



An Evaluation of Principals' Administrative Strategies for Enhancing School Management in Secondary Schools in Rivers State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study evaluated principals' administrative strategies for enhancing school management in government-owned senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The study formulated three research questions alongside three hypotheses. A descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. A total population of 350 principals, consisting of 241 males and 109 females, was used in the public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. A sample of 140 principals, representing 40% of the population, was selected using a simple random sampling technique. The instrument was a structured questionnaire titled An Evaluation of Principals' Administrative Strategies for Enhancing School Management Questionnaire (AEPASESSMQ), developed by the researchers, and was subjected to validation by two experts in management and evaluation for content modification and correction. The instrument was administered by the researcher with the assistance of trained research assistants. Of 140 instruments administered, all were retrieved, giving a 100% retrieval rate. A reliability coefficient of 0.88 was obtained for the instrument using the Cronbach alpha method. A modified four-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree was used to structure the instrument. Mean and standard deviation served as statistical tools for answering the research questions, while a z-test was used to test the hypotheses at the 0.05 alpha level. The findings of the study revealed that instructional supervision and staff development by principals improve teaching quality, student outcomes, and overall school effectiveness. When principals motivate staff effectively, it leads to increased productivity in lesson delivery and other responsibilities. Also, when principals delegate, it reduces the workload for principals and makes staff feel trusted and more accountable for their duties in government-owned senior secondary schools in Rivers State. Conclusions made include that school management is indispensable for healthy school functioning and the success of educational institutions, and that principals play a key role in this process. Recommendations made include (1) the Ministry of Education should intensify efforts to regularly re-orientate teachers in the various areas of discipline. (2) Principals should always supervise teachers in both content and methodology and make provision for staff development. (3) Principals should learn to motivate teachers and delegate functions; this will make them feel trusted and more accountable for their duties.

Keywords: Administrative Strategies, School Management, Principals, Secondary Schools, Rivers State

Introduction

Globally, there is an ongoing revolution—a transformation in education that will meet the demands of parents, guidance stakeholders in education, and employers of labour. Central to this revolution is visionary leadership, which ensures that educational systems adapt effectively to these changing demands. A visionary administrator demonstrates leadership by developing a clear direction for the future, motivating others to pursue long-term objectives, and steering the organisation towards progress, creativity, and sustainable success. This strategic leadership style adopted by an administrator undoubtedly leads organisations, such as schools, to an enviable standard. This clearly shows that, regardless of the advantages of past practices, new ways and methods are essential for future purposes. There are skills and knowledge that must be acquired by anyone who wishes to introduce innovative measures in educational

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leadership and management. The best educational administrators are professional, committed, and innovation-driven, carrying out their statutory functions effectively to achieve the goals and objectives of education. This is because the entire educational process is evolving and largely depends on effective modern communication to function efficiently. Education acquired through the strategic leadership of administrators empowers students to gain relevant knowledge and skills, think critically, make informed decisions, and improve their quality of life for a competitive advantage. According to Leithwood et al. (2020), successful school leaders establish a shared vision that aligns staff efforts towards common educational goals. This vision helps create coherence within the school system, ensuring that teaching practices, curriculum implementation, and assessment strategies are all geared towards improving student outcomes. Without such leadership, even highly qualified teachers may lack coordination, resulting in inefficiencies and reduced effectiveness.

The principal plays a pivotal role in the administration and management of secondary schools in the digital age. As the head of the school, the principal is responsible for coordinating academic activities, supervising staff, allocating resources, and ensuring the effective integration of digital technologies into teaching and learning. Rapid technological advancement has transformed the educational system, expanding principals' responsibilities from conventional administration to digital leadership and innovation management. According to Leithwood et al. (2020), effective school leadership greatly enhances students' academic performance through proper supervision, teacher motivation, and organisational development. Principals who utilise digital technologies are better positioned to improve instructional processes and help schools adapt to emerging educational changes. In the same vein, Fullan (2014) maintained that educational leaders must direct technological change in schools by promoting teamwork, innovation, and continuous professional development among teachers. Bush (2020) further explained that principals function as the principal coordinating officers in schools, linking educational policies with teachers, students, parents, and the wider community to achieve school objectives. In contemporary school administration, principals are expected to possess digital skills that enable them to supervise virtual learning, manage school information systems, and facilitate the effective use of information and communication technology (ICT). In addition, the knowledge society demands school leaders with cutting-edge skills to improve students' outcomes and overall school performance. Skilled administrators enhance decision-making processes within schools.

The administrative effectiveness of principals directly influences school performance. Strong leadership and strategic management in schools foster creativity and innovation, enhance the quality of educational delivery, and improve productivity. In the past, school management was primarily concerned with administrative control and supervision. Robinson et al. (2008) found that leadership practices focused on promoting and participating in teacher learning and development have a significant impact on student achievement. This highlights the importance of administrators who not only manage but also understand instructional practices and support continuous professional development. Scholars maintain that the success of school management should not be attributed solely to principals, as effective school administration depends on the collective efforts of teachers, non-teaching staff, students, and other stakeholders. Gronn (2002) stated that effective school management is not solely dependent on the principal but on the combined contributions of teachers, non-teaching staff, students, and other stakeholders within the school system. He explained that school leadership should be viewed as a collective responsibility, in which individuals work together by contributing their ideas, skills, and experiences towards the realisation of educational goals and objectives. According to him, cooperation and shared participation among members of the school community promote effective decision-making, organisational efficiency, and improved school performance.

As a matter of fact, one of the core corporate social responsibilities of every responsible government is to ensure that its citizens acquire the right education in order to build a society where everyone can thrive. One of the objectives of post-primary education, as mentioned in the education policy framework, is to equip the child with the right thinking skills to fit adequately into societal needs and to contribute meaningfully to the development of society. These laudable goals cannot be achieved in school management if the principal takes a casual approach to his job function. Post-primary education is obtained after primary schooling and occupies a critical position in child upbringing, serving as a bridge between foundational learning and higher learning. As a result, the principal's role as an instructional leader cannot be overemphasised. A principal must be both proactive and innovative to ensure that the objectives of post-primary education are effectively accomplished. To support this, Fullan (2014) notes that effective school leaders initiate change and create conditions that support continuous improvement. By setting clear goals, monitoring

academic progress, and supporting teachers through professional development, principals can significantly enhance student outcomes.

At this point, effective school management becomes essential, and the principal, as the chief executive officer, occupies a central position in ensuring quality and equity within the school system. School management in secondary schools is an essential element of an effective educational system, as it ensures that teaching, learning, and administrative processes function in a coordinated and purposeful manner. Central to this progress are school administrators, principals, vice-principals, and other leaders. An organisation such as a school is regarded as effective when there is strong teamwork and collaboration among staff, students, and administration. A principal cannot manage a school alone; he needs the support of others towards a common goal. The school administrator drives the promotion of this collaboration, which emphasises shared decision-making and collective responsibility. Effective principals involve teachers in decision-making processes. He sets the tone by promoting shared goals and encouraging unity among staff. As Helen Keller stated, "Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much", emphasising that collective effort yields greater results. Similarly, Schmoker notes that "collaboration allows teachers to capture each other's collective intelligence," highlighting that shared knowledge improves teaching and learning outcomes. In a related development, Hoerr (2016) explains that schools succeed when teachers and administrators "learn with and from one another," rather than working in isolation. Therefore, principals must foster positive interpersonal relationships within the school.

Effective school management involves coordinating and overseeing educational resources through planning, organising, directing, and controlling to achieve set objectives. The administrative strategies of principals in managing secondary schools are crucial tools for enhancing efficiency and effectiveness. These strategies include instructional supervision and staff development, staff motivation, delegation of authority and responsibility, crisis and conflict management, and communication and decision-making. According to Drucker (2007), management is fundamentally about achieving objectives through people and resources efficiently. In the school context, this translates into administrators coordinating teachers, students, facilities, and policies to ensure optimal outcomes. Similarly, Leithwood et al. (2008) emphasise that school leaders significantly influence students' achievements by shaping school conditions, including curriculum, implementation, and teacher effectiveness. Bush (2018) notes that school management directly influences the effectiveness of instructional and learning processes by creating an environment in which educators can perform efficiently and learners can succeed academically. Principals are responsible for managing the school, providing teaching programmes that meet certain academic standards, and offering professional opportunities for teachers to enhance their competencies and understanding through skills development and workshops. They are also responsible for implementing quality assurance measures to ensure high standards of teaching and learning, providing leadership in instructional matters, including monitoring classroom instruction, conducting classroom observations, and providing feedback to teachers, among others. The school system offers a structured learning environment through its curriculum, skilled teachers, and assessment techniques. The true impact of education depends on how school administrators manage schools and how learners put their learning into practice in real-world settings. School administrators play a crucial role in shaping the academic environment through effective planning, leadership, and supervision, ensuring that educational objectives are successfully accomplished.

Ingersoll and Strong (2011) highlight that supportive leadership, including mentoring and induction programmes, significantly improves teacher retention and effectiveness. Skilled administrators create conducive working environments in which educators feel valued and committed, thereby enhancing overall school performance. Furthermore, effective administrators foster a supportive school environment and culture. A well-managed school environment encourages collaboration, trust, and open communication among staff and students. Day et al. (2016) argue that leadership influences not only academic outcomes but also the emotional and social climate of the school. Administrators who demonstrate strong interpersonal and leadership skills can build relationships that promote teamwork and collective responsibility, which are essential for organisational success. Effective school administrators formulate policies that promote discipline, motivate teachers, and provide the resources necessary for quality teaching and learning. Additionally, well-managed schools create an environment that promotes creativity, innovation, and active participation. This improves students' capacity to absorb and use what they have learned. Conversely, weak administration can limit teaching effectiveness and learning outcomes. High-quality management engenders good education, and good education creates a sustainable future and improves the quality of the school system. Effective school leadership, coupled with practical application, ensures that education realises its transformative purpose.

Today's school leadership demands that school administrators be knowledgeable and able to apply administrative processes to effective school management. A school is an organisation characterised by human beings, and the school administrator, with his unique training, must recognise and respect the work and dignity of the human person in his relationships with academic and non-academic staff, as well as students/pupils (Abraham, 2003). The principalship is a position of great responsibility. The central responsibility of educational leaders is to sustain and strengthen the school system. Thus, success or failure depends on how effectively the principal acts as an efficient or inefficient school administrator. The principal must exercise intelligence to pilot the affairs of the school and reposition it for better, optimal productivity. A school is of no value if the principal is not proactive in discharging his statutory functions as a leader. It takes a principal with critical thinking to solve problems in school. As an administrator, the principal must possess essential skills to manage the school effectively. These skills include administrative, supervisory, and critical thinking skills, a commitment to hard work, high emotional intelligence, and knowledge of the subject matter. Coleman et al. (2009) affirmed that cognitive intelligence gains enable principals to process information quickly, solve problems efficiently, and make sound judgments. Similarly, Leithwood et al. (2004) state that high levels of cognitive ability enable principals to analyse complex data, identify patterns, and develop effective strategies to address students' achievement gaps. From a practical standpoint, the principal's role as a pivotal figure in shaping educational outcomes is widely acknowledged. While a plethora of leadership qualities and competences are essential for effective school management, the significance of intelligence as a contributing factor has often been debated. However, studies have shown that intelligence is positively correlated with leadership effectiveness in various domains (Mulford et al., 2000).

According to Azowa and Tantia (2020), school management practices are the moral guidelines and strategies expected of school administrators in carrying out their statutory duties in line with educational regulations. In general, management practices provide guidelines for appropriate behaviour within institutional settings, in both strategic planning and routine operations. In school settings, these procedures include all aspects of workplace conduct instituted by the school administrator and other school leaders to ensure effective school management. According to Jones et al. (2020), school management approaches shape the behaviour of those within the school system by clarifying the rules and limits that guide behaviour. They articulate the core viewpoints and priorities of the school system in specific terms. They also detail actions that are not permitted and serve as a legal guide for the school. Effective school management has become the only viable approach to providing qualitative and functional education, particularly for less developed countries (LCDs). This is precisely because resources are not only scarce, but the needs for education are growing in both scope and magnitude. A more effective way of meeting as much of this demand as possible within the constraints of meagre and dwindling resources is to commit to education. The basic process of managing the educational system takes place within organised units like the school. However, school management practices, according to Chris (2019), refer to strategies and activities that make things more satisfactory, faster, or more affordable. They drive improvement and performance and may help usher in new ideas that change existing rules. The fundamental premise or major objective of administrative strategies of the principal is to rejuvenate inputs, processes, and outputs; they bring about the introduction of ideas and practices in the school system. For the long-term sustainability of the school, management is necessary to execute tasks in an orderly manner.

Instructional supervision and staff development.

Instructional supervision and staff development by the principals improve teaching quality, students' outcomes and overall school effectiveness. The principal's instructional leadership is an essential aspect of effective school management.

It is concerned with enhancing teaching and learning process that directly impacts students outcomes. It is a complex construct encompassing variety dimensions including:

- Goals and aspiration: Articulating a well-defined and inspiring vision for the school, aligning it with broader educational tools.
- Curriculum and instruction: As the name imply it involves developing and implementing a rigorous and relevant curriculum, supporting teachers to effective instructional practices.

Assessment: Using assessment data to inform instruction in their work. According to Hallinger (2011), instructional leadership is a cornerstone of effective school management. Through it, leaders can significantly impact students' achievement, teacher morale, and overall school effectiveness. School leaders are strong thinkers who improve not only students but also promote administrative practices that support teachers. Effective principals play an essential

role in ensuring the successful implementation of the curriculum. They provide clear guidelines, monitor instructional practices, and offer support to teachers. Similarly, Lash and Wang (2002) state that principals must possess certain skills to carry out the tasks of academic leadership, including analytical and assessment skills, classroom monitoring skills, strategic planning abilities, and communication skills. They further stress that communication skills build trust, increase motivation, and improve staff cooperation. Supervision is very important for the well-being of any organisation. It is pertinent to note that whenever an organisation is set up to achieve goals, the concept of supervision comes into play. This is because, without well-organised school supervision, school quality may be compromised. School supervision is one of the key aspects of the administrative process that deals with the efforts of administrators in monitoring, guiding, and directing the activities of staff members to ensure operational efficiency (Amadi, 2021).

Engaging teachers and other staff members in development programmes enhances their job performance and optimises productivity. Continuous capacity-building programmes provide teachers with opportunities to enhance their pedagogical skills, foster critical thinking, and cultivate timeless creativity to perform at their best. Principals who invest in teacher training are more likely to achieve positive results, as this is a sure way to produce highly motivated teachers who can cater for the needs of the school system. To support this, Amadi (2021) states that professional development is a personnel function of the school administration which assists in identifying their potential, so as to raise their professional standards. For a competitive advantage, organisations like schools must seek the right calibre of workforce that are experienced and technically efficient to pilot the affairs of the school for the attainment of organisational goals. Similarly, Quint (2011) asserts that continuous capacity-building programmes are formal in-service training that furnish teachers with opportunities to enhance their pedagogical skills. Basically, staff development programmes are value-driven and have become an innovative way for teachers to become a better version of themselves than they were yesterday. They increase organisational efficiency and effectiveness. Amin (2013) affirms that training (staff development) is a systematic way of acquiring knowledge on how an employee should do their job creditably. Nevertheless, Nwabueze (2011) outlined the benefits of training and development for teaching staff to include:

1. Career productivity
2. Increased productivity
3. High morale standard
4. Managerial development
5. Improvement in existing skills

The above clarifies that regular staff development programmes for teachers improve standards in their job function, produce changes in instructional teachers' practices, and serve as a motivating factor for job performance, as well as the acquisition of skills and knowledge that prepare individuals for increased responsibilities in the future.

Staff motivation and delegation of authority.

Motivation is the process that arouses, directs and sustains behaviour towards the achievement of an expected goal. When principals motivate staff effectively, it leads to increased productivity in lesson delivery and other responsibilities. Teacher motivation can be influenced by external factors such as salary increases, job security, allowances, training, workshops and bonuses, which are extrinsic. When teachers are motivated by passion for their assigned tasks, this is intrinsic motivation. As observed by Herzberg (1968) in his two-factor theory, hygiene factors (dissatisfiers) and motivators (satisfiers) play distinct roles. Herzberg maintained that organisations should avoid anything that makes an employee feel bad about their job. Hygiene factors include pay, company policies, working conditions and job security. Motivators (satisfiers) undoubtedly increase motivation and job satisfaction when they are present. These factors make people work harder and feel fulfilled. When administrators recognise teachers' efforts and provide capacity-building programmes, teachers are more likely to feel their jobs are valued and to be committed to the school's goals. On the other hand, delegation of authority refers to the process through which a school administrator delegates duties to subordinates. A school principal alone cannot perform all the tasks assigned to them. To meet targets, the administrator should delegate authority. A school administrator who gives teachers meaningful responsibilities fosters a motivating workplace of trust, teamwork and excellence. According to Yukl (2013), effective delegation enhances employee competence and confidence by providing opportunities for skill development and participation in decision-making processes. In the classroom context, when teachers are assigned workloads such as course design and team leadership, they feel valued as professionals whose contributions matter. Furthermore, delegation contributes to improved school management by promoting collaboration and distributed leadership. Leadership in schools is most effective when it is distributed across multiple actors rather than centralised in one

individual (Spillane, 2006). By involving teachers in leadership roles, principals create a more inclusive, participatory environment that improves decision quality and organisational responsiveness. Conversely, a lack of delegation can leave teachers feeling tired and limit their capacity to gain more experience in their roles. Duncan (2009) emphasises that delegation is important for developing subordinates to fill future managerial positions, strengthening prospects for adequate vertical coordination. Furthermore, delegating authority helps reduce job stress, allowing the administrator to focus energy on important and critical issues.

Despite the importance of principals' administrative strategies in maintaining healthy school functioning, public schools in Rivers State still face obstacles such as incompetent leadership, deteriorating academic performance, low staff morale, and teachers' limited participation in decision-making. Although strategies such as supervision, participation in decision-making, incentivization, and empowering teachers with responsibilities exist, many principals struggle to apply them effectively, often showing weak leadership and limited stakeholder involvement. In view of these problems, the researcher considered it imperative to conduct this study to evaluate principals' administrative strategies for enhancing school management in senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

The study aimed to evaluate principals' administrative strategies for enhancing school management in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. Specifically, the study was designed to:

1. Assess the extent to which principals' administrative strategy practices enhance school management in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.
2. Examine how principals' instructional supervision and staff development practices enhance school management in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.
3. Investigate how staff motivation and delegation of authority by principals enhance school management in public junior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Research Questions

1. To what extent do principals' administrative strategies and practices enhance school management in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?
2. How do principals' instructional supervision and staff development practices enhance school management in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?
3. How do principals' staff motivation and delegation of authority enhance school management in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?

The study was guided by the following hypotheses, tested at the 0.05 level of significance.

H0₁: There is no statistically significant difference between the male and female principals regarding the extent to which principals' administrative strategies and practices enhance school management in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

H0₂: There is no statistically significant difference between male and female principals' perceptions of principals' instructional supervision and staff development in enhancing effective school management in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

H0₃: There is no statistically significant difference in the mean score of male and female principals on how staff motivation and delegation of authority enhance school management in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The study population comprised all 350 principals in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The sample comprised 140 principals, selected using simple random sampling, representing 40% of the population. The instrument used for data collection was a self-structured questionnaire titled "An Evaluation of Principals' Administrative Strategies for Enhancing School Management Questionnaire (AEPASESSMQ)." Two experts in Measurement and Evaluation validated the instrument. The researcher administered the instrument with the assistance of trained research assistants. Of the 140 instruments administered, all were retrieved, resulting in a 100% retrieval rate. The researcher established the instrument's internal consistency using Cronbach's alpha, obtaining a reliability coefficient of 0.88. The instrument was based on a modified

four-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). The data obtained were analyzed using mean, standard deviation, and rank order to answer the research questions. The criterion mean for acceptance was 2.50; any mean score below 2.50 was regarded as disagreement. Furthermore, z-test statistics were employed to test the hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance in order to determine differences in respondents' mean scores.

Results

Table 1: Extent on how principals' administrative strategies enhance school management in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

s/n	Items	Males		Females		Mean set	Decision
		M	Std	M	Std		
1	Proactive in conflict management and resolution	2.88	.52	3.23	.48	3.06	Agreed
2	Open communication	2.84	.70	3.09	.47	2.97	Agreed
3	Delegation of duties and staff motivation	2.90	.37	3.11	.39	3.00	Agreed
4	Flexibility and adaptability	2.88	.39	3.14	.51	3.01	Agreed
5	Mentoring approach	3.03	.17	3.13	.68	3.08	Agreed
	Cluster mean and standard deviation	2.91	0.43	3.14	0.51	3.02	Agreed

Data in Table 1 show that items 1 to 5 have mean values of 3.06, 2.96, 3.00, 3.01 and 3.08, respectively, above the criterion mean of 2.50, and that respondents agreed on the extent to which principals' administrative strategies and practices enhance school management in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. Principals' administrative strategies and practices enhance school management in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State through proactive conflict management and resolution, open communication, delegation of duties and staff motivation, flexibility and adaptability, and a mentoring approach.

Table 2: How principals' instructional supervision and staff development practices enhance school management in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State

s/n	Items	Males		Females		Mean set	Decision
		M	Std	M	Std		
1	Continuous growth	2.97	.75	3.16	.71	3.07	Agreed
2	Increase teachers' capability	2.66	.75	3.32	.56	2.99	Agreed
3	Improving instructional quality and students outcome	2.94	.68	3.09	.52	3.02	Agreed
4	Pedagogical innovation	2.89	.67	2.43	.55	2.66	Agreed
5	Mentoring approach	3.05	.49	2.50	.66	2.78	Agreed
	Cluster mean and standard deviation	2.90	0.67	2.90	0.60	2.90	Agreed

Table 2 shows that items 1 to 5 have mean values of 3.07, 2.99, 3.02, 2.66 and 2.78, respectively, above the criterion mean of 2.50, and were agreed by respondents to indicate that principals' instructional supervision and staff development practices enhance school management in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. These practices enhance school management through continuous growth, increased teachers' capabilities, improved instructional quality and student outcomes, pedagogical innovation, and mentoring approaches.

Table 3: mean and standard deviation on how staff motivation and delegation of authority of principals enhance school management in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

s/n	Items	Males		Females		Mean set	Decision
		M	Std	M	Std		
1	Boost teachers moral	3.10	.39	2.48	.79	2.79	High Extent
2	Increase in productivity	1.51	.50	2.91	.29	2.21	High Extent
3	Pedagogical innovation skill	2.79	.59	3.23	.52	3.01	High Extent
4	Enhance collaboration and trust	3.04	.48	2.89	.44	2.97	High Extent
5	Increase in high level of commitment	3.07	.44	3.09	.52	3.08	High Extent
	Cluster mean and standard deviation	2.70	0.48	2.92	0.51	2.81	High Extent

Table 3 shows that items 1 to 5 have mean values of 2.79, 2.21, 3.01, 2.97 and 3.08, respectively. The cluster mean of 2.81 indicates that staff motivation and the delegation of authority to principals, to a high extent, enhanced school management in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 4: t-test calculation of the mean difference between the mean scores of male and female principals on the extent to which principals' administrative strategies enhance school management in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Variables	N	M	Std	Df	t-val	Sig.	Decision
Males	96	2.91	0.43	138	9.96	.00	significant
Females	44	3.14	0.51				

Table 4 shows that the male principals have mean and standard deviation scores of M=2.91 and Std=0.48, while the female principals have mean and standard deviation scores of M=3.14 and Std=0.51, respectively. With a degree of freedom of 138 and a t-test value of 9.96, the hypothesis is rejected because the significance value of .00 is less than the probability value of .05. Therefore, there is a significant difference between the mean scores of male and female principals regarding the extent to which principals' administrative strategies enhance school management in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 5: t-test calculation of the mean difference between the mean scores of male and female principals on how principals' instructional supervision and staff development enhance school management in senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Variables	N	M	Std	Df	t-val	Sig.	Decision
Males	96	2.90	0.67	138	.071	.94	Not significant
Females	44	2.90	0.60				

Table 5 shows that the male principals have mean and standard deviation scores of M=2.90 and Std=0.67, while the female principals have mean and standard deviation scores of M=2.90 and Std=0.60, respectively. With a degree of freedom of 138 and a t-test value of .071, the hypothesis is not rejected because the significant value of .071 is greater than the probability value of .94. Therefore, there is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female principals on how instructional supervision and staff development enhance school management in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 6: t-test calculation of the mean difference in the mean scores of male and female principals on how staff motivation and delegation of authority by principals enhance school management in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Variables	N	M	Std	Df	t-val	Sig.	P-val	Decision
Males	96	2.70	0.48	138	4.74	.000	.05	significant
Females	44	2.92	0.51					

Table 6 shows that the male principals have mean and standard deviation scores of $M=2.70$ and $Std=0.48$, while the female principals have mean and standard deviation scores of $M=2.92$ and $Std=0.51$, respectively. With a degree of freedom of 138 and a t-test value of 4.74, the hypothesis is rejected because the significance value of .00 is less than the probability value of .05. Therefore, there is a significant difference between the mean scores of male and female principals regarding how staff motivation and delegation of authority by principals enhance school management in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Discussion

The principal plays a central role in the administration and management of secondary schools in the digital age. As the head of the school, the principal is responsible for coordinating academic activities, supervising staff, allocating resources, and ensuring the effective integration of digital technologies into teaching and learning. Rapid technological advancement has transformed the educational system, thereby expanding the responsibilities of principals from conventional administration to digital leadership and innovation management. Analyses presented in Table 1 indicate that respondents agreed that principals' administrative strategies and practices enhance school management in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. This aligns with Leithwood et al. (2020), who argue that effective school leadership greatly contributes to students' academic performance through proper supervision, teacher motivation, and organisational development. Gronn (2002) contends that effective school management is not solely dependent on the principal but on the combined contributions of teachers, non-teaching staff, students, and other stakeholders within the school system. He explains that school leadership should be viewed as a collective responsibility, in which individuals work together by contributing their ideas, skills, and experiences towards the realisation of educational goals and objectives. According to him, cooperation and shared participation among members of the school community promote effective decision-making, organisational efficiency, and improved school performance.

Instructional supervision and staff development by the principals improve teaching quality, students outcomes and overall school effectiveness. The principal instructional leadership is essential aspect of effective school management. It is concerned with enhancing the teaching and learning process, which directly impacts students' outcomes. It is a complex construct encompassing a variety of dimensions, including goals and aspirations: articulating a well-defined and inspiring vision for the school and aligning it with broader educational goals. The results of the analyses presented in Table 2 showed that respondents agreed that instructional supervision and staff development enhance school management in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The study was in agreement with Hallinger (2011), who stated that instructional leadership is a cornerstone of effective school management. Through it, leaders can significantly impact students' achievement, teacher morale, and overall school effectiveness. Leaders in schools are great thinkers who improve not only students but also promote administrative practices that support teachers. Effective principals play an essential role in ensuring the successful implementation of the curriculum. They provide clear guidelines, monitor instructional practices, and offer support to teachers. Lash and Wang (2002) argued that principals must possess certain skills to carry out the tasks of academic leadership, including analytical and assessment skills, classroom monitoring skills, strategic planning abilities, and communication skills. They further stressed that communication skills build trust, increase motivation, and improve staff cooperation.

Motivation and delegation of authority are indispensable tools for enhancing productivity in school management. When principals motivate and delegate responsibilities, staff feel recognised and are encouraged to give their best for the overall well-being of the organisation, leading to increased productivity in lesson delivery and other duties. Teacher motivation can stem from external factors such as salary increases, job security, allowances, training, workshops, and bonuses, which are extrinsic, and from the passion teachers have for their assigned tasks, which is intrinsic motivation. A school principal alone cannot perform all the tasks assigned to them. To meet targets, the administrator should delegate authority. A school administrator who gives teachers meaningful responsibilities fosters a motivating workplace of trust, teamwork, and excellence. The analyses presented in Table 3 revealed that

respondents agreed to a high extent that motivation and delegation of authority enhance school management in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. This is in agreement with Leithwood et al. (2020), who contended that principals who delegate responsibilities and empower teachers tend to build greater staff commitment, which in turn enhances overall school improvement. Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2018) argued that teachers are motivated when school leaders adopt supportive management practices. They note that practices such as acknowledging teachers' efforts, empowering them in decision-making, and encouraging shared responsibility contribute significantly to higher job satisfaction. In turn, this improved motivation enhances teachers' overall performance and effectiveness in the school environment. Firestone and Martinez (2014) argued that when delegation is introduced in schools without sufficient teacher preparation or with poorly defined leadership roles, it may create confusion and reduce efficiency instead of improving school performance. A school is considered effective in achieving its goals and objectives when the presence of employees is valued and respected.

Conclusion

The foregoing pages establish that principals' roles in enhanced school management are not just an ethical imperative, but also a strategic instrument for school success. Through instructional supervision and staff development, staff motivation, and delegation of authority, they build strong teamwork and collaboration to enhance instructional service delivery in school. Without competent skills of administrators, schools are unlikely to maintain a healthy organisational climate.

Recommendations

1. The Ministry of Education should regularly engage school principals in capacity-building programmes because of their strategic position as the chief executive officers of the school.
2. Principals should monitor teachers' lesson delivery closely and also make provision for training and workshops to enable them to carry out their job functions effectively.
3. Principals should learn how to motivate and delegate duties to teachers; this will make them feel trusted and become more accountable for their duties.

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