

**PRINCIPALS' LEADERSHIP PRACTICES FOR GOAL
ATTAINMENT IN PUBLIC SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN
RIVERS STATE.**

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Abstract

The study examined principals Leadership practices for goal attainment in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. Three research questions and three corresponding hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. A sample size of 86 representing 30% was drawn from a population of 258 principals in Rivers State, using stratified sampling technique. An 18 items validated instrument titled; principals leadership practices for goal attainment questionnaire. (PLPGAQ) was used for data collection. The test re-test method was used to obtain the reliability of the instrument. The reliability coefficient was established at 0.71. The mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while the mean was used to test the hypotheses. The findings revealed that principals' decision-making, instructional-supervision and transformational leadership practices enhance teachers performance and students academic achievement in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. it was inter-alia recommended that Rivers State government should partner with school principals to ensure that there is shared decision-making in secondary schools and effective supervision of instruction. A principals should also be transformational leaders.

Keywords: Principal, leadership, goal attainment, Education, decision-making.

Introduction

Education is seen as an important means of transmitting the skills and knowledge needed by individuals to participate in the society. It is also required in the contribution to the development of a country's economic, political and social development. In the secondary school level of education, the principal is the head. It is also the responsibility of the principals to provide the appropriate leadership practices which entails effective administration of the school.

Principals leadership practices are directly related to interaction between teachers and students, decision making, teaching and learning, and the entire administration of the school administrators ensure that the aim and objectives of establishing the institution is achieved. School goal attainment is geared towards ensuring that the quality of output is standard. To this end, principals need to provide the appropriate leadership practices that will help them realize or attain this goal. To this end, there is the need to examine the leadership practices needed for goal attainment in secondary schools.

Leadership is a major factor in the success or failure of school organization. It is a function of fellowship and followership. The school administrator as a leader is given the responsibility of coordinating and directing the activities of the school towards accomplishing set goals. Leadership according to Stogdill (1950) as cited in Abraham (2013:63) is "the process of influencing the activities of an organized group toward goal setting and goal achievement". Lipham (1964) as cited in Abraham (2013:63) defined leadership as "the initiation of a new structure or procedure for accomplishing an organization's goals and objectives or for changing an organization's goals and objectives.

From the above definitions, it is seen that leadership positions come with power and influence. This power and influence is important in coordinating and directing, decision-making, instructional supervision and the entire transformation of the organization towards goal attainment.

Decision making is also very important in secondary school administration. The principal as the head of the institution should ensure that his decision making leadership practice impacts positively in the students' academic performance and the entire administration process.

Wahstron, Louis, Leithwood and Anderson (2010) as cited in Gohmann study found that sharing decision making and distributing leadership impacts students outcomes. Meaning that there is leadership distribution and sharing of responsibilities, the greater the capacity of all individuals within the school. Heck and Hallinger (2009) as cited in Gohlmann (2018:48) also found that shared-making had a positive impact on the quality of student outcomes and that the reverse was the case in schools without shared decision making.

Furthermore, Hitt and Tucker (2016) as cited in Gohlmann (2018) indicated that shared decision-making not only allows for input from the varied perspectives of teachers but also creates a mechanism for teacher development. According to the duo, teachers who are involved in decision-making can see how their input is implemented and learn from the ultimate results of these shared decisions.

Also, Abraham (2013:84) stated that “it has been found that participative decision –making stands out as the best way to achieve effectiveness and compliance in the school organization”. He further noted that when teachers participate in decision-making, their satisfaction with the teaching profession is positively boosted. Supporting Hoy and Miskel (1987:338) as cited in Abraham (2013:84) stated that “the opportunity to share in formulating policies is an important factors in the moral of teachers and in their enthusiasm for the school organization. So, sharing decision-making or participative decision making not only results in better decisions, but also bolds the capacity of teachers and other leaders in the schools organizations, which in turns positively influences educational goals attainment. And this will result in higher students achievement.

Instructional leadership practices according to Onyali and Akinfolarin (2017) entail ensuring high quality teaching and learning by supervising instructional programme and ensuring effective use of instructional time to foster the attainment of educational goals and objectives.

Similarly, Onuma (2016) as cited in Onyali and Akinfolarin (2017:33) stated that “principal has the primary functions of exhibiting effective instructional leadership practices for the improvement of diversified curriculum and quality of instructional programme for effective attainment of educational goals”.

Again, Nnebedum and Akinfolarin (2017) as cited in Onyali and Akinfolarin (2017:34) are of the view that instructional supervision is the actions taken to

mentor and monitor subordinates or teachers and provide supportive and conducive atmosphere for improvement on the instructional process. Sule, Ameh and Egbai (2015) as cited in Onyali and Akinfolarin (2017:34) stated that “Principals” supervision of instruction practices include; checking of teachers’ lesson notes, scheme of work, students’ notes, teachers’ punctuality, teachers’ regularity in class, classroom observation, moderation of examination papers and marketing schemes among others”. According to them instructional supervision practices help to ensure that instructional delivery is painstakingly planned, effectively executed and properly radiated. The principals ensure that instructional time is managed to ensure that instructional time is not interrupted by other school activities which are not related to the instructional process (Mohammed & Muhammad, 2011 as cited Onyali & Akinfolarin, 2017).

It is therefore, the duty of school principals to ensure quality and timely instructional delivery to facilitate school effectiveness through supervision and time management to foster coverage of scheme of work. The principals’ personal observation of teachers will help to eliminate cases of inadequate coverage of scheme of work, teachers persistent lateness, missing of their class lessons, absenteeism and truancy among students in secondary schools. In this direction, Olele (1995) as cited in Nnadijeze and Ebete 2014:275) stated that;

It is the duty of the principal to oversee the running of the school in terms of staff and student welfare, development and implementation of proper instruction, school-community relations, discipline and proper keeping of school records. Others include student admissions, proper documentation of school finances and the creation of a conducive learning atmosphere.

When leadership in an organization is effective, there is progress, however when the leadership is defective, the organization declines and decays. Purkey and Smith (1983) as cited in Osagie and Momoh (2016:18) noted that in order to build strong teacher commitment towards the realization of school goals, principals must provide strong, directive leadership in setting and developing school goals, creating a unity of purpose, facilitating communication and managing instruction. Scheerens and Creemers (1989) as cited in Osagie and Momoh (2016:18) is also of the view that strong leadership embodied in the principal is instrumental in setting the time of the school.

Burns (1978) as cited in Osagie and Momoh (2016:19) described transformational leadership as the process by which leaders affect radical change in the outlook and behavior of followers. Bass (1985) as cited in Osagie and Momoh (2016) stated that a transformational leader as one who motivates followers to do more than they were originally expected to do. According to him transformational leaders influence others to transcend their own self-interest for the good of others, the organization, or country.

Also, Haters and Bass (1988) as cited in Osagie and Momoh (2016:19) noted that “transformational leaders are responsible for performance beyond expectations as they transit a sense of mission, stimulate learning experiences and arouse new ways of thinking”, supporting the above statement, Howell and Avolio (1993) as cited in Osagie and Momoh (2016) agreed that those display leadership that is transformational contribute positively to the achievement or attainment of business or unit goals. Yammarino (1994) as cited in Osagie and Momoh (2016:19) confirmed that a transformational leader is one that motivate followers to do more than they are expected to do in a way that upgrades the individual’s level of awareness of the importance and value of outputs and how they are produced.

Avalio, Waldma and Yammarino (1991) as cited in Osagie and Momoh (2016:19) highlighted a description of transformational behaviours as; Charisma, idealized influence, inspirational motivation, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation.

Indeed school principals are required to adopt appropriate leadership practice aimed at creating a collaborative working environment. The conducive collaborative working environment will result to higher productivity, increase student achievement and effective goal attainment.

Statement of the Problem

The basic goal for the establishment of secondary school is for effective teaching and learning which in turn leads to effective students academic achievement. School leadership are recognized as the foremost objective of school reforms and restructuring efforts that has both direct and indirect impact on students achievement. It seems that effective leadership practice develops school climate and culture that help both the teachers and learners in creating better teaching and learning environments which are more conducive to her level of students achievement. It is also perceived that school

administrators need to promote an environment of participation in decision making transformational leadership for the attainment of educational goal and objectives, the attainment of educational goal is dependent in the leadership practice adopted.

However, some people are of the opinion that the causation of low or high academic achievement is unending, as some factors like, self-esteem, emotional problem, study habits, poverty of the students, their parents, families, communities and environment may be responsible. Based on this controversies, the study examined the extent to which principals leadership practice leads to goal attainment in public secondary schools.

Aim and objectives of the study

The aim of this study was to examine principals leadership practices for goal attainment in public secondary schools in Rivers State. The specific objectives were to;

- 1) Determine the extent to which principals decision making leadership practice influences goal attainment in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.
- 2) Assess the ways that principal's instructional leadership practice influence educational goal attainment in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.
- 3) Find out how principals transformational leadership practice affect educational goal attainment in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Research questions

The following research questions were answered.

1. To what extent does principals decision-making leadership practice influence educational goal attainment in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.
2. In what ways do principals instructional leadership practice influence educational goal attainment in senior secondary schools in Rivers State?
3. How does principals transformational leadership practice affect educational goal attainment in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested

- 1) There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on the extent to which principals decision-making leadership practice influences goal attainment in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.
- 2) There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on the ways that principals instructional supervision leadership practice influences goal attainment in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.
- 3) There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on how principals transformational leadership practice affects goal attainment in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. A sample size of 86 representing 30% were drawn from a population of 258 principals using stratified sampling technique. An instrument titled principal leadership practices for goal attainment in secondary schools questionnaire (PLPGASSQ) was used for data collection. The instrument contains 18 items and designed to elicit information from research questions. It is patterned according to modified likert scale of strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and strongly Disagree (SD).

Validity of instrument was ascertained y using the professional critique of experts in educational measurement and evaluation. Reliability was obtained through test re-test method, using a sample of 30 vice principals in Rivers State. The instrument was administered twice on the respondents. And the wo scores were analyzed by using the Pearson product moment correlation statistics and the reliability index was established at 0.73. The instrument was administered and retrieved by the researcher with the help of research assistant. The data were collated using the mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions while the z-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 significant level.

Results

Research question 1: To what does principals decision-making leadership practice influence educational goal attainment in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 1: Mean and Standard deviation of principals opinion on the extent to which principals’ decision-making leadership practice influences educational goal attainment in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

S/N	Items	Male Principals		Female Principals		\bar{x}	Decision
		\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD		
1.	Teachers involvement in policy formation enhances their performance.	3.07	.77	3.10	.70	3.08	Agree
2.	Teachers involvement in school decision-making process boost their moral.	3.06	.66	3.04	.64	3.05	Agree
3	Teachers participation in formulating school decisions positively affects his zeal for duty performance.	3.11	.71	3.14	.74	3.12	Agree
4.	Teachers participation in school decision making positively affects students academic performances	3.16	.76	3.19	.81	3.17	Agree
5.	Teachers and other staff participation in school decision making enhancing their performance and also organization goal attainment	3.20	.82	3.17	.80	3.18	Agree
	Aggregate mean	3.12		3.13		3.12	

In table above, the calculated mean scores of items 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 are \bar{x} 3.08, \bar{x} 3.05, \bar{x} 3.12, \bar{x} 3.17 and \bar{x} 3.18. The calculated mean scores are above the criterion mean 2.50, which portrays that teachers involvement and participation in school policy formulation and decision making enhances teachers performance, boost teachers moral, positively affects teachers zeal for duty performance, positively affects students academic performance and organizational goal attainment.

Research question 2: In what ways do principals instructional supervision leadership practice influence educational goal attainment in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 2: Mean and Standard deviation of principals opinion on the ways that principal instructional leadership practice influences educational goal attainment in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

S/N	Items	Male Principals		Female Principals		\bar{x}	Decision
		\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD		
6.	Principals supervision of instruction helps to supervise teaching and learning.	3.14	.74	3.16	.76	3.15	Agree
7.	It is used to ensure that teachers strike to the scheme of work.	3.19	.81	3.17	.80	3.18	Agree
8.	It is used to check teachers regularly punctuality and effectiveness to his duties.	3.05	.65	3.00	.60	3.02	Agree
9.	It is used by the principals to ensure quality in instructional delivery.	3.08	.88	3.09	.89	3.08	Agree
10.	Teachers instructional supervision leadership practice ensures quality of instructional programmes for effective attainment of educational goals.	3.07	.77	3.09	.89	3.08	Agree
	Aggregate mean	3.11		3.10		3.10	

In table 2 above, the calculated mean scores of items 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 are, \bar{x} 3.15, \bar{x} 3.18, \bar{x} 3.02, \bar{x} 3.08 and \bar{x} 3.08. The calculated mean scores are above the criterion mean of 2.50. The calculated mean scores are above the criterion mean of 2.50. This reveals that principals instructional-supervision leadership practice helps to supervise teaching and learning. It is also used to ensure that teachers stick to the scheme of work principals also use it to check for teachers regularly and punctuality to his duties, ensure quality in

instructional delivery or programmes for effective attainment of educational goals.

Research question 3: How does principals transformational leadership practice affect educational goal attainment in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 3: Mean and standard deviation of principals’ opinion on how transformational leadership practice affect educational goal attainment in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

S/N	Items	Male Principals		Female Principals		\bar{x}	Decision
		\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD		
11.	Principals charisma affects teachers performance.	3.15	.75	3.17	.77	3.16	Agree
12.	His inspirational motivation also affects organizational goal attainment.	3.18	.78	3.16	.76	3.17	Agree
13.	Leaders intellectual stimulation enhances organizational goal attainment.	3.06	.66	3.12	.62	3.04	Agree
14.	Effective and progressive leadership enhances teachers performance and students academic achievement.	3.10	.70	3.12	.72	3.11	Agree
15.	Principals transformational leadership practice contributes positively to school goal attainment.	3.00	.60	2.98	.58	2.99	Agree
	Aggregate mean	3.10		3.09		3.09	

In table 3, above the calculated mean scores of items 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15 are, \bar{x} 3.16, \bar{x} 3.17, \bar{x} 3.04, \bar{x} 3.11 and \bar{x} 2.99. The calculated mean scores are above the criterion mean of 2.50. This indicates that principals charisma affects teachers performance His inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation enhances organizational goal attainment. Effective and progressive leadership enhances teachers performance and students academic

performance. Principals transformation leadership practices contributes positively to school goal attainment.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on the extent to which principals decision-making leadership practice influences goal attainment in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 4: z-test analysis of the significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on the extent to which principals decision-making leadership practice influences goal attainment in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Variables	N	\bar{x}	SD	Df	z-cal	z-critical	Decision
Male	52	3.12	.74	84	0.93	±1.96	Accepted
Female	34	3.13	.73				

The data in table 4 above show that the z-calculated value of 0.93 is less than the z-critical value of ±1.96 at 0.05 significant level. Since the z-calculated value is less than the z-critical value, the hypotheses is accepted. There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on the extent to which principals decision-making leadership practice influences goal attainment in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Hypotheses 2: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on the ways that principals instructional supervision leadership practice influence goal attainment in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 5: z-test analysis of the significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on the ways that principals instructional-supervision leadership practice influences goal attainment in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Variables	N	\bar{x}	SD	Df	z-cal	z-critical	Decision
Male	52	3.11	.77	84	0.83	±1.96	Accepted
Female	34	3.10	.78				

The data in table 5 above show that the z-calculated value of 0.80 is less than the z-critical value of ± 1.96 at 0.05 significant level. The hypothesis is accepted. There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on the ways that principals instructional – supervision leadership practice influences goal attainment in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Hypotheses 3: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on how principals transformational leaders practice influence goal attainment in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 5: z-test analysis of the significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on how principal transformational leadership practice influences goal attainment in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Variables	N	\bar{x}	SD	Df	z-cal	z-critical	Decision
Male	52	3.10	.69	84	0.78	± 1.96	Accepted
Female	34	3.09	.69				

The data in table 6 above show that the z-calculated value of 0.78 is less than the z-critical value of ± 1.96 at 0.05 significant level. The hypothesis is accepted. There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on how principals transformational leadership practice affects goal attainment in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Discussion

Principals ‘decision-making leadership practice and goal attainment

The study revealed that teachers involvement and participation in policy formulation, school decision making or formulation process enhances their performances, boost their moral, positively affects their zeal fr duty performance, affects students academic performance and the school goal attainment. This finding agrees with Abraham (2013) who stated that it has been found that participative decision-making stands out as the best way to achieve effectiveness and compliance in the school organization supporting Hoy and Miskel (1987) as cited in Abraham (2013) is an important factor in the morale of teachers and their enthusiasm for the school organization.

Principals' instructional-supervision leadership practice and goal attainment

The study revealed that principals supervision of instructions helps to supervise teaching and learning; ensure that teachers stick to the scheme of work, check teachers regularity, punctuality, effectiveness, and ensure quality in instructional delivery. This finding is in line with Onyeali and Akinfolarin (2017) when the stated that instructional leadership practice entails ensuring high quality teaching and learning by supervising instructional programme and ensuring effective use of instructional time to foster the attainment of educational goals and objectives. The duo further stated that the principal has the primary function of exhibiting effective instructional leadership practices for the improvement of diversified curriculum and quality of instructional programme for effective attainment of educational goal.

Principals transformational leadership practice and goal attainment

The study revealed that principals charisma, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and effectiveness affects teachers performance, students academic achievement and the organizational goal attainment. This finding is in line with Howell and Avolio (1993) as cited in Osagie and Momoh (2016) agreed that those who display leadership that transformational contribute positively to the achievement or attainment of business or unit goals. Supporting Avolio, Waldma and Yammarino (1991) description of transformational behaviours as; charisma, idealized influence, inspirational motivation, individualized consideration and intellectual stimulation.

Conclusion

School principals who adopt share-decision making, instructional supervision and transformational leadership practice were found to create a conducive collaborative working environment. This will pave way for high productivity, increased students achievement and effective school goal attainment.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following were recommended

- 1) Rivers State government should work with school principals to ensure that teachers and other staff participate in the state school policy formation and decision making.
- 2) Principals should ensure that instructional supervision is on daily bases.

- 3) Rivers State government should ensure supervisors from the ministry are sent to schools regularly to assist in the supervision of instruction.
- 4) Principals should ensure that they remain charismatic, inspirational and motivating.
- 5) Principals should also ensure that they display effective and progressive practices.

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