
School Leadership Effectiveness as Predictor of Internal Efficiency of Public Secondary Schools in Less Developed Communities in South-South Region, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: *School internal efficiency in south-south region of Nigeria; a geopolitical region perceived to be rich in natural resources has been worrisome in recent times. The study therefore investigated the relationship between school leadership effectiveness and internal efficiency of public secondary schools in less developed communities in south-south regions of Nigeria. Four research questions were raised and three hypotheses were formulated for the purpose of the study. The research design adopted for the study was a descriptive survey. A total of two hundred and forty-two (242) schools were selected through multi stage sampling technique. Two research instruments developed by the researchers and validated by seasoned education practitioners were used to collect data for the study. They are; Leadership Effectiveness of Public Senior Secondary School Questionnaire (LEPSSSQ) and Public Senior Secondary School Students Enrolment Checklist (PSSSSEC). The questionnaire was pilot tested and its reliability value was computed using the Cronbach alpha statistics which yielded 0.79. Descriptive and inferential statistics such as mean, standard deviation and Pearson r were used to analyse the data generated from the research questions and hypotheses respectively. It was found that principals were effective in their leadership roles performance but schools were generally inefficient amongst other findings. Based on these, it was recommended that principals should be regularly trained and retrained on effective leadership strategies that will engender and sustain high school internal efficiency despite some challenges faced in the system.*

KEYWORDS: school leadership, effectiveness, internal efficiency, less developed communities.

INTRODUCTION

The importance of school leadership in educational policy agenda and sustainable goals attainment cannot be overemphasized globally. Onuma (2016) defined leadership as a process of social

influence where leaders induce followers to apply their energies and resources towards attaining a given objective. Leadership is the process of influencing, motivating and communicating with people towards achievement of specific goals (Nwankwo, 2014). Nusche and Moorman cited in Dabesa and Cheramlak (2021) asserted that school leadership plays a great role in improving school outcomes by influencing the motivation of teachers, parents, community and stakeholders. Bush (2018), opined that in many developing countries, experienced evaluated by years of teaching is adequate to take the roles and duties of a school leader.

School leadership ascertains the degree of commitment of principals and teachers in the school system. It is therefore a veritable tool for measuring school effectiveness. School effectiveness according to Farhat, Zarghuna, Khalid, Ashiq & Mohammad (2012) is aimed at enhancing the conditions of schooling and output measured especially by academic achievement of students. Martin (2021) is of the view that school effectiveness is the extent to which the school has the features of high students' retention and academic performance. It implies that school effectiveness is the degree of improvement in students' performance in terms of assessment results and the willingness of the learners to complete their education at a particular level with a sense of satisfaction. School based leadership is therefore the ability of the leader to enhance the learning environment in other to actualize the goals and objectives of education.

Secondary school is critical to an individual meaningful and useful living within the society and a significant place were students through the collective efforts of the stakeholders' level of preparation for higher education. It is therefore the intermediary between primary and tertiary education (Federal Republic of Nigeria (FGN) 2014). Secondary school is commonly referred to as the post-primary education. The role of principals as leaders cannot be over emphasized. They are in charge of the management of secondary schools. They bring about the actualization of the vision, mission, goals and objectives of secondary education. They are also involved in the monitoring of students' attendance, discipline and school climate expectations for quality work assisted by staff and students, promotion of school/community collaborative relationship towards the training of the students. Dabesa and Cheramlak (2021) asserted that the school principal is regarded as someone in leadership position whose actions, activities, decision making skills and policies are geared towards attaining the goals of the system.

School principals perform several roles which include both administrative and instructional. They implement policies and poised at achieving high academic standards by conducting classroom observations, assessing learning materials, evaluation of teachers and communication through interpersonal relationship with other schools and communities. Onwubiko, Eze, Udeh, Okoloagu and Chuka-Okosa (2015) opined that the role of the school principal is that of administrative head, a manager, a community public relations officer, a supervisor, an instructional leader, a curriculum developer and a catalyst of planned revolution in the educational system. Mutegi (2019) in a study on determinates of internal efficiency in public primary schools in Kenya opined that inspection

of teachers' work done, teachers lesson notes, monitoring their participation in school extra-curricular activities and their school attendance will help check their progress to ensure regular instructional delivery among others which are instructional supervision practices for school effectiveness. This was supported by Hayat (2015) in a study carried out on principals' instructional leadership practices and their relationship to teachers' instructional practices in Sharjah schools which affirmed that the instructional leadership practices of supervising and assessing instruction was highly done by the principals. Muhammad (2014) equally conferred that capable, experienced, educated and well trained principals having manageable number of teachers under their effective supervision could help improve schools' effectiveness in an investigation on dimensions of principals' characteristics for improving efficiency of schools. However, Unachukwu and Odumodu (2015) in a study on management support practices for teachers' supervision in secondary schools in Anambra state, Nigeria asserted that there is significant difference in the mean rating of principals and teachers on the extent management support practices for teachers' supportive supervision. Effective leadership is committed to the utilization of all the inputs in the school system including the students to ensure that quality, standards and the purpose of secondary education is achieved. The manner, style which a school leader adopts in the performance of duties is critical to his/her level of effectiveness and school internal efficiency.

Attaining internally efficiency in secondary education is a major priority to education leader. Adeyemi (2012) posited that internal efficiency is the degree to which resources made available to the educational system are used to achieve the objectives for which the educational system has been set up. Succinctly, it is the relationship between inputs (unprocessed students) and output (graduates) of an educational system (Idehen and Edeki, 2022). It is not uncommon however to observe high rate of repetition and students dropout in less developed communities (rural areas) arising from the inability to complete their secondary education. Vision 2020 report (2009) further collaborated this observation of high incidence of wastage among rural dwellers and urban slum dwellers in school. When educational system turns out graduate at recorded time without wasting any student-year, having dropouts or repeaters, the system is said to be internally efficient (Ayodele and Ogbiye 2018; Ayodele, Adaralegbe and Adeleke 2015; Ileuma 2017).

Internal efficiency is associated with the issue of resources allocation and utilization in the search for education supply. School leadership has a significant role to play in this regard. Principalship, an important organ in school administration should be concerned about how the resources in the school can be effectively be utilized including supervision, curriculum implementation, maintenance of facilities and provision of staff and students personnel administration to achieve school objectives and internal efficiency. The indices of internal efficiency in schools are wastage rate (dropouts, repeaters) and graduation rates (promoters). Internal efficiency of the educational system is determined using the cohort analysis of the educational system (promotion, repetition and dropout rates) (Kolawola & Ogbiye 2020; Ileuma 2017).

Umar, Kenayathulla and Hoque (2021) in their study on principal leadership practices and school effectiveness in Niger State, Nigeria asserted that principals' leadership practices contribute greatly towards secondary schools effectiveness as their concept of leadership is practiced through interaction with parents, teachers and communities which attracts support for the realization of the schools vision and mission. By implication, effective leadership practices could promote school internal efficiency. The study on principal' leadership skills and school effectiveness, the case of South Western Nigeria by Akinola (2013) revealed that administrative skill was most prevalent among the principals. Akinsolu (2017) in his study on analysis of educational wastage in public secondary schools in Olorunda Local Government Area of Ogun State, Nigeria found out high wastage rate among secondary schools. However, Pitan (2012); Adeyemi (2012); Kolawola and Ogbiye (2020) in their various studies revealed that secondary schools were internally efficient as their progression rates was high due to adequate utilization of available human and physical resources.

It is therefore imperative to investigate school leadership effectiveness as it predicts internal efficiency of public secondary schools in less developed communities in southern region of Nigeria that is perceived to be the economic hub of the nation. Variables of leadership effectiveness skills of the principals such as administrative, supervisory and instructional skills and indices of internal efficiency (promotion, repetition and dropout rates) was the focus of this study.

Statement of the Problem

Leadership effectiveness of principals is very crucial in ensuring internal efficiency in secondary schools. However, there seems to be loss of faith in secondary education, ability to prepare students for a useful living and future higher education endeavour because of high rates of repeaters and dropouts in secondary schools despite the seemingly government fiscal and material commitment. This poses a serious challenge and worry to stakeholders of secondary education in the region. Moreover, some school principals have been faulted for their perceived poor administrative, supervisory and instructional roles which perhaps could negatively impact on the internal efficiency of public secondary schools. It is against this back drop the study investigated school leadership effectiveness and its influence on internal efficiency in public senior secondary schools in less developed communities of South-South region of Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the levels of principals' leadership effectiveness and also establish internal efficiency in terms of promotion, repetition and dropout rates of secondary school students in some selected less- developed communities in south- south region of Nigeria for 2016/2017 to 2018/2019 academic sessions. The study further investigated whether a relationship exist between principals' leadership effectiveness and internal efficiency of public senior secondary schools in less developed communities in South-south of Nigeria. Lastly, the study examined whether principals' styles of leadership have significant influence on internal

efficiency of public senior secondary schools in rural communities in South-south region of Nigeria.

Research Questions

To guide the purpose of the study, five research questions were raised.

1. What are the levels of principals' leadership roles effectiveness and internal efficiency of public senior secondary schools in less developed communities of South-South region of Nigeria?
2. Is there a relationship between principals' leadership roles effectiveness and internal efficiency of public senior secondary schools in less developed communities of South-South region of Nigeria?
3. Is there a relationship between principals' instructional supervisory role effectiveness and internal efficiency of public senior secondary schools in less developed communities of South-South region of Nigeria?
4. Is there a relationship between principals' charismatic leadership style and internal efficiency of public senior secondary schools in less developed communities of South-South region of Nigeria?
5. Does a relationship exist between principals' functional leadership style and internal efficiency of public senior secondary schools in less developed communities of South-South region of Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.5 level of significance for the study.

1. There is no significant relationship between principals' leadership roles effectiveness and internal efficiency of public senior secondary schools in less developed communities of South-South region of Nigeria.
2. There is no significant relationship between principals' instructional supervisory roles effectiveness and internal efficiency of public senior secondary schools in less developed communities of South-South region of Nigeria.
3. Principals' charismatic leadership style does not significantly influence internal efficiency of public senior secondary schools in less developed communities of South-South region of Nigeria.
4. A significant relationship does not exist between principals' functional leadership style and internal efficiency of public senior secondary schools in less developed communities of South-South region of Nigeria

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population of the study comprised 3,020 principals and 68,898 teachers from 3,020 public senior secondary schools from less developed communities in the six states (Akwa-Ibom (31), Bayelsa (8), Cross River (16), Delta (25), Edo (18) and Rivers (23)) of South-South region of Nigeria. A simple random sampling technique was

used to select 2 schools each from the states that constitute the south- south region of Nigeria after stratification. A total of 242 schools and their principals were thus sampled for the study. In each of the sampled schools, five (5) teachers were randomly selected. A total of 1,210 teachers from this process were used to assess their principals' leadership roles effectiveness.

A questionnaire titled: "Leadership Effectiveness of Public Senior Secondary School Questionnaire" (LEPSSSQ) and a checklist titled: "Public Senior Secondary School Students Enrolment Checklist" (PSSSSEC) were used to collect relevant data for the study. The questionnaire was divided into three sections: section A, B and C with five items structured on a four rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The items bothered on the leadership, instructional supervisory roles and leadership styles of principals. The checklist was used to collect information regarding enrolment of public senior secondary school students from 2015/2016 to 2017/2018 academic session.

The instruments were validated by two experts from the Department of Educational Management in the Faculty of Education, University of Benin. The instrument was pilot tested using 20 teachers who were not part of the main study. Thereafter, the cronbach alpha statistics was used to determine the internal consistency of the items in the questionnaire which was estimated at 0.79. Data on students' enrolment was obtained from the sampled schools and the six states Ministry of Education.

The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation was use to answer the research question while Pearson Moment Correlation Statistics was used to test the hypotheses formulated for the study. The level of principals' leadership roles effectiveness were categorized as low (mean value of 2.50 and below), and high (mean value of 2.51 & above). A mean value of 0-0.9 indicate that secondary schools in the region are internally inefficient while 1 to 1.5 shows that the schools are internally efficient.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: *What are the levels of principals' leadership roles effectiveness and internal efficiency of public senior secondary schools in less developed communities of South-South region of Nigeria?*

Table 1a:

Levels of principals' leadership roles effectiveness of public senior secondary schools in less developed communities in South- South region of Nigeria

N = 232

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	Remark
School discipline	2.19	.466	Low
Instructional supervision	3.39	.556	High
School- community relationship	2.86	.432	High
Staff and students' welfare	2.45	.512	High
Average mean of leadership role effectiveness	2.72		High

The mean value of principal' leadership roles effectiveness as shown in Table 1a with regard to school discipline, instructional supervision, school community relationship, staff and students' welfare was 2.19, 3.39, 2.86 and 2.45 with their corresponding standard deviation respectively. The average mean leadership roles effectiveness was 2.72 which is higher than the normative mean of 2.50. Therefore, principals' leadership roles were generally effective as assessed by their teachers.

Table 1b was used to calculate the school's internal efficiency using enrolment and output chart from 2015/2016- 2017/2018 academic session of selected secondary school students in South-South less developed communities in Nigeria.

Table 1b:

Public senior secondary school enrolment and outputs cohort from 2015/2016 – 2017/2018 academic session in South- South, Nigeria.

S/N	States	Enrolment (Inputs)	Completers (Output)	Actual (Input/output)	Wastage ratio (efficiency level)
1	Akwa-Ibom	51509	21739	2.37	0.8
2	Bayelsa	19721	11421	1.73	0.6
3	Cross Rivers	15127	9664	1.57	0.5
4	Delta	35194	25891	1.36	0.5
5	Edo	26238	18578	1.41	0.5
6	Rivers	24473	22435	1.09	0.4
	Total mean	172262	109728	1.59	0.55

Table 1b was used to calculate the wastage ratio (internal efficiency) of selected secondary schools in less developed communities from the states of Akwa- Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross Rivers, Delta, Edo and Rivers. Thus, their level of internal efficiency was 0.8, 0.6, 0.5, 0.5, 0.5 and 0.4 respectively while the average wastage ratio (efficiency) was 0.55. Since the average efficiency value of 0.55 was less than 1, it can therefore be concluded that public senior secondary schools in less developed communities in the region of South- South Nigeria were internally inefficient.

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis 1: *There is no significant relationship between principals' leadership roles effectiveness and internal efficiency of public senior secondary schools in less developed communities of South-South region of Nigeria*

Table 2:

Relationship between principals' leadership roles effectiveness and internal efficiency of public senior secondary schools in less developed communities of South-South region of Nigeria.

		Principals' leadership roles effectiveness	School internal Efficiency
Principals' leadership roles effectiveness	Pearson Correlation	1	.032
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.627
	N	232	232
School Efficiency	Pearson Correlation	.032	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.627	
	N	232	232

Data in Table 2 shows the relationship between principals' leadership roles effectiveness and internal efficiency of public senior secondary schools in less developed communities of South-South region of Nigeria. From the Table, the correlation value was .032 while the alpha level value was .627. Since the Pearson r was less than the alpha level, the relationship is low and therefore not significant at 0.05 level. The null hypothesis is accepted, meaning there is no significant relationship between principals' leadership roles effectiveness and internal efficiency of public senior secondary school students in less developed communities in South-south region of Nigeria.

Hypothesis 2: *There is no significant relationship between principals’ instructional supervisory roles effectiveness and internal efficiency of public senior secondary schools in less developed communities of South-South region of Nigeria.*

Table 3:

Pearson r statistics between principals’ instructional supervisory roles effectiveness and internal efficiency of public senior secondary schools in less developed communities of South-South region of Nigeria.

		Principals’ Instructional Supervisory roles effectiveness	School Internal Efficiency
Principals’ Supervisory leadership roles	Pearson Correlation	1	-.025
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.703
	N	232	232
School Efficiency	Pearson Correlation	-.025	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.703	
	N	232	232

The data in Table 3 revealed a Pearson r value of .025 and a p-value of .073. This shows a weak correlation. Testing at an alpha level of 0.05, the p-value is not significant. The null hypothesis was therefore retained. Consequently, there is no significant relationship between principals’ instructional supervisory roles effectiveness and internal efficiency of public senior secondary schools in less developed communities in South-south, Nigeria.

Hypothesis 3: *Principals’ charismatic leadership style does not significantly influence internal efficiency of public senior secondary schools in less developed communities of South-South region of Nigeria.*

Table 4:

Correlation between principals' charismatic leadership style and internal efficiency of public senior secondary schools in less developed communities of South-South region of Nigeria.

	Principals' charismatic leadership styles	School Internal Efficiency
Principals' charismatic leadership styles	Pearson Correlation 1 Sig. (2-tailed) N 232	.135* .040 232
School Internal Efficiency	Pearson Correlation .135* Sig. (2-tailed) N 232	1 1 232

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 4 showed the association between principals' charismatic leadership style and internal efficiency of public senior secondary schools in less developed communities of South-South region of Nigeria which has r value of .135 and a p-value of .40. There is a low correlation coefficient. However, the null hypothesis was rejected as there exists a significant relationship between principals' charismatic leadership style and the internal efficiency of public senior secondary schools in South-South region of Nigeria.

Hypothesis 4: *A significant relationship does not exist between principals' functional leadership style and internal efficiency of public senior secondary schools in less developed communities of South-South region of Nigeria*

Table 5:

Pearson r correlation between principals' functional leadership style and internal efficiency of public senior secondary schools in less developed communities of South-South region of Nigeria.

		Principals' functional leadership style	School Efficiency	Internal
Principals' functional leadership style	Pearson correlation	1	.138	
	sig (2 tailed)		.061	
	N	232	232	
School Internal Efficiency	Pearson correlation	.138		1
	sig (2 tailed)	.061		
	N	232	232	

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

In Table 5, the result of the analysis showed that the calculated Pearson r value was .138 while, the p-value was .061. Testing the alpha level at 0.05, it shows that there is a significant relationship. The hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between functional leadership style and internal efficiency of public senior secondary schools in less developed communities of South-south region of Nigeria was therefore rejected.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of the study revealed that principals' leadership roles in less developed communities in South-South region of Nigeria is generally effective. This finding therefore implies that the principals in the southern region of Nigeria are conscious of their duties and responsibilities which include daily inspection of teachers' lesson notes and lesson delivery, maintenance of facilities and equipment for smooth teaching and learning, records keeping, ensuring conducive climate and harmonious school- community relationship. The findings has further corroborated Onwubiko, Eze, Udeh, Okoloagu and Chuka-Okosa (2015) who opined that an effective school principal is a committed administrative head, a manager, a community public relations officer, a supervisor, an instructional leader, a curriculum developer and a catalyst of planned revolution in the educational system.

It was however found that senior secondary schools in South-South region of Nigeria were internally inefficient. What probably could be responsible for this despite the effective principals' administrative and leadership roles could be due to poor availability of basic school facilities and dearth of qualified teachers in the rural and less developed communities in the region. Such a scenario could demotivate students from investing their time in secondary education. Consequently, majority of the students might dropout or withdraw from school for fishing, farming or menial jobs. Thus resulting to wastage in the system. Nevertheless, this findings is at variance

with Kolawole and Ogbiye (2020) who found in a related study that secondary schools were internally efficient due to adequate utilization of available human and physical resources in Ekiti State, Nigeria.

The findings which stated that there is no significant relationship between principals' leadership roles effectiveness and internal efficiency of secondary schools is startling. It also contradicts the views of Umar, Kennyathulla and Hogue (2021) that effective school leadership stimulates parents, teachers and community support for realization of school vision and mission which promotes school internal efficiency. However, when teaching staff are not motivated by their employers, their level of job commitment in the teaching and learning process may be compromised thereby resulting to under learning and students' academic failure. Parents and community support is germane for a meaningful and successful academic career of students. The absence of this could result to school internal efficiency despite the school administrators' leadership and administrative role effectiveness.

The study also revealed that there was no significant correlation between principals' instructional supervisory role effectiveness and internal efficiency of secondary schools in South-south region of Nigeria. This could possibly be as a result of intervening variables such as lack of basic learning materials like textbook, poor concentration as a result of hunger, environmental factor such as fear of insecurity and simply lack of interest.

It was found in hypothesis three that a significant relationship existed principals' charismatic leadership style and internal efficiency of public senior secondary schools in less developed communities of South- South region of Nigeria. This finding appears to support the opinion of Nusche and Moorman in Dabessa and Cheramlak (2021). They opined that the leadership style adopted is very critical in influencing school learning and outcome. It can therefore be inferred that a school principal who is charismatic in leadership has a positive personality such as patient, humility, wisdom, creative and innovative and passionate about the learners' needs. A school leader who combines professional qualification with acceptable personality in the school system is likely to achieve high internal school efficiency expressed in large students output worthy of character and learning.

Lastly, hypothesis four also revealed that there was a significant relationship between principals; functional leadership style and internal efficiency of public senior secondary school system in less developed communities in South-south states of Nigeria. The finding corroborates the assertion of Nwankwo (2014) and Bush (2018). They asserted that leadership and functional leadership in particular is a commitment to school goals attainment. The implication of this finding therefore is that, functional school leadership style is that principal who is conscious of his/her great responsibilities as an educational administrator. A functional is an instructional leader and an effective communicator. He is responsive to the needs of the teachers and students; and believes

in all stakeholders' participation; parents especially in the provision of quality education service delivery. Such a leadership style is capable of promoting and sustaining high school internal efficiency.

CONCLUSION

Public Senior Secondary Schools in less developed communities in South-South Nigeria are not internally efficient as a result of high wastage ratio (0.5) of the enrolled students in the studied schooling years. Also principals' effectiveness in leadership roles and style adopted has a strong positive correlation to school internal efficiency. Nevertheless, the efficiency of a school is exclusively determined by principals' leadership effectiveness but a function of many factors such as availability of physical facilities, provision of quality teaching manpower, learners motivation, school safety and its environment. A school leader needs to be technical and functional in the discharge of his administrative duties to achieve school internal efficiency and effectiveness.

Recommendations

Arising from the findings of this study therefore, the following recommendations were made.

1. School principals should be encouraged to be committed to their leadership roles that could engender high job performance and students' academic success.
2. Government should regularly retrain school administrators. This will serve as a capacity building strategy that will promote quality education services that will ultimately guarantee school internal efficiency despite emerging challenges confronting schools.
3. School principals as *primus inter pares* should increase their instructional supervisory roles. Effective teaching and learning is capable of stimulating learners interest in school. They should regularly monitor pedagogical activities and be willing and ready to assist both the teachers and students who might have any challenge.
4. The disciplinary role of a school principal needs to be stepped-up. A discipline school will assure high school enrolment of students who are responsible and devoted to both curricular and extral curricular activities in the school.
5. School principals should ensure that teachers and students are motivated. Learning facilities should be provided and maintained, school internal security should be guaranteed. A harmonious school-community relationship should be fostered through effective leadership style by school administrators to stimulate high students' enrolment and successful graduate output.

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