UNIJERPS
Unizik Journal of Educational Research and Policy Studies VOL.21 (2);
January-June, 2026 https://unijerps.org
2023 Impact Factor: **6.834;** 2022 ***Impact Factor***: 5.156; ***2021 Impact Factor: 5.641;***
2020 Impact Factor: 5.355. *Indexing and Impact Factor URL:* http://sjifactor.com/passport.php?id=21363

PRINCIPALS' ADMINISTRATIVE COMPETENCE AND SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS IN PUBLIC SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN DELTA STATE, NIGERIA

Dr (Mrs.) Ifesiokwu Carol Nneka

Federal College of Education (Technical)
Asaba, Delta State
icarolnneka@gmail.com
08037255933

Maha Mark Okem
09017068196

Nwanokor Charles
09017068196

ABSTRACT

This study examined principals' administrative competence and school effectiveness in public senior secondary schools in Delta State. The study adopted the correlational research design. This study was guided by two hypotheses, tested at .05 alpha level of significance. 12,222 principals and teachers from the 468 senior secondary schools in Delta State formed the population, while 100 principals and 1,175 teachers, totaling 1,275 representing 10 percent of the total formed sample of the study. The multi stage sampling technique was employed to choose the respondents. The instruments for data collection were the researcher designed questionnaires titled "Principal Administrative Competence and School Effectiveness Questionnaire (PACSEQ)". The instruments were validated by two experts. The instruments had reliability coefficient index of 0.82 and 0.85 respectively. Regression analysis was used to test the null hypotheses. The analyses were done with the aid of Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 26. The findings of the study showed that principals' supervisory competence and communication competence has significant relationship with school effectiveness in public senior secondary schools in Delta State. The study concluded that principals' administrative competence is significantly related to school effectiveness in public secondary schools in Delta State. Principals' supervisory and communication influence school effectiveness. Based on the findings, it was recommended that principals should provide a platform for vertical and horizontal communication flow. Proper communication strategies/channels should be adopted in order to give room for teachers' participation and activeness in school policies, projects and programs of the school.

Keywords: Competence, Administrative Competence, School Effectiveness.

Introduction

The role that education is expected to play in a society is multi-faceted. It is expected to build the character of the learner, to get him informed about what is worthwhile, socially acceptable, desirable and purposeful about himself, his environment and society. It is also expected to make the individual worth living and worth living with. Education is not only a social service, but an instrument of political socialization that informs the learner as to his privileges and basic human rights. Secondary school is that sector of the education pyramid that usually comes immediately after primary education. It also comes before tertiary education. It is at this age of education that students are prepared for the Polytechnics, colleges of education and Universities. Within the framework of the New National Policy on Education (FRN, 2014), secondary schools are established to achieve specific goals in the Nigerian society.

Competence is the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that an individual should have to perform his / her duty as per the predetermined goals. Various past studies have tried to determine the aims of the school and the administrative competencies of the school principals who are authorized to achieve these goals. As a matter of fact, in studies examining the competencies of educational administrators like the school principals, it is emphasized that it is vital for the school to have the predetermined administrative competences to be possessed by the school principals. The duties to be fulfilled by the school principals are also their professional competencies. As it can be seen, when these competencies are examined, school principals should have many competencies defined in technical, conceptual, and humanitarian dimensions (Şişman & Taşdemir, 2008).

Principals as leaders who are in a position to influence others therefore, must have the skills that will make them take advantage of that position. The principal is the head of administration in secondary schools who ensures the effective implementation of policies and progammes for the achievement of the school goals. For the attainment of the objectives of secondary schools, the curriculum has been developed to suit such desires which are to be implemented by the principal with the cooperation of teachers and other members of staff (Walker, Lee, & Bryant, 2014). The principal is the accounting officer of the school, the chief executive and instructional leader. As an accounting officer, the principal oversees the day-today management of the school. Stressing further. The most important function of the secondary school principal is his instructional leadership role in the school. Eboka (2018) and Baudinette (2018) noted that successful administration of secondary schools requires competent principals with appropriate administrative competencies. Therefore, school effectiveness would depend on the competence of a principal. To be competent as school leaders, principals need the requisite leadership skills. Previous studies show that there is an extensive interest by many researchers, educationists, parents and even stakeholders and policy makers on the principals' competence in handling the educational programmes of the schools.

The importance of supervision in secondary schools in Nigeria cannot be overemphasized. The Federal Republic of Nigeria's (FRN, 2012) In the National Policy on Education stated that the objectives of planning, administrative, inspectorate, supervisory and financial services in education are to ensure quality assurance through regular and continuous supervision of instructional and other educational services. Supervision is one of the processes by which school principals attempt to achieve acceptable standards of performance and results. It is the tool of quality control in the school system and phase of school administration which focuses primarily on the achievement of appropriate expectations of the educational system.

Supervisory competencies are managerial skills that allow principals to assess and regulate the teaching and learning process in the school to ensure that goals and objectives are met (Bennet, Woods, & Newton, 2017). Supervisory competencies may enable principals to achieve the set goals in the pursuit of high-quality instruction and student learning outcomes. In secondary schools. In Delta State, supervisory competencies may assist the principal in driving effective curriculum delivery in the school. Principals may use these competencies as an appropriate measure to ensure that all teachers adhere to the established rules and regulations when carrying out their instructional responsibilities. This is not intended to persecute teachers; rather, it is intended to instill in them a sense of commitment, self-control, and goal-setting, as well as high expectations for their students.

The supervisory function is carried out by principals when they contrast anticipated outcomes with overall performance and adopt the appropriate remedial initiative. Supervisory competencies enable principals to complete the cycle of leadership functions. Supervisory competencies are essential managerial competencies that assist principals to discharge their responsibilities effectively. It may simply consist of walking around the building to see how things are going, talking to students, visiting classrooms, talking to heads of departments, or it may involve designing coordinated information systems to check on the quality of behaviour and performance, but it must be done if the principal is to be successful (Garza, Drysdale, Gurr & Jacobson, 2014). Supervisory also means giving rewards for good behaviour and providing corrections for disciplinary problems using various techniques. This means that the application of supervisory competency in the management of secondary schools could enable the principal to identify certain behavioural patterns and reward them accordingly for enhancement of teachers' job effectiveness.

Communication is an important factor in enhancing teachers' motivation and ensuring their efficiency in schools where informal relationships play an important role. Schools with an effective communication network will have more interaction between the principals and the teachers. In this way, good cooperation will be established between the management, one of the most effective units of the school, and workers. The motivation of workers in schools where the communication network is strong is more than those in schools

where the communication network is weak. Through effective communication, both the management and workers can better understand what the other side wants and thus the motivation of workers, particularly that of teachers increases.

Communication is lifeblood of a braid. If we think of school as a person, the communication becomes blood circulating throughout the whole body to feed educators, students, parents and society. If communication is interrupted or ineffectual, there is a blockage in the circulation (Danielson, 2015). Communication, one of the management processes, activates the other processes of management and plays a key role in maintaining these processes. If this key role is properly played, management will be well informed about the good and bad sides of the system by the workers. Thus, workers' motivation levels are also affected from the existing communication process (Torbacıoglu, 2007). The communication process is not just about sending one or more simple messages.

Communication is about complex networks that connect people together. For example, in an organizational context, an administrator (source) who wants a volunteer (message) to work on the weekend may send this message to all employees (receivers) via an e-mail (channel). This model, conceptualized as a very simple "SMCR" model, can be summarized as a source transmitting a message to a receiver via a channel (Miller, 2012). It is the school principal who will lead the school towards its objectives and will create a quality atmosphere in the school. As a social system, the school should be able to establish a balance between the individual and the organization and in this regard, the main responsibility should be taken by the school director. For school principals to serve the goals of the school effectively, they need to be well-informed about the concepts and theories of management and human relationships (Toremen & Kolay, 2003).

Taken together, previous researchers seemed to have focus on school principals' competence (Eboka, & Igbokwe, 2021; Owan & Agunwa, 2019; Egboka et al., 2013). Specifically, not much is known on the influence of school principals' administrative competence and school effectiveness especially, none of the existing study considered principals' administrative competence in the dimensions that is considered in this study and were all done outside Delta State, Nigeria. This is a gap which must be filled with reason being that the results obtained from a foreign study might not be the same as that of a study carried out locally. There is a need for a study to be conducted in Delta State, that will yield results that may be applicable to the immediate environment. It was based on this background that the conduct of this study was considered germane.

Statement of the Problem

In recent times, there have been growing concerns about the declining effectiveness of public senior secondary schools in Delta State. Many schools are faced with issues such as poor academic performance of students, low level of teachers' commitment, and weak instructional delivery. These challenges have raised questions about the role of school

leadership, particularly the administrative competence of principals, in managing school activities and ensuring that educational goals are achieved. One major area of concern is the level of supervision carried out in schools. In some cases, supervision of teaching and learning activities appears to be inadequate, which may result in teachers not properly preparing lesson notes, not completing the syllabus, or not delivering lessons effectively. When supervision is weak, it becomes difficult to monitor teachers' performance and support them to improve, which can negatively affect students' learning outcomes.

Another important issue is communication within the school system. Effective communication is necessary for coordinating school activities, passing information, and maintaining good relationships among staff and students. However, there are indications that communication in some schools is not effective, leading to misunderstandings, poor collaboration, and low staff morale. When communication is poor, it can disrupt the smooth running of the school and reduce overall effectiveness.

Despite these concerns, it is not very clear how supervisory and communication competencies of principals are related to school effectiveness in public senior secondary schools in Delta State. This gap in knowledge has created the need for this study to examine the relationship between principals' administrative competence particularly in the areas of supervision and communication and the effectiveness of schools.

Objectives of the Study

The objective of this study was to examine the relationship between principals' administrative competence and school effectiveness in public senior secondary schools in Delta State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Examine the relationship between principals' supervisory competence and school effectiveness in public senior secondary schools in Delta State.
2. Determine the relationship between principals' communication competence and school effectiveness in public senior secondary schools in Delta State.

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses was formulated to direct the study.

H_{o1}: There is no significant relationship between principals' supervisory competence and school effectiveness in public senior secondary schools in Delta State.

H_{o2}: There is no significant relationship between principals' communication competence and school effectiveness in public senior secondary schools in Delta State.

Methodology

The study adopted correlational research design. Correlational research design indicates the direction and magnitude of relationship between variables (Nworgu, 2015). It is correlational design because the study sought to establish the direction and magnitude of the relationship between two or more variables. Twelve thousand, two hundred and twenty-two (12,222) principals and teachers made up the

population of this study. The population constitute of 468 principals and 11,754 teachers in the four hundred and sixty-eight (468) senior secondary schools in Delta State, Nigeria (Source: Delta State Post Primary Education Board (PPEB), 2026). The sample of this study is 1,275 respondents which represents 10.4% of the total population. Multi-stage sampling technique was used to sample 100 principals and 1175 teachers from the public secondary schools in Delta State.

Structured questionnaires were developed by the researchers and was titled "Principal Administrative Competence and School Effectiveness Questionnaire (PACSEQ)" served as instrument for data collection. The instrument was divided into section A and B. Section A required respondents' demographic information while section B contained 20 items which addressed the subject matter of the study. The instrument was structured on a 4-point scale with responses ranging from Strongly Agree – 4 points, Agree - 3 points, Disagree - 2 points, Strongly Disagree – 1 point. To validate the instrument, it was given to two experts in the field of Measurement and Evaluation. Based on their criticism and suggestions, modifications were made to give room for face and content validity. To ensure the reliability of the instrument, the test-re-test method was adopted. 40 copies of the questionnaire were administered to 40 principals and to 40 teachers from public senior secondary schools who are not among the population sampled for the study. After two weeks, the same set of instruments were re-administered to the same respondents. The two sets of scores were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient to determine the reliability index of r= 0.82 and 0.85 respectively, which shows that the instruments were reliable for the study.

Administration of the questionnaire to respondents involved a face to face, personal contact with the respondents. The data collected were subjected to statistical analysis. Regression analysis was used to test the null hypotheses. The analyses were done with the aid of Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 26.

Results

Test of Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to direct the study.

H_{o1}: There is no significant relationship between principals' supervisory competence and school effectiveness in public senior secondary schools in Delta State.

Table 1: Regression Analysis on Principals' Supervisory Competence and School Effectiveness

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.703[a]	.495	.494	.29652	.495	1167.098	1	1192	.000

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	102.613	1	102.613	1167.098	.000[b]
Residual	104.802	1192	.088		
Total	207.415	1193			

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.524	.044		34.363	.000
Supervisory Competence	.469	.014	.703	34.163	.000

The results in Table 1 show that principals' supervisory competence has a strong influence on school effectiveness. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.495$) indicates that about 49.5% of the variation in school effectiveness is explained by supervisory competence, while the remaining variation is due to other factors not included in the model. In addition, the regression model was found to be statistically significant, as indicated by the F-statistic ($F(1, 1192) = 102.613$, $p < 0.05$). This means that supervisory competence is a meaningful predictor of school effectiveness in public senior secondary schools in Delta State.

Furthermore, the regression analysis revealed that supervisory competence has a positive and significant relationship with school effectiveness. The regression equation ($Y = 1.524 + 0.469X_1 + \varepsilon$) shows that an increase in supervisory competence leads to a corresponding increase in school effectiveness. Specifically, a one-unit increase in supervisory competence results in a 0.469 increase in school effectiveness. Based on these findings, the null hypothesis was rejected, leading to the conclusion that principals' supervisory competence significantly influences school effectiveness in public senior secondary schools in Delta State.

H_{o2}: There is no significant relationship between principals' communication competence and school effectiveness in public senior secondary schools in Delta State.

Table 2: Regression Analysis on Principals' Communication Competence and School Effectiveness

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
2	.169[a]	.028	.028	.41116	.028	34.902	1	1192	.000

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	5.900	1	5.900	34.902	.000[b]
Residual	201.514	1192	.169		
Total	207.415	1193			

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	2.308	.120		19.290	.000
Communication Competence	.215	.036	.169	5.908	.000

The results in Table 2 indicate that principals' communication competence has a statistically significant effect on school effectiveness, although its explanatory power is relatively low. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.028$) shows that communication competence accounts for only 2.8% of the variation in school effectiveness, while the remaining variation is influenced by other factors not included in the model. Despite this low percentage, the regression model was found to be statistically significant, as indicated by the F-statistic ($F(1, 1192) = 34.902$, $p < 0.05$). This suggests that communication competence still plays a meaningful role in predicting school effectiveness.

Furthermore, the regression analysis revealed a positive and significant relationship between communication competence and school effectiveness. The regression equation ($Y = 2.308 + 0.215X_1 + \varepsilon$) indicates that an increase in communication competence leads to a corresponding increase in school effectiveness. Specifically, a one-unit increase in communication competence results in a 0.215 increase in school effectiveness. Based on these findings, the null hypothesis was rejected, leading to the conclusion that principals' communication competence significantly influences school effectiveness in public senior secondary schools in Delta State.

Summary of Findings

The findings of this study are summarized as follows:

1. There is strong and positive correlation between principals' leadership competence and school effectiveness in public senior secondary schools in Delta State.
2. There is significant relationship between principals' leadership competence and school effectiveness in public senior secondary schools in Delta State.

Discussion of Findings

The result of the test of hypotheses revealed that principals' supervisory competence has significant relationship with school effectiveness in public secondary schools in Delta state. This finding is in harmony with the finding of Olowo and Oladimmeji (2012) who in a study on school Monitoring: Partway to quality assurance for sustainable secondary education in Oyo

State found that there was a significant relationship between school monitoring and quality assurance in terms of school administrative effectiveness. This result implies that in schools where principals exhibited good supervisory competence, teachers work performance will also increase and vice versa, in terms of instructional delivery, attendance to classes, notes writing, and record keeping. However, this result does not imply that supervisory competence of secondary school administrators is the cause for teachers' work performance increasing or decreasing. This finding corroborates the finding in a study by Nzabonimpa (2011) which examined the influence of secondary school head teachers' general and instructional supervisory practices on teachers' work performance.

The result of the test of hypothesis showed that principals' communication competence has significant relationship with school effectiveness in the public secondary schools in Delta State. This implies that for effectiveness in any organization schools inclusive, communication is very important. A good principal must ensure free flow of information among the personnel in the school (teachers and students). This finding is in line with Grossman (2020) stated that when people don't have the information or knowledge, they feel they need, low productivity results. He again noted that when workers are communicated appropriately, it opens up door for misinterpretation. This implies that poor communication techniques in schools would create environments which are unhealthy to the school administration. It is obvious that poor communication does not promote conducive environment in the school. To support this findings, Ndum (2013) postulates that breakdown in communication and its process can leads to many managerial problems in the (school) organization, which is the typical case in the area where this study was conducted.

Conclusion

The study focused on principals' administrative competence and school effectiveness in public secondary schools in Delta State. The result from the study revealed that when principals exhibit supervisory, communication, leadership, personnel management, physical facility management and financial management competences, school effectiveness in the public secondary schools will also be improved in terms of instructional delivery, attendance to classes, notes writing and record keeping. By implication, teachers will be closely monitored, they will also understand their roles expectations, and will be motivated to work as a result of principals' improved supervision, communication and leadership patterns.

It was concluded generally that principals' administrative competence is significantly related to school effectiveness in public secondary schools in Delta State. Principals' supervisory, communication, leadership, personnel management, physical facility management and financial management competences influence school effectiveness. Competent principals who supervise, lead, and communicate effectively with their teachers will witness improved performance from teachers in terms of instructional delivery, attendance to classes, notes writing and record keeping, then incompetent principals.

Principals who are competent will be able to closely monitor teachers; they will be able to communicate objectives and roles expectations to teachers and will be able to motivate teachers through their leadership.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were stated following the outcome of the findings;

i. Secondary school principals should beef up their supervision to ensure that teachers' lesson notes, diaries, registers, and instructional delivery are regularly checked. This will enable the teachers to display a sense of effectiveness in the discharge of their duties.

ii. Principals should provide a platform for vertical and horizontal communication flow. Proper communication strategies/channels should be adopted in order to give room for teachers' participation and activeness in school policies, projects and programs of the school. Information necessary for teachers to discharge their duties on time should also be communicated to them, and on time.

REFERENCES

Aminu, J. (2015). *Educational administration and supervision*. Kaduna: Joyce Publishers.

Baudinette, S. D. (2018). *Effective administration of secondary schools*. Cordin Press.

Bennet, N., Woods, P. & Newton, W. (2017). Understandings of middle leadership in secondary schools: a review of empirical research. *Journal of Education, 27*(5), 453-470.

Chukwuma, W. A. (2026). Critical issues in the management of students' rights in contemporary Nigeria. *International Journal of Law, Social Sciences and Environmental Education Studies, 1*(1).

Chukwuma, W. A. (2026). Reviewing the office of an ombud under the new taxing space in Nigeria. *International Journal of Law and Clinical Legal Education, 7*.

Danielson, C. (2015). Framing Discussions about Teaching. *Educational Leadership, 72*(7), 38- 41.

Eboka, C. O. (2018). *Principals' leadership style and organizational climate in secondary schools* [Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis]. University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

Egboka. P. N., Ezeugbor, C. O. & Enueme, C. P. (2013). Managerial skills and enhancement strategies of secondary school principals. *Journal of Education and Practice, 4*(26), 168-174.

Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) (2012). *National policy on education*. NERDC Press.

FRN. (2014). *National policy on education*. NERDC Press.

Hoy, W. K. & Miskel, C. G. (2008). *Educational administration: Theory, research, and practice* (8th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Miller, D. E. (2012). Prediction and statistical overkill revisited. *Measurement and Evaluation in Guidance, 6*(3), 157–163.

Nakpodia, E. D. (2011). Teachers' disciplinary approaches to students' discipline problems in Nigerian secondary schools. *International NGO Journal*, 6(6), 144–151.

Oghuvbu, E. P. (2010). Effective communication in educational management. *Journal of Educational Studies*, 5(2), 45–52.

Okorie, N. C. (2014). *Organizational behaviour and communication in education*. Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishing.

Owan, V. J. & Agunwa, C. (2019). *Conflict management strategies and secondary school teachers' job effectiveness in Obubra Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria* [Unpublished B.Ed. Project]. University of Calabar, Nigeria.

Peretomode, V. F. (2012). *Educational administration: Applied concepts and theoretical perspectives*. Lagos: Joja Press.

Şişman, M. & Taşdemir, İ. (2008). *Türk eğitim sistemi ve okul yönetimi (Turkish education system and school management*). Pegem Akademi Yayınları.

Torbacıoglu, D. (2007). *Managers of primary school's communication methods and senses for motivation levels* [Unpublished Master's Thesis]. Yeditepe University, Istanbul.

Toremen, F. & Kolay, Y. (2003). *Ilkogretim okulu yoneticilerinin sahip olması gereken yeterlikler*. Milli Egitim.

Ucheagwu-Okoye, O. M. (2026). Child rights in schools: Causes of violations and protection strategies in Nigeria. *International Journal of Law, Social Sciences and Environmental Education Studies, 1*(1).

Ucheagwu-Okoye, O. M. (2026). Prospects of collective bargaining in Nigeria in the 21st Century. *International Journal of Jurisprudence, School Management and Civic Education, 1*(1).

Walker, A. D., Lee, M. & Bryant, D. A. (2014). How much of a difference do principals make? An analysis of between-schools variation in academic achievement in Hong Kong public secondary schools. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement, 25*(4), 602-628.