

## **CAPACITY BUILDING PRACTICES AND LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ENUGU EDUCATION ZONE, NIGERIA: IMPLICATIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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**Abstract** - This study examined capacity building and leadership in education with emphasis on capacity building practices adopted for educational leadership development and how such practices enhance administrative competence and institutional productivity in Secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone, Nigeria, Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population comprised 33 principals and 1576 teachers in the 33 public secondary schools in the three LGAs in Enugu Education Zone. The sample size was 351 respondents made up of 33 principals and 318 teachers obtained through multi-stage sampling procedure. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled “Capacity Building and Educational Leadership Questionnaire (CBELQ)” and analyzed using mean and standard deviation. Findings revealed that capacity building practices such as workshops, seminars, in-service training, mentoring, ICT training, conferences, and professional development programmes are commonly adopted for leadership development in educational institutions. The study further revealed that capacity building significantly enhances administrative competence by improving decision-making skills, communication effectiveness, instructional supervision, staff motivation, conflict management, and policy implementation. It also improves institutional productivity through enhanced efficiency, innovation, accountability, and improved organizational performance. The study concluded that capacity building is a critical determinant of effective educational leadership and sustainable institutional development. It recommended that governments and educational stakeholders should institutionalize continuous professional development programmes, strengthen leadership training structures, and provide adequate funding for capacity building initiatives in educational institutions.

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**Keywords:** Capacity building, educational leadership, administrative competence, institutional productivity, professional development

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### **Introduction**

Education remains one of the most powerful instruments for national transformation, human capital development, social reconstruction, cultural preservation, economic advancement, and political stability across the world. According to the United Nations Development Programme 2030 (2024), no nation can rise above the quality of its educational system, and no educational system can function effectively beyond the competence, vision, and administrative capacity of its leaders. This explains why educational leadership has increasingly become a major concern among governments, policymakers, scholars, educational planners, and development agencies globally. Maxwell (2018) explained that, in contemporary society characterized by rapid technological advancement, globalization, policy reforms, organizational complexities, and increasing educational demands, educational leaders are expected to possess dynamic competencies, innovative administrative abilities, strategic thinking skills, and

transformational capacities necessary for effective institutional management and sustainable educational development.

The changing realities of the twenty-first century have placed enormous responsibilities on educational leaders. According to Ghamrawi (2023), school administrators, principals, deans, heads of departments, provosts, rectors, and vice-chancellors are no longer expected merely to supervise academic activities; rather, they are expected to serve as visionary leaders capable of managing change, promoting innovation, motivating staff, ensuring accountability, improving instructional quality, maintaining institutional discipline, integrating technology, and driving sustainable development goals in education. Consequently, the issue of capacity building has emerged as a critical strategy for strengthening leadership effectiveness in educational institutions.

The concept of capacity building has gained tremendous attention in educational administration and planning because educational systems can only achieve meaningful progress when administrators and institutional leaders possess adequate knowledge, professional competence, managerial skills, technological literacy, emotional intelligence, and decision-making abilities. Morgan (2006) articulated that capacity building therefore becomes a continuous process of empowering educational leaders through training, retraining, mentoring, workshops, seminars, conferences, professional development programmes, and experiential learning opportunities aimed at improving Performance and organizational productivity. According to United Nations Development Programme (2020), capacity building refers to the process through which individuals, organizations, and institutions develop, strengthen, and maintain the capabilities required to achieve developmental objectives over time. This definition emphasizes sustainability, institutional growth, and continuous improvement. Similarly, Eade (2007) defined capacity building as the enhancement of individual abilities, institutional structures, knowledge systems, and organizational processes necessary for effective performance and sustainable development. This definition highlights the multidimensional nature of capacity building as involving human, organizational, and systemic transformation. In another perspective, Morgan (2022) described capacity building as the process by which individuals and organizations obtain, improve, and retain the skills, knowledge, tools, equipment, and resources needed to perform their functions competently and sustainably. This definition stresses skill acquisition, competence enhancement, and long-term institutional effectiveness.

From the foregoing definitions, capacity building in education can therefore be understood as a systematic and continuous process of improving the professional competence, administrative abilities, leadership qualities, technological skills, and organizational effectiveness of educational personnel for efficient service delivery and institutional development. Capacity building is not a one-time event; it is a lifelong developmental process that equips educational leaders with the ability to respond effectively to emerging challenges in the educational sector. It involves formal training, in-service education, mentoring, collaborative learning, coaching, leadership exposure, digital literacy development, policy orientation, and experiential professional growth.

In educational institutions, capacity building manifests in various forms such as leadership development programmes, administrative workshops, ICT training, curriculum implementation seminars, policy orientation programmes, research development initiatives, conflict management training, financial management workshops, and quality assurance exercises. These are referred to as capacity building practices. Morgan (2022)

also stated that capacity building practices refer to organized activities, programmes, and professional development initiatives aimed at improving the competence, effectiveness, and productivity of educational leaders and personnel. These practices are designed to strengthen administrative skills, leadership abilities, technological competence, instructional supervision, communication skills, and organizational management (United Nations Development Programme, 2020). Morgan opined that one of the most common capacity building practices in educational institutions is workshops and seminars. Workshops expose educational leaders to modern administrative strategies, innovative leadership techniques, policy changes, and contemporary educational practices. Through workshops and seminars, administrators gain opportunities to share experiences, discuss institutional challenges, and acquire new professional knowledge.

Another major capacity building practice is in-service training. In-service training programmes are organized to improve the professional competence of educational personnel while they remain actively engaged in service. Northouse (2022) observed that in-service training programmes equip administrators and teachers with updated knowledge and skills needed for effective performance in modern educational environments. Mentoring and coaching programmes also constitute important capacity building practices in educational institutions. Through mentoring, experienced administrators guide newly appointed leaders by sharing professional experiences, leadership strategies, and institutional management techniques. Mentoring helps young administrators develop confidence, leadership competence, and problem-solving abilities.

Similarly, conferences and professional development programmes provide educational leaders with opportunities for networking, collaborative learning, policy orientation, and exposure to global educational trends. Eze (2025) observed that educational conferences also promote research dissemination, intellectual interaction, and exchange of innovative ideas among educational professionals. ICT training has equally become a major aspect of educational capacity building due to increasing technological advancement in education. Educational administrators are now expected to manage digital learning systems, online communication platforms, educational databases, and technology-driven instructional processes. Consequently, digital literacy training has become indispensable for effective educational leadership in the twenty-first century. Furthermore, collaborative learning and peer interaction are increasingly recognized as effective capacity building strategies in education. Jessen, Fangyun and Anulika (2024) asserted that collaborative leadership practices encourage teamwork, collective problem-solving, professional interaction, and shared decision-making among educational personnel. Such practices improve institutional cohesion, innovation, and organizational productivity. From the above, explanations, it is obvious that a school principal who undergoes regular leadership and digital management training is more likely to handle staff coordination, student discipline, instructional supervision, conflict resolution, and educational innovation more effectively than an administrator who lacks professional exposure and continuous training opportunities. Thus, capacity building serves as the intellectual and professional engine that drives educational leadership effectiveness.

Leadership remains one of the most discussed concepts in educational administration because every organization rises or falls largely on the quality of its leadership. According to John In the view of Peter Northouse (2022), leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common objective. This definition highlights leadership as a relational and goal-oriented process.

Similarly, Yukl Gary (2020) defined leadership as the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it effectively, while facilitating individual and collective efforts toward shared objectives. This definition stresses communication, coordination, cooperation, and collective productivity. According to Maxwell (2018), educational leadership involves the ability to influence, direct, coordinate, inspire, supervise, and mobilize human and material resources toward the achievement of educational goals and objectives. Effective leadership creates vision, inspires commitment, promotes teamwork, enhances productivity, and fosters institutional progress.

Educational leadership, therefore, refers to the ability of educational administrators to guide, influence, coordinate, supervise, and inspire members of educational institutions toward the realization of educational objectives. In view of Yan, Clive and Allan (2024), educational leaders are expected to possess managerial competence, emotional intelligence, communication skills, policy interpretation abilities, strategic planning capacities, and innovative thinking necessary for effective institutional administration. In schools and tertiary institutions, leadership determines the quality of teaching and learning, staff morale, students' academic achievement, discipline, institutional climate, and overall organizational productivity.

In modern educational systems, leadership is gradually shifting from authoritarian administration to transformational and participatory leadership approaches that encourage collaboration, innovation, inclusiveness, accountability, teamwork, and shared decision-making. Eze (2025) stated that transformation has become necessary because contemporary educational institutions operate in highly dynamic environments requiring leaders who are flexible, technologically driven, emotionally intelligent, research-oriented, and professionally competent. Educational leaders must therefore continuously update their knowledge and managerial capacities in order to remain relevant and effective in the administration of educational institutions. The relationship between capacity building and leadership in education is inseparable because effective leadership cannot thrive in the absence of continuous professional development and administrative competence. Gary (2020) observed that educational leaders who lack training opportunities often experience difficulties in policy implementation, communication, supervision, conflict management, technological integration, and institutional planning. On the contrary, leaders who undergo regular capacity development programmes tend to demonstrate greater efficiency, confidence, innovation, accountability, adaptability, and administrative effectiveness.

In recent years, the Nigerian educational system has continued to experience serious administrative and leadership challenges such as poor planning, weak policy implementation, inadequate supervision, staff dissatisfaction, ineffective communication, corruption, declining educational standards, resistance to innovation, and poor institutional management. Ugwanyi and Marcus (2024) were of the opinion that many educational administrators assume leadership positions without adequate preparation, managerial training, technological competence, or leadership orientation. In some cases, appointments into educational leadership positions are based on seniority rather than administrative competence and professional preparedness. This situation has negatively affected institutional productivity, staff performance, policy implementation, educational quality, and sustainable development in the educational sector.

Furthermore, globalization and technological advancement have significantly altered the nature of educational administration across the world. According to Jessen and

Merok (2022), educational leaders are now expected to manage digital learning systems, integrate artificial intelligence into administration, analyze educational data, supervise virtual learning environments, coordinate interdisciplinary collaborations, and respond effectively to emerging educational trends. These increasing responsibilities require continuous leadership capacity development in order to improve institutional adaptability and educational effectiveness.

Scholars have therefore argued that investment in leadership capacity building is one of the most effective strategies for improving educational quality and institutional sustainability. Hence, Morgan (2022) articulated that capacity building enhances decision-making abilities, strengthens communication skills, promotes strategic planning, improves conflict resolution capacities, enhances staff motivation, and fosters innovative leadership practices. It also helps educational leaders to adapt to policy reforms, technological changes, and contemporary administrative challenges in the educational sector. Educational institutions that neglect leadership development and professional capacity building may struggle with stagnation, administrative inefficiency, poor educational outcomes, and organizational decline. Consequently, there is an urgent need for continuous investment in leadership development programmes capable of equipping educational administrators with the competencies required for effective educational management in the twenty-first century, Ghamrawi (2023). It is against this background that this study examined capacity building and leadership effectiveness in education with a view to understanding how professional development and competence enhancement contribute to effective educational administration, institutional productivity, and sustainable educational development.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The achievement of educational goals and sustainable national development depends largely on the effectiveness of educational leadership. Educational leaders are expected to provide vision, strategic direction, administrative coordination, policy implementation, staff motivation, instructional supervision, conflict management, and institutional innovation. However, despite the enormous responsibilities placed on educational administrators, many educational institutions in Nigeria still experience serious leadership and administrative challenges such as poor decision-making, ineffective communication, weak supervision, poor policy implementation, staff dissatisfaction, corruption, low productivity, declining educational standards, and resistance to innovation. One major factor responsible for these challenges appeared to be inadequate capacity building for educational leaders at every level of education. It is widely observed that some educational leaders rely on outdated administrative practices that fail to address the complex realities of modern educational systems. The absence of continuous training opportunities, workshops, mentoring programmes, and leadership development initiatives further weakened administrative effectiveness in educational institutions.

Moreover, the rapid advancement in technology, globalization, digital transformation, and emerging educational reforms have increased the complexity of educational administration. Educational leaders are now expected to manage technologically driven learning environments, integrate digital innovations into administration, coordinate diverse institutional activities, and respond effectively to changing educational policies and societal expectations. Unfortunately, many educational institutions still lack adequate structures for leadership development and professional

capacity enhancement. Poor leadership capacity building leads to ineffective school administration, poor teacher morale, students' poor academic performance, industrial conflicts, policy failures, low institutional productivity, and decline in public confidence in the educational system. Despite the recognized importance of capacity building, there remains inadequate attention to systematic leadership development programmes in many educational institutions. Several empirical studies have examined educational leadership, professional development, and institutional effectiveness, however, most of these studies were conducted outside the specific context of public secondary schools in Nigeria and concentrated largely on leadership outcomes rather than specifically examining the various capacity building practices adopted for educational leadership development and how such practices enhance administrative competence and institutional productivity. Furthermore, many previous studies emphasized correlational and predictive relationships without adequately providing descriptive evidence on existing capacity building practices available to educational leaders in schools. There is therefore a paucity of descriptive studies that comprehensively examine capacity building practices and their contributions to administrative competence and institutional productivity within the Nigerian educational system, particularly in public secondary schools in Enugu State. It is against this identified gap in literature that this study investigated capacity building practices for educational leadership development and how capacity building enhances administrative competence and institutional productivity in public secondary schools in Enugu state.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study;

1. What are the capacity building practices adopted for educational leadership development in public secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone?
2. How does capacity building enhance administrative competence and institutional productivity in Enugu Education Zone?

### **Methods**

The research adopted descriptive survey design as it involves obtaining available information from respondents as at the point of study which represent the entire population used for the study. According to Nworgu (2016), when a survey centers on describing some variables in relation of a given population, the descriptive survey research design is the most appropriate. The design was considered appropriate for this study because the study sought to obtain detailed information from respondents concerning the capacity building practices adopted for educational leadership development and how such practices enhance administrative competence and institutional productivity in educational institutions. The design enabled the researcher to collect first-hand information from principals and teachers regarding their perceptions and experiences on leadership development practices without manipulating any variable. The area of the study was all the public secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone, Nigeria. The population comprised 33 principals and 1576 teachers in the 33 public secondary schools in the three LGAs in Enugu Education Zone. The sample size was 351 respondents made up of 33 principals and 318 teachers obtained through multi-stage sampling procedure. Firstly, Taro Yamane formula was used to determine the sample size of 351. Secondly, stratified proportionate random sampling techniques were used to sample 318 teachers from the three local government areas in Enugu Education Zone. A 20- item questionnaire was used to collect data from the respondents. The instrument was structured on a 4-points

likert type scale on which the respondents reacted to. The items in the questionnaire were weighted as follows: Strongly Agree (SA)-4 points, agree (A)- 3 points, disagree (D) -2 points and Strongly Disagree (SD) -1point. The criterion mean of acceptance is 2.50 and above. The instrument was face validated by two senior lecturers in Educational Administration and planning and one in measurement and evaluation, all from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Cronbach Alpha Co-efficient method was used to determine the reliability of the instrument. It yielded a co-efficient of 0.93. A total of 150 copies of the instrument were administered and retrieved. The data was analyzed using mean and standard deviation scores. Any item statement with the mean rating of 2.50 and above was accepted while item statement with a mean rating less than 2.50 was rejected.

## RESULTS

**Research Question 1:** What are the capacity building practices adopted for educational leadership development in public secondary schools in Enugu Education zone?

**Table 1:** Mean responses of principals and teachers on the capacity building practices adopted for educational leadership development in public secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone.

S/N	Item statement	Mean	Std	Decision
1	Educational administrators are regularly sponsored to attend workshops and seminars for leadership development.	3.00	0.29	Agreed
2	Educational institutions organize in-service training programmes for school leaders and administrators.	2.86	0.90	Agreed
3	Mentoring and coaching programmes are provided for newly appointed educational leaders.	2.77	0.96	Agreed
4	Educational leaders are encouraged to participate in conferences and professional development programmes.	2.81	0.72	Agreed
5	Institutions provide ICT training programmes to improve administrative efficiency among educational leaders.	2.57	0.67	Agreed
6	Leadership development programmes are organized to improve decision-making and problem-solving skills.	2.81	0.80	Agreed
7	Educational administrators receive training on effective communication and conflict management strategies.	2.90	0.83	Agreed
8	Educational institutions organize capacity building programmes on policy implementation and strategic planning.	2.76	0.65	Agreed
9	School leaders are exposed to continuous professional development opportunities to improve managerial competence.	2.77	0.77	Agreed
10	Educational administrators are trained on innovative leadership practices and modern educational management techniques.	2.65	0.65	Agreed

**Grand mean = 2.76**

Table 1 identified the capacity building practices adopted for educational leadership development in public secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone. Table 1 indicates that items 1-10 are the capacity building practices adopted for effective educational leadership

development in schools. The grand mean score of 2.76, which is above the criterion mean of 2.50, indicates that the capacity building practices include: workshops/seminars, in-service training programmes, mentoring and coaching, ICT training, conferences, professional development programmes, policy orientation programmes, collaborative learning activities, leadership development workshops, and strategic management training and regular exposure to these professional development programmes significantly improve leadership competence, communication skills, decision-making abilities, policy implementation, conflict management, and administrative effectiveness among educational leaders.

**Research Question 2:** How does capacity building enhance administrative competence and institutional productivity in education?

**Table 2:** Mean responses of principals and teachers on how capacity building enhances administrative competence and institutional productivity in Enugu Education Zone?

S/N	Item statements	Mean	Std	Decision
11	Capacity building improves the decision-making abilities of educational administrators.	3.00	0.76	Agreed
12	Leadership training enhances effective supervision of staff and students in educational institutions.	3.01	0.65	Agreed
13	Capacity building programmes improve communication and interpersonal relationships among educational leaders.	2.92	0.66	Agreed
14	Educational leaders who undergo regular training demonstrate higher administrative efficiency.	2.65	0.71	Agreed
15	Capacity building promotes effective implementation of educational policies and programmes.	2.79	0.59	Agreed
16	Professional development programmes enhance institutional productivity and organizational effectiveness.	2.58	0.50	Agreed
17	Capacity building improves educational leaders' ability to manage conflicts and crises effectively.	2.77	0.72	Agreed
18	Leadership training enhances innovation and adaptability in educational administration.	3.00	0.64	Agreed
19	Capacity building contributes to improved staff motivation and morale in educational institutions.	2.91	0.81	Agreed
20	Continuous professional development enhances the overall quality of educational management and leadership.	2.80	0.79	Agreed

**Grand Mean= 2.79**

Table 2 reveals that capacity building significantly enhances administrative competence and institutional productivity in public secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone. Table 2 indicates that items 11- 20 shows that leadership training improves decision-making abilities, instructional supervision, communication skills, staff motivation, organizational effectiveness, innovation, policy implementation, and conflict management. The grand mean score of 2.79 suggests that educational leaders who undergo continuous professional development demonstrate higher administrative efficiency, greater

confidence, improved leadership effectiveness, and better institutional coordination than those without adequate training opportunities.

### **Discussion**

The findings of the study revealed that educational institutions adopt various capacity building practices for educational leadership development. These practices include workshops and seminars, in-service training programmes, mentoring and coaching programmes, ICT training, conferences, professional development programmes, collaborative learning activities, policy orientation exercises, and strategic leadership training. The findings further revealed that these practices significantly contribute to improving leadership competence, communication skills, managerial effectiveness, instructional supervision, decision-making abilities, and administrative efficiency among educational leaders.

The findings of this study are in agreement with the study of Ghamrawi (2023), Northouse (2022) and Morgan (2006) who believed that leadership development programmes such as workshops, seminars, mentoring, and professional learning activities significantly improve educational leadership effectiveness, instructional supervision, and school administration. The researchers emphasized that continuous professional development exposes school leaders to innovative administrative practices and strengthens their ability to manage educational institutions effectively. Hence, Gery (2020) stated that educational leaders who participate regularly in professional development programmes demonstrate greater innovation, adaptability, accountability, and managerial competence than those without such opportunities. From the findings of this study, it can therefore be concluded that capacity building practices constitute critical instruments for developing competent, innovative, and transformational educational leaders capable of responding effectively to the changing demands and complexities of modern educational administration.

Other findings of the study revealed that capacity building significantly enhances administrative competence and institutional productivity in educational institutions. The findings indicated that educational leaders who undergo regular professional development demonstrate improved decision-making abilities, better communication skills, effective instructional supervision, enhanced conflict management abilities, stronger policy implementation capacities, improved staff motivation, and greater institutional coordination. Maxwell (2018) also revealed that continuous capacity building contributes to innovation, accountability, organizational effectiveness, and overall improvement in educational management.

The findings of this study are in line with the study conducted by Ugwuanyi and Pietsch (2024), and Tan, Dimmock, and Allan Walker (2024) who found that continuous leadership training and professional development significantly improve administrators' competence, leadership confidence, instructional supervision, organizational management, and institutional effectiveness. The scholars further stressed that educational leaders who receive adequate capacity development opportunities perform better in managing staff, implementing educational policies, and coordinating school activities effectively. This means that educational leaders who participate in continuous professional development programmes possess greater abilities in strategic planning, innovation, teamwork, and policy implementation. Based on the findings of this study, it can therefore be concluded that capacity building remains a vital tool for strengthening administrative competence,

improving institutional productivity, promoting effective educational leadership, and ensuring sustainable educational development in contemporary educational institutions.

### **Conclusion**

This study has revealed that capacity building is not merely an administrative routine or organizational formality, but a strategic instrument for strengthening educational leadership, enhancing institutional productivity, improving administrative competence, and sustaining educational development. The study therefore confirmed that effective educational leadership cannot thrive in an atmosphere of professional stagnation, outdated administrative practices, and inadequate managerial competence. Leadership without continuous learning becomes weak, rigid, and ineffective in responding to the realities of contemporary educational administration. Thus, capacity building serves as the intellectual fuel that energizes educational leadership and drives institutional transformation. Consequently, this study strongly concludes that capacity building remains one of the most powerful instrument for revitalizing educational leadership, strengthening administrative competence, enhancing institutional productivity, and achieving sustainable educational development in the twenty-first century. Educational transformation can only become a reality when educational leaders are continuously empowered, intellectually equipped, technologically exposed, professionally developed, and strategically prepared to lead institutions effectively in a rapidly changing world.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Government and educational authorities should institutionalize regular capacity building programmes such as workshops, seminars, conferences, leadership retreats, and professional development trainings for educational administrators at all levels of education.
2. Educational institutions should establish sustainable leadership development centres dedicated to continuous training, mentoring, coaching, and professional growth of school administrators and educational leaders.
3. Principals, vice-principals, deans, heads of departments, and other educational leaders should undergo compulsory leadership and administrative training before assuming leadership positions in educational institutions.
4. Educational leaders should be encouraged and sponsored to participate in national and international conferences, workshops, and professional associations to expose them to global best practices in educational leadership and administration.
5. ICT training and digital literacy programmes should be intensified for educational administrators to enable them effectively manage technology-driven educational systems and digital learning environments.

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