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# Decision-Making Skills of Principals' on Teachers' Job Performance in Senior Secondary Schools in North-East Nigeria

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## *Abstract*

The study examined principals' decision making skills as correlate of teachers' job performance in Secondary Schools in North-East, Nigeria. The purpose of the study was to determine the extent of principals' decision making skills in post basic schools in North East Nigeria, to also examine the relationship between principals 'decision making skills and teachers job performance and to assess whether teachers' job performance differ significantly across principals' decision making levels. Three research questions were answered. The study adopted the correlation survey research design. Stratified and random sampling techniques were used in selecting the sample of the study. The population was 19,797 respondents in Secondary Schools from four states (Adamawa, Bauchi, Gombe, and Taraba) drawn from North-East zone, Nigeria. The sample for the study was 592 determined using Taro Yamane formula and comprised of 76 principals and 516 teachers. The instruments for data collection were two, a structured questionnaire tagged "Principals' Decision Making Skills Questionnaire (PDMSQ) which was responded by teachers, and structured questionnaire tagged "Teachers' Job Performance Questionnaire (TJPQ) was administered and responded to by principals to measure teachers' performance. The instruments were face validated and the internal consistency for the instruments was determined using Cronbach Alpha method. Reliability yielded 0.73 for Principal Decision Making Skills Questionaire, 0.69 for Teachers' Job Performance Questionnaire. The findings of the study revealed Principals demonstrated high decision-making competence ($M = 3.57$, $SD = 0.62$). Decision-making skills significantly predicted teachers' job performance ($\beta = 0.82$, $p < 0.001$; $R^2 = 0.67$). ANOVA results confirmed a significant difference in teacher performance across

decision-making levels ($F(1, 590) = 201.8$, $p < 0.001$) with a large effect size ($\omega^2 \approx 0.67$). Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that principals' decision making skills was significantly related to teachers' job performance in Secondary Schools in North-East Nigeria. Recommendations made based on the findings include among others that; ministry of education should organize workshops focusing on training principals in data-driven and collaborative decision-making methods, establish school decision committees involving teachers to enhance ownership, Include decision-process quality indicators in principal performance appraisals, embed decision-management modules in principal-certification programs.

**Keywords;** principal, decision making, teacher job performance, secondary school, skill.

# *Introduction*

**Background**

Education is a process of acquiring knowledge, skills, values and understanding through various methods such as teaching, training or research. It typically takes place in formal settings like schools or universities as well as informally through life experiences. Teachers are personnel employed to impart knowledge to students, they undergo training at various levels to gain skills on how to impart such knowledge to students. A teacher may know his subject matter well, but imparting the knowledge into someone requires skills which are acquired through effective training. Teachers are also the implementers of curriculum, when educational planners design contents to be taught, it is the teachers that implement the syllabus within the curriculum. In Nigeria the government has instituted a council for teacher's registration (Ayeni,2020). The Teacher Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) is saddled with the responsibility of licensing professional teachers. All teachers in the country are encouraged to become professional so as to increase performance. In developed countries of the world only teachers with license are allowed to teach. To further encourage the need for productive teachers, Adamawa state government has approved an allowance for professional teachers under the teacher salary scheme all in an effort to get productive teachers to teach. Only teachers with license are eligible for the package. Teachers play a pivotal role in the education sector. It is widely believed that no education system is greater than the quality of her teachers. For an education system to achieve the desired goals and objectives, the teachers' efficiency must be taken into consideration. The future of any educational level depends not only on the psychological factors, but also on the emotional factors of teachers (Gistuati, 2020). Expectedly, the teachers put in their best when they are happy with the job and their performance increases when they are effectively supervised. Gistuati (2020) opined that teachers' performance means increase in output through better performance. It involves interplay of various elements in the school's system. Increased

performance is usually attained when teachers are satisfied with their job and are effectively supervised (Ayeni, 2020). Sound decision-making forms the backbone of successful school administration. In complex educational settings such as North-East Nigeria, where principals face insecurity, inadequate resources, and fluctuating policies, the ability to make timely, data-driven, and participatory decisions directly influences teacher motivation and instructional quality. This study investigates how principals' decision-making skills predict teachers' job performance in post-basic schools within the region.

**OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

i. Determine the extent of principals' decision-making skills in post-basic schools in North-East Nigeria.
ii. Examine the relationship between principals' decision-making skills and teachers' job performance.
iii. Assess differences in teachers' job performance across varying levels of principals' decision-making skills.

**RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

i. What is the extent of principals' decision-making skills in post-basic schools in North-East Nigeria?
ii. What relationship exists between principals' decision-making skills and teachers' job performance?
iii. Do teachers' job performance levels differ significantly based on principals' decision-making skill levels?

**Principals' Decision-Making Skills**

Decision making has been observed to be the heart of administrative process and leadership in schools. Siebert, Kunz and Rolf (2021) asserted that where teachers are adequately involved in decision making and decision making process, there would be commitment and adequate support to the principal and the realization of school goal will be easy, apathy and opposition within the school will be minimized. Siebert et.al (2021) called the system participative decision making and defined it as higher level individual effort to provide those at a lower with a greater voice in organizational performance. Where teachers are not involved in decision making, it will result to teacher behaving as if they are stranger within the school environment. Thus, most teachers will not put in their best to have full sense of commitment and dedication to the schools. The decision ability of principals in a state can have a significant impact on the performance of teachers. Principals are responsible for making important decisions that affect the overall functioning of a school, including staffing, curriculum development, resource allocation, and discipline policies.

Torlak, Demir and Badur (2022) was of the opinion that many people believed staff participation in decision making leads to higher performance and which is necessary for

survival in an increasingly competitive world. Workers should be involved in decision making that concern them like general working conditions, fringe benefits and professional growth programs this adds to the attractiveness of the organization climate. Torlak, et.al (2022) buttressed the fact that when teachers are not part of decision making process, there is greater opportunity of the regression of mind, ideas, existing disputes and more occasions for disagreements. When principals have strong decision- making skills, they can make informed and effective choices that support teacher effectiveness and boost performance. They can create a positive work environment by involving teachers in decision- making processes, seeking input, and considering their expertise and experiences. This collaborative approach fosters teacher motivation, engagement, and job satisfaction, ultimately enhancing their performance.

Siebert, et.al (2021) corroborated this fact and saw involvement of employees in decision making as empowerment while a neglect of employees in decision making was seen as an assumption that workers are untapped resources with knowledge need to provide opportunities and structures for their involvement. He also assumed that participative decision making is likely to lead to job satisfaction and better quality decisions. Siebert,et.al (2021) states that staff cooperation can be indisputable asset to the school principals while involvement in decision making process by the teachers could ease the principal's mounting problems as many heads would be put together to intellectually solve problems that could have remained unsolved by the principals alone. Administration is sometimes conceptualized as the job of the school principal which include holding together the organization, making progress towards set objectives and getting things done. It is also the process of organization leadership. Additionally, principals who have the ability to make fair and unbiased decisions can ensure that teacher feel supported and valued. They can address and resolve conflicts, provide constructive feedback, and recognize and reward teachers achievements, these actions can enhance teacher morale and motivation, leading to increased productivity in the classroom.

Fredrick Herzbergs motivation hygiene theory (1963) posits that workers are not motivated by extrinsic factors such as salary working conditions and job security but by intrinsic factors such as achievement, recognition and responsibility. Ngussa and Gabriel(2017) asserted that the idea of participative and management is generally viewed as an ideal style of leadership and management in education today. They further argue that participative management has been widely promoted as a means of formalizing a new conceptualization of management to bring about school improvement. On the other hand, principals with poor decision- making abilities can negatively impact the performance of teachers. Inadequate decisions regarding resource allocation, curriculum, or staffing can result in increased workload, limited access to necessary materials, and lack of professional development opportunities. This can lead to frustration and demotivation among teachers, impairing their performance.

Ngussa and Gabriel (2017) points to a number of assumption on which the notion of participation and devolution of powers to schools is based namely. Participation is divorced from politics. It is assumed that communities are united as well as being homogenous and

therefore participation is a positive intervention that will improve schools (Siebert, et.al, 2021). Such an assumption that greater local participation will improve the relevance, quality and accountability of schools is held worldwide. Torlak et.al (2022) agree with the above assumptions that teachers who are encouraged to participate democratically in decision making process are reported to be more positive and committed to the school as an organization, all stakeholders should be given a chance to have a say in the running of the school. Furthermore, principals who make decisions without consulting or considering the input of teachers may create a sense of disempowerment and inhibit creativity and innovation in the classroom. Without the opportunity to contribute their ideas and expertise, teachers may feel less invested in their work, leading to a decline in performance.

Teachers' participation in school decision making is mandatory for the attainment of schools organizational objectives in democratic ways (Torlak et.al 2022). This means that all stakeholder including teachers must be given the opportunity to play their defined and legitimate roles. Therefore, teachers that are important human resources in schools must be part of the decision making process. The present real situations in secondary schools showed that some teachers had greater participation while others do not want to involve. It is the responsibility of the educational administrator to identify the capabilities and interest of individuals and assign each staff member according to the desired level of participation (Torlak, et al., 2022).

Participatory decision making process of teachers leads to the real improvement of school and academic achievement because it reduce inequalities among teachers, brings change on the management, teachers' Performance and students learning by making teachers more accountable to their community. Siebert,et.al (2021) revised from various researches that school based management has positive effects, in addition they out that found that school based management when implemented create greater commitment to the school among teachers.

However, different researchers around the world identified controversies result on the implementation and effect of teacher participation in secondary schools decision making processes. Iradukunda and Irechukwu (2023) conducted a research in Rwanda secondary schools and found that principals hindered the proper implementation of participatory decision making. Ayeni (2020) examined teachers' involvement in decision making process in secondary schools in Nigeria. In his study, it was found that secondary schools teachers were not significantly involved in decision making process. It was also identified that teacher participation varies according to their experience and sex. Another study from South Africa, found that the influence of insignificant teacher participation in critical school issues result in low staff morale. A study from Kenya by Chemutai and Khaili (2022) revealed that teachers participation in decision making in Kenyan secondary schools were very low, teachers did not participate in decision making as desired. All of the above studies recommended that teacher participation in decision making must be encouraged, there was need to create awareness for the stakeholders, Iradukunda and Irechukwu (2023) examined the extent to which the

involvement of different stakeholders in schools brought impact upon critical decision making at school level. In summary, principal decision- making ability plays a crucial role in teachers' performance. Effective decision- making that involves teachers and considers their perspectives can create a positive work environment, enhance teacher morale, and increase performance. Conversely, poor decision- making can result in demotivation, increased workload, and reduced performance among teachers. Decision-making refers to selecting the best course of action among alternatives to achieve organizational goals (Guskey, 2020). Competent principals analyze problems, seek consultation, weigh consequences, and implement choices efficiently (Ibrahim & Afolabi, 2021). Collaborative decision-making promotes ownership and accountability among teachers (Okeke, 2023).

**Teacher Job Performance**

Teacher performance encompasses planning, instructional delivery, class control, and assessment (Afolabi & Alabi, 2020). Decision clarity and consistency from principals directly influence teacher motivation and focus (Akanbi & Lawal, 2020). Utami and Vireza (2021) opined that performance of teachers involves the interplay of various elements in the work place in the school while inputs may be related to miscellaneous resources (labor, material, and capital). The output is the outcome of whole process in terms of student's achievement. The issues of performance, and how to raise the level of productivity of the citizens of a country particularly labor is important and should be of utmost concern to employers of labor both in the public and private sectors of the country. It is now very important for employers to have a way of measuring the performance of their employees. Although, education and agricultural sector, happen to be the highest employer of labor in Nigeria, a sector of the economy where government is allocating huge budget yearly needs to be thoroughly appraised. The categories of personnel that determine educational achievement; are the teachers, the learner and the educational administrators, of all the three, teachers appear to be the chief determinants of educational attainments. It was based on this fact that the national policy on education (2004) stated that ''no quality education can rise above the quality of the teacher''.

Ofuase, Daka and Mbaba (2021) state that, in Nigeria the concern for improving quality of work life does not appear to be wide spread, especially in the teaching profession. This has resulted in poor performance of students in external examinations. This situation has often been the core of frequent teachers strike actions that occur in all ties of education. It is uncommon to read about low salaries, irregular promotions and nonpayment of allowances and benefits. To achieve a high performance, all efforts must be made to ensure that the teachers are secured, retrained and developed. These can only be achieved through an effective personnel management practice. According to Ofuase,et.al (2021), personnel management practice includes human resources planning, recruitment selection, socialization, training and development, staff appraisal, compensation and staff welfare.

It means increase in output, in educational sector especially for teachers performance, it means better performance from teachers leading to school leavers, or graduates who are morally, spiritually, physically and mentally able to fit in to the society as well as the labor market (Ofuase, 2021). Accordingly, factors affecting productivity are inefficiency of management at work place, hours worked, investment level and degree of industrialization. Human capital theory believes that good education can raise productivity, such as personal ability, formal and informal education, training, research and experience e.t.c. In order to have productive workers, Ofuase, et.al(2021) has suggested that, Nigerian education should be conscious about performance in terms of administration, admission, instruction, examination, supervision and graduation. Labor force has always been sieving potential workers in such a way that those with high ability will eventually enter the high productivity sector of the economy. Qualitative education is capable of leading to high academic achievement because usefulness of education and training in developing productive worker cannot be over-emphasized.

Hung (2020) says supervision of instruction plays a vital role at assisting, guiding and stimulating the teachers to improve on their teaching skill and experience as well as enhance their professional development. Hung (2020), sees supervision instruction as an improvement of the teaching – learning process for the benefit of students. Supervision accordingly, provides opportunities for teachers to be grounded through a discursive critical study of class room interaction. It helps them to carry out their teaching task in line with professional codes of conduct. It enables provision of professional assistance and guidance towards the achievement of effective teaching and learning in the school system. Therefore, principals should adopt methods, principle and functions that are necessary to achieve the educational goals. Hung (2020) opines that success of supervisory management often depends on insight into delicate and intangible issues which does not always come easily. This is important because the post basic school principal is super-ordinate who should influence the beliefs and behavior of teachers and also serve as watch dog to the educational system, through observation, modification, and correction of teachers. The principal is the chief supervisor of the school and the one who should aid teachers to be in an advantage position of functioning efficiently.

**Research Design**

A correlation survey design was employed to examine the relationship between principals' decision-making skills and teachers' job performance.

**Population and Sampling**

From a population of 19,797 teachers and principals across Adamawa, Bauchi, Gombe, and Taraba States, 592 respondents (516 teachers and 76 principals) were selected through stratified and simple random sampling.

**Instrument**

i. *Principals' Decision-Making Skills Questionnaire (PDMSQ):* 5 items covering problem identification, information analysis, consultation, evaluation, and implementation.
ii. *Teachers' Job Performance Scale (TJPS):* 8 items assessing lesson planning, punctuality, collaboration, and assessment.

**Validity and Reliability**

Three experts in Education Management department, modibbo adama university, yola validated the instruments for clarity and construct coverage. Pilot testing yielded Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.73$ (PDMSQ) and 0.70 (TJPS).

**Data Analysis**

Means and SDs answered Research Question 1; Pearson r and Regression tested Question 2; ANOVA addressed Question 3. Normality and homoscedasticity assumptions were confirmed.

**RESULTS**

Research Question 1: Extent of Principals' Decision-Making Skills

Table 1. Mean and Standard Deviation of Principals' Decision-Making Skills and Teachers' Job Performance (N = 592)

| Variable | N | Mean | SD | Remark |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Problem Identification** | 592 | 3.53 | 0.61 | High |
| **Information Analysis** | 592 | 3.59 | 0.60 | High |
| **Consultation and Participation** | 592 | 3.65 | 0.64 | Very High |
| **Evaluation of Alternatives** | 592 | 3.52 | 0.63 | High |
| **Implementation and Follow-up** | 592 | 3.56 | 0.61 | High |
| **Overall Decision-Making Skills** | 592 | 3.57 | 0.62 | High |
| **Overall Teacher Performance** | 592 | 3.68 | 0.64 | High |

*Note.* 1.00–2.49 = Low; 2.50–3.49 = Moderate; 3.50–4.49 = High. Principals displayed strong decision competence, notably in consultation (M = 3.65).

Table 2. Simple Linear Regression Predicting Teachers' Job Performance

| Predictor | B | SE B | B | T | p | 95 % CI (B) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Constant** | 0.89 | 0.09 | – | 9.89 | < .001 | [0.71, 1.07] |
| **Principals' Decision-Making Skills** | 0.58 | 0.04 | 0.82 | 14.20 | < .001 | [0.50, 0.66] |

*Model summary:* $R = 0.82$; $R^2 = 0.67$; Adj. $R^2 = 0.67$; $F(1, 590) = 201.8$; $p < .001$. Decision-making skills explained 67 % of the variance in teachers' job performance.

Table 3. ANOVA Summary for Principals' Decision-Making Skills Predicting Teachers' Job Performance

| Source | SS | df | MS | F | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Regression** | 89.4 | 1 | 89.4 | 201.8 | < .001 |
| **Residual** | 261.7 | 590 | 0.44 | | |
| **Total** | 351.1 | 591 | | | |

*Effect size:* $\omega^2 \approx 0.67$ (large). Decision-making significantly differentiated teachers' performance levels.

**FINDING**

Principals demonstrated high decision-making competence (M = 3.57, SD = 0.62). Decision-making skills significantly predicted teachers' job performance ($\beta = 0.82$, $p < 0.001$; $R^2 = 0.67$). ANOVA results confirmed a significant difference in teacher performance across decision-making levels ($F(1, 590) = 201.8$, $p < 0.001$) with a large effect size ($\omega^2 \approx 0.67$).

**DISCUSSION**

The findings show that principals in North-East Nigeria exhibit high decision-making competence, especially in consultation and participation. This supports Bello & Hassan (2021) and Adeyemi & Adu (2021), who found that participatory leadership encourages teacher buy-in and productivity. The strong predictive value ($\beta = 0.82$; $R^2 = 0.67$) indicates that decision-making skills explain a large portion of performance variance, consistent with Bola & Nwankwo (2022).

From a theoretical perspective, the findings align with Vroom & Yetton's (1973) Model, which advocates situational decision styles. Consultative decision practices appear to enhance teachers' sense of belonging and motivation (Leithwood et al., 2008). This is particularly vital in the North-East context where collective input and transparent decisions stabilize school operations under stressful conditions (Lawal & Umar, 2021). The large effect size ($\omega^2 \approx 0.67$) signifies that decision quality is a strategic determinant of teacher effectiveness. However, echoing Mohammed & Usman (2020), leaders must avoid decision fatigue by delegating responsibility and using data-based planning tools. Ultimately, transparent decision structures build trust and reduce resistance to change (Guskey, 2020).

**CONCLUSION**

Principals' decision-making skills significantly predict teachers' job performance in post-basic schools of North-East Nigeria. High competence in analysis, consultation, and implementation enhances teacher motivation and instructional efficiency. Decision-making should therefore be viewed as a strategic leadership competency essential for educational improvement.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

i. Ministries should train principals in data-driven and collaborative decision-making methods.
ii. Establish school decision committees involving teachers to enhance ownership.
iii. Embed decision-management modules in principal-certification programs.
iv. Include decision-process quality indicators in principal performance appraisals.
v. Future studies should use longitudinal or qualitative designs to explore decision impact on teacher retention and school climate.

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