

PRINCIPALS' LEADERSHIP FUNCTIONS AS PREDICTORS OF TEACHERS' JOB PERFORMANCE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NSUKKA EDUCATION ZONE

Agu, Patricia Uzoamaka

Department of Educational Foundations
Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka

Abstract

This study examined principals' leadership functions as a predictor of teachers' job performance in secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone, Enugu State, Nigeria. The study was guided by five research questions and five null hypotheses tested at 0.05 level of significance. A correlational survey research design was adopted. The population of the study consisted of 300 teachers. Given that the population was manageable in size, all the teachers were included in the study, and consequently, no sampling technique was employed. Data were collected using two instruments: the Principals' Leadership Functions Questionnaire (PLFQ), comprising 40 items across four clusters (planning, organizing, directing, and supervising), and the Teachers' Job Performance Questionnaire (TJPQ), comprising 20 items, both structured on a 4-point rating scale. The instruments were validated by three experts and yielded Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficients of 0.82 and 0.79 respectively. Data were analyzed using Simple Linear Regression. The findings revealed that all four leadership functions, namely planning ($R^2 = .131$), organizing ($R^2 = .563$), directing ($R^2 = .172$), and supervising ($R^2 = .184$), significantly predicted teachers' job performance ($p < .05$ in all cases). The organizing function was the strongest predictor, accounting for 56.3% of the variance in teachers' job performance. It was concluded that principals' leadership functions are significant predictors of teachers' job performance in the zone. It was recommended, among other things, that the Enugu State Secondary Education Board should organize capacity-building workshops for principals with emphasis on organizational and supervisory skills, and that principals should adopt participatory planning approaches that involve teachers in school goal-setting.

Keywords: Principals, leadership, teachers, job performance, secondary school

Introduction

Principals play a critical role in the administration and management of secondary schools. Through the performance of various leadership functions, such as supervision, decision-making, communication, motivation, and resource management, principals create conditions that can significantly influence teachers' effectiveness and overall job performance. Consequently, the quality of leadership exhibited by principals has become a major concern in efforts to improve educational outcomes and school effectiveness. For secondary schools to fulfil this critical mandate, teachers must perform their jobs effectively. Teachers' job performance refers to the extent to which teachers carry out their professional duties in the school setting. These duties include lesson plan preparation, instructional delivery, classroom management, use of instructional materials, assessment of students, and record keeping (Adeyemi, 2010; Imhangbe, Okecha & Obozuwa, 2019). Teachers' job performance is a critical determinant of student learning outcomes and school effectiveness. Research has

confirmed that when teachers perform well, students tend to achieve better academic results (Halinger & Heck, 2010; Owens & Valesky, 2015).

However, reports from various parts of Nigeria suggest that teachers' job performance in secondary schools has been less than satisfactory, owing in part to poor leadership from school principals (Adeyemi, 2010; Imhangbe, Okecha, Obozuwa, 2019). Teachers' job performance is a multidimensional concept. Its dimensions include lesson preparation, instructional delivery, classroom management, use of instructional materials, student assessment, and record keeping. Lesson preparation refers to how well teachers plan their lessons before entering the classroom. Instructional delivery refers to the methods and strategies teachers use to communicate subject matter to students. Classroom management involves how teachers maintain order and create a conducive learning environment. Record keeping involves the systematic documentation of student attendance, performance data, and other school-related records. These dimensions are important indicators of teachers' professional commitment and instructional effectiveness (Owan, 2019; Oyewole & Alonge, 2019).

The importance of teachers' job performance extends beyond individual classrooms. When teachers perform well collectively, schools become effective institutions capable of producing graduates who meet national and global standards. Conversely, poor teacher performance contributes to poor student achievement, high dropout rates, and declining public confidence in the education system. In Nsukka Education Zone of Enugu State, concerns have been raised about the quality of teaching in secondary schools, low student performance in external examinations, and poor teacher attitude to work (Akiri & Ugborugbo, 2009). These challenges suggest that there may be a relationship between the leadership functions of principals and the job performance of teachers in this area. The quality of teaching that occurs in classrooms depends on many factors, one of the most significant being the quality of leadership provided by school principals. In Nigeria, the principal is the chief executive officer of the secondary school. The principal is responsible for the day-to-day administration of the school and for directing teachers toward the achievement of educational goals (Chidobi, 2012; Muriana, 2014). Secondary education in Nigeria is managed under the framework of the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004). This policy places the responsibility for school administration on the school principal. The principal is expected to plan school programmes, organize resources, supervise instruction, evaluate teacher performance, maintain discipline, and foster a positive school climate (Nigeria Professional Standards for School Leaders, 2023). These responsibilities collectively constitute the leadership functions of the principal. When these functions are performed well, they are expected to translate into improved teacher job performance.

Leadership, in the context of school administration, refers to the process by which a principal guides, directs, motivates, and influences teachers and other school staff toward the attainment of set educational objectives. This definition aligns with the view of Bush (2011), who described leadership as the exercise of influence aimed at achieving shared goals. Leadership functions are the specific administrative activities and responsibilities carried out by the principal to manage the school effectively. These functions generally include planning, organizing, directing, coordinating and supervising school activities (Fayol, 1949, as cited in Nakpodia, 2009). When principals perform these functions effectively, they create conditions

that motivate teachers to give their best at work. The importance of the principal's leadership functions cannot be overstated. Research has consistently shown that the nature and quality of principal leadership significantly influence teacher performance and, by extension, student achievement. Adeyemi (2010) found that the leadership style of principals significantly affected teachers' job performance in senior secondary schools in Ondo State, Nigeria. Similarly, Imhangbe et al. (2019) established that a combination of democratic, autocratic, and laissez-faire leadership styles explained about 68.3% of the variance in teacher job performance in Edo State. These findings demonstrate that what principals do, and how they do it, directly shapes teacher behaviour in schools.

Planning is one of the key functions of the principal. It involves setting school goals, developing programmes and schedules, and allocating resources to achieve those goals. An effective principal plans the academic calendar, organizes the timetable, and ensures that teachers know what is expected of them in terms of lesson delivery and curriculum coverage. Organizing, another core function, involves grouping school activities, assigning duties to teachers, and coordinating resources to ensure smooth school operations. A well-organized school environment gives teachers clarity about their roles and reduces confusion that may hinder performance. Directing is the leadership function by which the principal guides teachers on how to carry out their duties effectively. It includes giving instructions, providing feedback, motivating staff, and ensuring that teachers follow school policies and procedures. Supervision is closely related to directing and involves monitoring teachers' classroom activities, reviewing lesson plans, and offering constructive feedback to improve instructional quality. Ayeni and Afolabi (2012) noted that effective instructional supervision by principals is positively related to teachers' instructional task performance. Similarly, He, Guo, & Abazie (2024) found significant associations between school principals' instructional leadership and teachers' professional development.

Notwithstanding the recognized importance of principal leadership in driving teacher performance, there is growing evidence that many secondary school principals in Nigeria are not adequately performing their leadership functions. Several reports indicate that principals fail to plan school activities systematically, supervise teachers regularly, maintain effective communication, or evaluate teacher performance objectively. Njoku (2015) noted that most secondary school principals in Nigeria lack the administrative and managerial competence needed to perform their leadership functions optimally. This deficiency in leadership has been linked to teachers' poor attitude toward work, irregular attendance, failure to prepare lesson notes, inadequate use of instructional materials, and poor classroom management. The situation in Nsukka Education Zone is not different. The zone has witnessed persistent challenges in teacher performance and student academic outcomes. Principals have been reported to be ineffective in their supervisory and administrative functions, thereby leaving teachers without proper guidance and motivation (Nakpodia, 2009). Teachers in some schools in the zone reportedly come to class without adequate preparation, fail to complete the school curriculum, and show low commitment to their professional responsibilities. This state of affairs calls for a systematic investigation into the extent to which principals' leadership functions predict teachers' job performance in secondary schools in the zone.

Several studies have examined the relationship between principals' leadership and teacher job performance in Nigeria. Adeyemi (2010) focused on leadership styles in Ondo

State; Imhangbe et al. (2019) examined leadership styles in Edo State; Adeke, Tyokyaa and Mando (2024) investigated leadership styles in Benue State; and Kakaba (2024) explored principals' leadership functions and record keeping in Plateau State missionary schools. While these studies have contributed valuable knowledge, most of them focused on leadership styles rather than leadership functions. There is a conceptual difference: leadership styles refer to how principals relate to their subordinates, while leadership functions refer to the specific administrative activities principals are expected to perform in managing the school. Furthermore, most existing studies in Nigeria have been conducted in states such as Ondo, Edo, Benue, Lagos, Delta, and Plateau, with limited attention to the South-East geopolitical zone, particularly Enugu State and specifically Nsukka Education Zone. The unique social, cultural, and administrative context of Nsukka Education Zone may produce patterns different from those found elsewhere. Studies conducted in other zones cannot be generalized without empirical verification specific to Nsukka Education Zone.

Additionally, many previous studies have used leadership style as a predictor and teacher job performance as a broad outcome without disaggregating job performance into its specific dimensions such as lesson preparation, instructional delivery, classroom management, use of instructional materials, and student assessment. This limits the practical usefulness of their findings for school administrators seeking to address specific performance gaps. The present study addresses these gaps by focusing on principals' leadership functions, including planning, organizing, directing, and supervising as predictors of teacher job performance in secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone. Moreover, the study on principals' administrative practices in Enugu State (Ukaigwe, Nwabueze & Nwokedi, 2023) found that delegating duties and effective communication networks significantly predicted teachers' job performance. Previous studies have examined specific aspects of principals' leadership practices, particularly delegation and communication. However, leadership functions in schools are broader and encompass several dimensions that may collectively influence teacher job performance. Therefore, there is a need for a more comprehensive investigation into the extent to which principals' leadership functions as a whole predict teachers' job performance in secondary schools.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of the study was to investigate principal leadership functions as predictors of teacher job performance in secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone, Enugu State. Specifically, the study investigated the:

1. predictive power of principals' planning function on teachers' job performance in secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone
2. predictive power of principals' organizing function on teachers' job performance in secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone
3. predictive power of principals' directing function on teachers' job performance in secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone
4. predictive power of principals' supervisory function on teachers' job performance in secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone
5. joint predictive power of principals' leadership function on teachers' job performance in secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the predictive power of principals' planning function on teachers' job performance in secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone?
2. What is the predictive power of principals' organizing function on teachers' job performance in secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone?
3. What is the predictive power of principals' directing function on teachers' job performance in secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone?
4. What is the predictive power of principals' supervisory function on teachers' job performance in secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone?
5. What is the joint predictive power of principals' leadership function on teachers' job performance in secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

- H0₁:** Principals' planning function does not significantly predict teachers' lesson preparation in secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone.
- H0₂:** Principals' organizing function does not significantly predict teachers' instructional delivery in secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone.
- H0₃:** Principals' directing function does not significantly predict teachers' classroom management in secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone.
- H0₄:** Principals' supervisory function does not significantly predict teachers' use of instructional materials in secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone.
- H0₅:** Principals' leadership function does not jointly significantly predict teachers' use of instructional materials in secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone.

Methods

This study adopted a correlational survey research design. The population of the study consisted of 300 teachers. Given that the population was manageable in size, all the teachers were included in the study, and consequently, no sampling technique was employed. Two instruments were used for data collection. The first was the Principals' Leadership Functions Questionnaire (PLFQ), which consisted of four clusters corresponding to the four leadership functions: planning, organizing, directing, and supervising. Each cluster contained ten items, giving a total of 40 items. The second instrument was the Teachers' Job Performance Questionnaire (TJPQ), which contained 20 items measuring teachers' performance across the dimensions of lesson preparation, instructional delivery, classroom management, and use of instructional materials. Both instruments were structured on a 4-point rating scale with response options of Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1). The instruments were validated by three experts, two from the Educational Administration and Planning Unit, Department of Educational Foundations and one Measurement and Evaluation Unit, Department of Science Education, all in the Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Reliability of the instruments was established using Cronbach's Alpha method, which yielded reliability coefficients of 0.82 for the PLFQ and 0.79 for the TJPQ, indicating that both instruments were reliable for the study. Data were collected through direct administration of the questionnaires to respondents with the assistance of trained research assistants. A total of 330 copies of the questionnaire were distributed and all copies were

retrieved and found usable, giving a 100% return rate. Data collected were analyzed using simple and multiple linear regression. Each null hypothesis was rejected where the p-value was less than or equal to 0.05, and retained where the p-value exceeded 0.05.

Results

Table 1: Simple linear regression on the predictive power of principals' planning function on teachers' job performance in secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.362 ^a	.131	.129	15.35036

a. Predictors: (Constant), Planning

The result in Table 1 shows that there is a weak positive relationship between principals' planning function and teachers' job performance in secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone, as indicated by the correlation coefficient ($R = .362$). This implies that principals' planning function modest association with teachers' job performance. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = .131$) further reveals that principals' planning function accounts for about 13.1% of the variation in teachers' job performance. This suggests that while principals' planning function contributes meaningfully to teachers' job performance, other factors not included in this model explain the remaining 86.9% of the variation.

Table 2: t-test associated with simple linear regression on the predictive power of principals' planning function on teachers' job performance in secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone

Coefficients ^a					
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	
1	(Constant)	32.523	3.826		.000
	Planning	.910	.119	.362	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Performance

The result presented in Table 2 reveal that principals' planning function has a standardized beta coefficient ($\beta = .362$) and a t-value of 7.677 with a p-value of .000, which is less than the significance level of 0.05. This indicates that the predictive power of principals' planning function on teachers' job performance is statistically significant. Consequently, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant predictive power of principals' planning function on teachers' job performance is rejected. This means that effective planning by principals significantly enhances teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone.

Table 3: Simple linear regression on the predictive power of principals' organizing function on teachers' job performance in secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.750 ^a	.563	.562	10.88500

a. Predictors: (Constant), Organizing

The result in Table 3 shows that there is a strong positive relationship between principals' organizing function and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone, as indicated by the correlation coefficient ($R = .750$). This implies that better principals' organizing function is associated with higher levels of teachers' job performance. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = .563$) further reveals that principals' organizing function accounts for 56.3% of the variation in teachers' job performance while the remaining 43.7% of the variation is explained by other factors not included in this model.

Table 4: t-test associated with simple linear regression on the predictive power of principals' organizing function on teachers' job performance in secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone

Coefficients ^a					
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	
1	(Constant)	4.340	2.598		.096
	Organizing	1.872	.083	.750	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Performance

The result presented in Table 4 reveal that principals' organizing function has a standardized beta coefficient ($\beta = .750$) and a t-value of 22.424 with a p-value of .000, which is less than the 0.05 level of significance. This indicates that the predictive power of principals' organizing function on teachers' job performance is statistically significant. Consequently, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant predictive power of principals' organizing function on teachers' job performance is rejected. This means that effective organizing function by principals significantly enhances teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone.

Table 5: Simple linear regression on the predictive power of principals' directing function on teachers' job performance in secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.414 ^a	.172	.170	14.98925

a. Predictors: (Constant), Directing

The result in Table 5 shows that there is a weak positive relationship between principals' directing function and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone, as indicated by the correlation coefficient ($R = .414$). This implies

that improved principals' directing function is associated with higher levels of teachers' job performance. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = .172$) further reveals that principals' directing function accounts for 17.2% of the variation in teachers' job performance while the remaining 81.8% of the variation is attributed to other factors not captured in this model.

Table 6: t-test associated with simple linear regression on the principals' directing function on teachers' job performance in secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone
Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	47.444	1.716		27.649	.000
1 Directing	.599	.067	.414	8.990	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Performance

The result presented in Table 6 reveal that principals' directing function has a standardized beta coefficient ($\beta = .414$) and a t-value of 8.990, with a p-value of .000, which is below the 0.05 level of significance. This indicates that the predictive power of principals' directing function on teachers' job performance is statistically significant. Consequently, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant predictive power of principals' directing function on teachers' job performance is rejected. This means that effective directing function by principals significantly enhances teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone.

Table 7: Simple linear regression on the principals' supervisory function on teachers' job performance in secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.429 ^a	.184	.182	14.87414

a. Predictors: (Constant), Supervisory

The result in Table 7 shows that there is a weak positive relationship between principals' supervisory function and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone, as indicated by the correlation coefficient ($R = .429$). This implies that effective supervisory function by principals is moderately associated with higher levels of teachers' job performance. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = .184$) further reveals that principals' supervisory function accounts for 18.4% of the variation in teachers' job performance while the remaining 81.6% is explained by other factors not included in this model.

Table 8: t-test associated with simple linear regression on the principals' supervisory function on teachers' job performance in secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone
Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		

1	(Constant)	47.138	1.684		27.991	.000
	Supervisory	.601	.064	.429	9.388	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Performance

The result presented in Table 8 reveal that principals' supervisory function has a standardized beta coefficient ($\beta = .429$) and a t-value of 9.388 with a p-value of .000, which is below the 0.05 level of significance. This indicates that the predictive power of principals' supervisory function on teachers' job performance is statistically significant. Consequently, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant predictive power of principals' supervisory function on teachers' job performance is rejected. This means that effective supervisory function by principals significantly enhances teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone.

Table 9: Multiple linear regression on the joint predictive power of principals' leadership function on teachers' job performance in secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.892 ^a	.795	.793	.62265

a. Predictors: (Constant), Planning, Organizing, Directing, Supervisory

The result in Table 9 shows that there is a strong positive joint relationship between principals' leadership functions (planning, organizing, directing, and supervisory) and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone, as indicated by the multiple correlation coefficient ($R = .892$). This suggests that when considered together, these leadership functions are strongly associated with improved teachers' job performance. The R Square value of .795 indicates that approximately 79.5% of the variation in teachers' job performance can be explained jointly by the principals' leadership functions included in the model. The remaining 20.5% of the variation is attributable to other factors not captured in this study.

Table 10: ANOVA associated with multiple linear regression on the joint predictive power of principals' leadership function on teachers' job performance in secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	115.590	4	28.898	74.536	.000 ^b
	Residual	126.001	295	.388		
	Total	241.592	299			

a. Dependent Variable: Performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Planning, Organizing, Directing, Supervisory

Based on the result in Table 10, the F-value of 74.536 with a significance level (p) of .000, which is less than the 0.05 threshold, indicates that the joint predictive power of principals' leadership functions on teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone is statistically significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant joint predictive power of principals' leadership functions (planning, organizing, directing, and supervisory) on teachers' job performance is rejected. This implies that, collectively, principals' leadership functions have a significant positive influence on teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone.

Discussion

Predictive power of principals' planning function on teachers' job performance

The finding showed that principals' planning function significantly predicted teachers' job performance in secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone. This means that the planning activities carried out by principals, such as setting school goals, preparing academic programmes, scheduling lessons, and allocating resources, account for about 13.1% of the variation in teachers' job performance. The relatively modest but statistically significant effect of planning may be because planning in many Nigerian secondary schools is often a top-down exercise that does not involve teachers, thereby limiting its motivational impact on their performance. When teachers are excluded from school planning, they may lack a sense of ownership over school goals and consequently show limited commitment to their duties. This finding aligns with Ukaigwe, Nwabueze and Nwokedi (2023), who found that principals' administrative functions significantly predicted teachers' job performance in Enugu State secondary schools. It also agrees with Ayeni (2012), who observed that principals who engage in systematic planning create clearer expectations for teachers, which in turn supports improved instructional performance. The finding further supports the classical management theory of Fayol (1949, as cited in Nakpodia, 2009), which positioned planning as the foundational function of any administrator, providing direction for all other management activities.

Predictive power of principals' organizing function on teachers' job performance

The finding revealed that principals' organizing function was the strongest predictor of teachers' job performance among all four leadership functions examined. This indicates that the way principals structure school roles, assign duties, coordinate staff, and manage resources explains as much as 56.3% of the variation in teachers' job performance, which is a substantially large proportion. The dominance of the organizing function may be explained by the fact that teachers perform best when they have clarity about their roles, access to needed resources, and a well-structured school environment that removes administrative bottlenecks. When the school is poorly organized, teachers face confusion over assignments, inadequate materials, and conflicting directives that disrupt their instructional activities. This finding is consistent with the work of Imhangbe, Okecha and Obozuwa (2019), who found that the nature of administrative leadership significantly shaped teacher job performance in Edo State. It also resonates with the findings of Adeke, Tyokyaa and Mando (2024), who noted that principals who maintained clear organizational structures improved teacher commitment and output in Benue State secondary schools. The strength of this finding underscores the

argument that effective organizing by the school principal is not merely a bureaucratic function but a direct enabler of teacher effectiveness.

Predictive power of principals' directing function on teachers' job performance

The finding showed that principals' directing function significantly predicted teachers' job performance, accounting for 17.2% of the variance. Directing, which encompasses how principals guide, instruct, motivate, and communicate with teachers, plays a meaningful role in shaping how teachers carry out their classroom responsibilities. The moderate predictive power of directing may reflect the reality that many principals in Nigerian secondary schools tend to adopt authoritarian approaches to directing staff, which can suppress teacher morale and reduce intrinsic motivation. Research has shown that directive leadership is effective only when accompanied by adequate feedback, recognition, and professional respect (Bush, 2011). When principals give instructions without offering constructive feedback or creating dialogue, the motivational effect of directing is weakened. This finding aligns with Adeyemi (2010), who found that the way principals engage and guide their teachers significantly affects the teachers' professional output in Ondo State. It is also consistent with Abazie, Gbemisola and Harriet (2024), who found that instructional leadership by principals, which is closely tied to the directing function, significantly associated with teachers' professional development.

Predictive power of principals' supervisory function on teachers' job performance

The finding indicated that principals' supervisory function significantly predicted teachers' job performance, with supervision accounting for 18.4% of the variance in teacher performance. This finding suggests that when principals regularly observe classroom instruction, review lesson plans, and provide feedback, teachers are more likely to take their instructional responsibilities seriously. The supervisory function creates a culture of professional accountability that keeps teachers alert to quality standards. The slightly higher predictive value of supervision compared to planning and directing may be because supervision is the most direct and visible expression of principal interest in teacher performance; its presence or absence is immediately felt by teachers. Principals who fail to supervise regularly send an indirect message that teacher performance is not being monitored, which may lead to complacency. This finding is supported by Ayeni and Afolabi (2012), who established a positive relationship between effective instructional supervision by principals and teachers' instructional task performance. It also aligns with Kakaba (2024), who found that principals' leadership functions significantly influenced specific dimensions of teacher performance, including record keeping, in Plateau State missionary secondary schools.

Joint predictive power of principals' leadership function on teachers' job performance

The finding revealed that the joint predictive power of principals' leadership functions (planning, organizing, directing, and supervisory) on teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone was statistically significant, with the four functions together accounting for 79.5% of the variation in teachers' job performance. This is a remarkably high proportion, indicating that when principals effectively combine all four leadership functions, the cumulative effect on teacher performance is far greater than what any single function can achieve in isolation. The strength of this joint prediction suggests that principals' leadership functions do not operate independently but are mutually reinforcing; effective planning creates the structure for organizing, organizing provides the foundation for

directing, and directing is sustained and monitored through supervision. When all four functions work in concert, teachers experience a coherent and well-managed school environment that supports optimal performance. Conversely, a weakness in any one function is likely to undermine the effectiveness of the others, thereby reducing the overall quality of teacher output. This finding is consistent with Owan (2019), who established that principals' administrative competence, when holistically applied, significantly influenced teachers' work performance in Calabar Education Zone. It also aligns with Ukaigwe, Nwabueze and Nwokedi (2023), who found that the combined effect of principals' administrative practices was a stronger predictor of teachers' job performance than individual practices considered separately in Enugu State secondary schools. Furthermore, the finding supports the position of Owens and Valesky (2015), who argued that effective school leadership is not reducible to a single management function but rather emerges from the integrated and coordinated application of multiple leadership responsibilities. The finding equally resonates with Bush (2011), who contended that educational leadership achieves its greatest impact when it is comprehensive, systematic, and sustained across all dimensions of school administration. The result therefore reinforces the view that school principals must not selectively execute some leadership functions while neglecting others, but must demonstrate consistent competence across planning, organizing, directing, and supervisory domains if meaningful and lasting improvement in teachers' job performance is to be achieved in Nigerian secondary schools.

Conclusion

Based on these findings, the study concluded that principals' leadership functions are significant predictors of teachers' job performance in secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone, with the organizing function exerting the strongest predictive influence, followed by the supervisory, directing, and planning functions respectively. This conclusion affirms that the quality of how principals plan, organize, direct, and supervise school activities directly shapes the extent to which teachers fulfil their professional responsibilities, and that investing in the improvement of these leadership functions is a viable strategy for enhancing instructional quality and overall school effectiveness in the zone.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. The Enugu State Post Primary School Management Board should organize regular capacity-building workshops for school principals in Nsukka Education Zone with a specific focus on organizational skills, including role assignment, resource management, and staff coordination, since the organizing function emerged as the most powerful predictor of teacher job performance. Such training will equip principals with the practical competencies needed to create enabling work environments for teachers.
2. Principals in Nsukka Education Zone should institutionalize a structured and transparent teacher supervision programme. Regular classroom observations, feedback sessions, and lesson plan reviews should be conducted at least twice per term to create a culture of professional accountability that sustains high levels of teacher performance.
3. School principals should adopt a participatory approach to school planning by involving teachers in the formulation of academic calendars, curricular goals, and school improvement plans. Teacher participation in planning increases a sense of ownership and

commitment, which can enhance the motivational impact of the planning function on teacher job performance.

4. The state ministry of education should develop and implement a principal performance appraisal system that evaluates how well principals discharge their leadership functions.
5. Pre-service and in-service training programmes for school leaders should incorporate modules on the classical management functions of planning, organizing, directing, and supervising.

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