, who are close observers of the principals’ leadership practices perceived the principals’ leadership practices relatively low. The disparity in the grand means of the principals and teachers (6.80, Table 1 and 5.11, Table 2 respectively) indicated a possibility that inflation of results could be in play as principals rated themselves based on their perception of their behaviours. These high self-ratings are consistent with what has been referred to as a “Halo Effect” when analyzing self reported data in research (Dixon, 2014). Perception of teachers interestingly, showed a different level of principals’ behaviours and a seemingly realistic description the school climate which the principals may have thought they are practicing. This finding has great implication for the principals because they would by its knowledge try to improve their ability regarding their leadership practices. The result of the t-test analysis revealed that differences in the mean ratings of
both principals and teachers are statistically significant. While this finding confirms Pringle (2004) & Holt (2003) who found from their different studies that subordinates perceived their school administrators as being less engaged in best leadership practices it disagrees with Floyd (1999), who found no significant difference between principals’ self perceived behaviours and teachers’ observed principals’ behaviours. From the teachers’ perception, the principals dislike Encourage the Heart, Inspire a Shared Vision, Model the Way and Enable Others to Act. It therefore, follows that the principals are not really putting in their best efforts and it spells problem for the nation in their efforts to reform and restructure school systems. Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee (2004) noted that effective school leaders are collaborative and highly skilled at influencing others in pursuit of a common organizational goal. Principals who Enable Others to Act build a sense of teamwork and utilize shared decision making to meet the goals of the organization. They understand that the job of the principal cannot be done alone. Therefore, this finding is disturbing when one recalls that principals perceived themselves to be practicing best leadership behaviours. The corollary is therefore, that they are pretending and needs to be checked if secondary education would improve. In essence the current study opens avenue for further research using other factors such as students, school community etc. Most times leaders lack training and exploration in the matter of implementing effective practices in schools.

**Conclusion**

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent of secondary school principals’ leadership practices in Nigeria using the Kouzes and Posner LPI, while controlling with teachers. Currently, there is increased pressure placed upon schools in Nigeria for quality education and the schools reforms and restructuring over the years have focused on the importance of effective principals’ leadership practices. Effective leadership practices for principals are more important than ever for the improvement and better future of secondary schools depend on it. However, Kouzes and Posner LPI, a reliable and widely used tool provides the principals with practical guidance on how to lead as well as practical suggestions on how to act for schools improvement and goal achievement. When principals accurately assess their own leadership practices and determine the effect in their schools, the potential for school improvement will be greater because the knowledge will help principals to increase their effectiveness by reflecting upon their leadership practices. But, there is greater gain when principals reflect on the feedback of others, especially subordinates.

**Recommendations**

Based on the findings and conclusion, it is recommended that:

1. Principals should adopt Kouzes and Posner’s leadership practices and utilize such knowledge to self-manage their behaviours and professional growth and consequently, increase their effectiveness in the schools.
2. Encourage the Heart was rated lowest by both principals and teachers. The leadership practices in that dimension should be deeply studied and not neglected. Principals/school supervisors should pay full attention to these practices.
3. Government and education supervisors should conduct workshops on best leadership practices based on Kouzes and Posner’s leadership practices for practical purposes.
4. Education administrators should use the Kouzes and Posner’s leadership practices as yardstick for principals’ appraisal for promotions.

**References**


