

SCHOOL-BASED PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATORY DECISION-MAKING AS PREDICTORS OF QUALITY ADMINISTRATION IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN RIVERS STATE

Florence Peter EGWEGBETE

Department of Educational Management, Faculty of Education, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Nigeria

florence.egwegbete@iaue.edu.ng

Scholastica Baridi ANOR

Department of Educational Management, Faculty of Education, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Nigeria

scholarstica.anor@iaue.edu.ng

<https://orcid.org/0009-0000-8954-1628>

ABSTRACT: This study investigated school-based personnel management and participatory decision-making as predictors of quality administration in public secondary schools in Rivers State. A correlational research design was adopted to determine the nature and strength of the relationships among the study variables. The population comprised 355 principals and 8,228 teachers in 355 public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. Using a multi-stage sampling procedure, a sample of 823 respondents, representing 15% of the population, was selected, consisting of 121 principals and 702 teachers. Cluster sampling was used to group schools into the three senatorial zones: Rivers East, Rivers West and Rivers South-East, while simple random sampling was employed to select schools from two Local Government Areas in each zone, resulting in 77 sampled schools. Data were collected using two self-developed instruments: the School-Based Management Scale (SBMS) and the Quality Administration Scale (QAS). The SBMS measured school-based personnel management and participatory decision-making, while the QAS assessed administration of staff personnel, school curriculum, school facilities, and student personnel. Responses were rated on a four-point modified Likert scale. Reliability coefficients of .731 and .782 were obtained for SBMS and QAS respectively using Cronbach's Alpha. Data were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient, with hypotheses tested using the associated z-test at the 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that there is significant relationship between school-based personnel management and participatory decision making and quality administration in public secondary schools in Rivers State. The study recommends among others that school administrators in public secondary schools should give attention to the needs of the workers in form of interpersonal relationship, training, recruitment based on merit, adequate reward system, etc. in order to improve the quality of their administration.

Keywords: School-Based, Personnel Management, Participatory Decision-Making, Effective, Quality Administration, Public, Secondary Schools, Rivers State.

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INTRODUCTION

The quality administration in public secondary schools is central to the attainment of educational goals and the effective delivery of instruction. In contemporary educational management,

increasing attention has been given to school-based management practices that decentralize authority and strengthen internal administrative processes. Among these practices, school-based personnel management and participatory decision-making is critical in quality administration particularly in public secondary schools, where challenges that relate to leadership effectiveness, staff motivation and stakeholder involvement persist.

School-based personnel management refers to the planning, organization, development, supervision, and motivation of human resources within the school system. Teachers and other school personnel constitute the most vital resources in education, and how they are managed significantly influences administrative effectiveness. According to Hoy and Miskel (2013), effective personnel management enhances organizational coordination, promotes staff commitment and ensures that educational objectives are achieved efficiently. In public secondary schools, principals play a central role in managing personnel through recruitment, deployment, supervision, performance appraisal, and professional development. When these functions are effectively carried out at the school level, they contribute to improved instructional delivery, staff morale, and overall administrative quality.

Empirical studies in Nigeria have shown that effective personnel management practices such as regular supervision, clear role definition, staff motivation and opportunities for professional growth are positively associated with school effectiveness, quality improvement and administrative efficiency (Ololube, 2017). Public secondary schools often grapple with issues of teacher absenteeism, inadequate supervision and low morale, school-based personnel management provides principals with the autonomy to address these challenges contextually. In managing personnel needs locally, principals respond promptly to staff issues, promote accountability and improve professional climate that supports quality administration.

Participatory decision-making, on the other hand, involves the active inclusion of teachers and other stakeholders in decisions affecting school operations. This management approach aligns with democratic leadership principles and emphasizes collaboration, shared responsibility, and collective problem-solving. Somech (2010) asserted that participatory decision-making enhances teachers' sense of ownership, increases job satisfaction, and strengthens commitment to organizational goals. In school settings, participation may occur through staff meetings, committees and consultative forums where teachers contribute to decisions on curriculum implementation, discipline, resource allocation and school policies.

In the Nigerian educational context, participatory decision-making has been found to improve administrative effectiveness and school climate. Studies indicate that when teachers are involved in decision-making processes, they are more likely to support administrative decisions and implement policies effectively (Ebunu, 2020). According to Ololube (2017), participatory decision-making help bridge the gap between school leadership and classroom practice by ensuring that decisions reflect the realities of teaching and learning. This collaborative approach reduces resistance to change, enhances transparency, and promotes trust between administrators and staff, all of which are essential components of quality administration.

School-based personnel management and participatory decision-making jointly predict quality administration by shaping the internal dynamics of schools. Quality administration is characterized by effective leadership, efficient utilization of resources, accountability, and the achievement of institutional goals. Bush (2020) emphasized that decentralized management structures enable school leaders to make informed decisions that improve administrative performance and educational outcomes. When principals manage personnel effectively and

involve staff in decision-making, administrative processes become more responsive, inclusive, and sustainable.

Furthermore, the interaction between personnel management and participatory decision-making reinforces administrative quality. Effective personnel management creates a supportive environment where teachers feel valued and empowered, while participatory decision-making provides a platform for utilizing teachers' expertise in solving administrative and instructional challenges. Together, these practices enhance organizational effectiveness and promote a culture of shared leadership. In Rivers State public secondary schools, adopting these approaches can help address persistent administrative challenges such as poor staff commitment, weak supervision, and limited stakeholder engagement.

Thus, school-based personnel management and participatory decision-making seem to be significant predictors of quality administration in public secondary schools in Rivers State because personnel management ensures that competent and motivated staff are effectively deployed and supported, while participatory decision-making promotes collaboration, accountability, and shared responsibility among school stakeholders. Strengthening these practices at the school level improves administrative effectiveness, enhance school climate, and ultimately contribute to the achievement of educational goals. Policymakers and school administrators should therefore prioritize capacity building for principals in personnel management and participatory leadership to promote quality administration in public secondary education.

Statement of the Problem

The effectiveness of public secondary schools largely depends on the quality of their administrative practices, which shape instructional delivery, staff performance, and overall school outcomes. In Rivers State, public secondary schools continue to face persistent administrative challenges such as inadequate supervision of teachers, low staff morale, weak coordination of school activities, and limited stakeholder involvement in school governance. These challenges have raised concerns among education stakeholders about the capacity of school administrators to provide quality leadership and management that can enhance teaching and learning.

In spite of policy emphasis on school-based management reforms, evidences suggests that many school principals still rely on centralized and authoritarian administrative approaches, with minimal involvement of teachers in decision-making processes. This has often resulted in poor commitment to school policies, resistance to administrative decisions, and ineffective implementation of educational programs. At the same time, weaknesses in school-based personnel management such as irregular staff appraisal, limited professional development opportunities, and inadequate motivation have further undermined administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools.

Although studies that examined aspects of school leadership and administration in Nigeria, and limited empirical attention has been given to the combined influence of school-based personnel management and participatory decision-making on quality administration, particularly in Rivers State. The extent to which these management practices predict administrative quality remains unclear. This gap in knowledge makes it difficult for policymakers and school leaders to adopt evidence-based strategies for improving administrative effectiveness. This study therefore tends to address the problems because it is therefore necessary

to provide empirical insights that can guide school administrators, inform policy decisions and promote quality improvement and administration in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Purpose of this Study

The main purpose of this study is to investigate school-based personnel management and participatory decision-making as predictors of quality administration in public secondary schools in Rivers State. Specifically, the study was designed to:

- Examine the relationship between school-based personnel management and quality administration in public secondary schools in Rivers State.
- Determine the relationship between participatory decision making and quality administration in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Research Questions

This study is guided by two research questions:

- What is the relationship between school-based personnel management and quality administration in public secondary schools in Rivers State?
- What is the relationship between participatory decision making and quality administration in public secondary schools in Rivers State?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to further guide the study:

- There is no significant relationship between school-based personnel management and quality administration in public secondary schools in Rivers State.
- There is no significant relationship between participatory decision making and quality administration in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

School-Based Management (SBM)

School-Based Management (SBM) is an educational reform strategy that decentralizes decision-making authority from central education authorities to individual schools, granting principals, teachers, parents, and community members greater control over school operations and resources. The primary goal of SBM is to improve school effectiveness, accountability, and educational quality by empowering stakeholders at the school level (Caldwell, 2005; World Bank, 2008).

SBM is grounded in the principle that those closest to the school particularly principals and teachers are better positioned to make decisions that respond to local needs. By shifting authority over budgeting, personnel management, curriculum adaptation, and resource allocation to the school level, SBM promotes flexibility, innovation, and responsiveness (Leithwood &

Menzies, 1998). In this model, school leaders are not merely administrators but strategic managers who coordinate human and financial resources to achieve improved student outcomes.

One of the key features of SBM is participatory governance. School councils or management committees, often composed of parents, teachers, community leaders, and sometimes students, collaborate in decision-making processes. This shared governance structure enhances transparency and builds stakeholder trust. Research indicates that participatory decision-making strengthens accountability mechanisms and fosters a sense of ownership among community members, which can positively influence school performance (Osorio et al., 2019). In many developing countries, SBM has been associated with improved resource mobilization and enhanced monitoring of school activities.

Financial decentralization is another critical component of SBM. Schools are granted authority over budget preparation and expenditure, enabling them to prioritize spending according to their specific needs. Evidence from cross-national studies suggests that when SBM includes genuine fiscal autonomy and accountability mechanisms, it can lead to modest improvements in student achievement and school efficiency (World Bank, 2008). However, the effectiveness of SBM depends largely on the capacity of school leaders to manage funds transparently and strategically.

In spite its potential benefits, SBM faces several challenges. Limited managerial capacity among principals and school committee members can hinder effective implementation. Without adequate training in financial management, strategic planning, and leadership, decentralization may not yield the desired improvements (Caldwell, 2005). Furthermore, in contexts where community participation is weak or politicized, decision-making processes may become ineffective or inequitable. Leithwood and Menzies (1998) caution that SBM does not automatically lead to improved student outcomes; its success depends on supportive policies, professional development, and accountability systems.

In Nigeria and other African countries, SBM has been promoted to enhance community participation and improve quality assurance in public secondary schools. The introduction of School-Based Management Committees (SBMCs) reflects an effort to institutionalize shared responsibility in educational governance. When properly implemented, SBM strengthens collaboration between schools and communities, improves transparency in financial management, and contributes to overall quality administration.

Thus, School-Based Management represents a significant shift toward decentralized and participatory educational governance. While SBM offers opportunities for improved accountability, efficiency, and school responsiveness, its success depends on leadership capacity, stakeholder engagement, and robust monitoring mechanisms. Strengthening these elements can enhance the contribution of SBM to quality education and sustainable school improvement.

Personnel Management and Effective School Administration

School-based personnel management is a critical component of effective school administration and plays a significant role in determining the quality of administration in secondary schools. Personnel management refers to the systematic planning, organization, coordination and control of human resources within an educational institution to achieve predetermined goals efficiently (Ololube & Wome, 2025). In school settings, this involves the recruitment, placement, supervision, motivation, development, and evaluation of teachers and non-teaching staff. Since

human resources constitute the backbone of educational systems, the effectiveness of school administration largely depends on how well personnel are managed at the school level.

Quality administration in education is characterized by effective leadership, efficient utilization of resources, accountability, and the achievement of institutional objectives. According to Hoy and Miskel (2013), administrative quality in schools is reflected in the ability of school leaders to coordinate human and material resources in ways that promote teaching effectiveness and student learning. School-based personnel management enhances administrative quality by decentralizing personnel functions and empowering school administrators, particularly principals, to make context-specific decisions that address staff needs and institutional challenges.

Effective school-based personnel management promotes quality administration through proper staff recruitment and placement. When principals are involved in selecting teachers who possess the requisite qualifications and competencies, instructional delivery improves and administrative coordination becomes more effective (Bush, 2020). Additionally, regular supervision and performance appraisal enable school administrators to monitor staff performance, identify professional development needs, and maintain high standards of accountability. These practices contribute to improved staff discipline, commitment, and productivity, which are essential indicators of quality administration.

Furthermore, personnel motivation and welfare are vital aspects of school-based management that influence administrative effectiveness. Ololube (2017) noted that motivated teachers demonstrate higher job satisfaction, improved classroom performance, and stronger commitment to school goals. School administrators who order staff welfare through recognition, professional development opportunities, and supportive working conditions create a positive organizational climate that enhances administrative efficiency and cooperation. Such an environment reduces conflict, absenteeism, and turnover, thereby strengthening administrative stability.

School-based personnel management also facilitates participatory leadership and collaboration, which are essential for quality administration. When teachers are involved in school planning and decision-making, they develop a sense of ownership and responsibility for administrative outcomes. This collaborative approach improves communication, fosters trust between administrators and staff, and enhances the implementation of school policies (Somech, 2010). Consequently, administrative processes become more transparent, inclusive and responsive to school needs.

Participatory Decision Making and Effective School Administration

Participatory decision-making is increasingly recognized as a vital administrative practice that enhances effectiveness in school management. In the context of education, participatory decision-making refers to the involvement of teachers and other relevant stakeholders in decisions concerning school policies, instructional practices and administrative operations. This approach departs from traditional authoritarian leadership styles and aligns with democratic and collaborative models of school administration that emphasize shared responsibility and collective problem-solving.

Effective school administration is characterized by purposeful leadership, efficient coordination of resources, accountability and the achievement of educational goals. To Hoy and Miskel (2013), school administrators who involve staff in decision-making processes are more

likely to foster commitment, trust, and cooperation within the school organization. Participatory decision-making enhances administrative effectiveness by improving the quality of decisions, as contributions from diverse perspectives provide administrators with richer information and practical insights drawn from classroom experiences.

According to Ololube (2017), one of the major contributions of participatory decision-making to effective school administration is its positive influence on teacher motivation and job satisfaction. Teachers who participate in decision-making feel valued and respected, which increases their sense of ownership and responsibility toward school programs (Somech, 2010). This sense of inclusion promotes greater commitment to the implementation of school policies and reduces resistance to administrative decisions. As a result, school administrators are better able to coordinate activities and achieve institutional objectives.

Participatory decision-making also strengthens communication and collaboration within the school system. Bush (2020) argued that collaborative leadership practices enhance transparency and trust between school leaders and staff, thereby improving administrative efficiency. When teachers are involved in decisions related to curriculum planning, discipline, and instructional improvement, they are more likely to support administrative initiatives and contribute actively to school development. This collaborative climate enhances teamwork and minimizes conflict, which are essential elements of effective school administration.

In addition, participatory decision-making improves accountability in school administration. When stakeholders are involved in making decisions, they share responsibility for outcomes and are more willing to be held accountable for successes or failures. This shared accountability promotes prudent use of resources, adherence to school policies, and continuous evaluation of school practices. Research indicates that schools with participatory administrative structures often demonstrate improved organizational performance and staff effectiveness (Lunenburg, 2011).

Furthermore, participatory decision-making supports professional growth and leadership development among teachers. Through participation in committees and decision-making forums, teachers develop administrative skills and leadership competencies that contribute to school effectiveness (Ololube, 2017). Thus, distributed leadership approach reduces the administrative burden on principals while building institutional capacity for sustainable school improvement.

METHODS

This study adopted a correlational research design, which is appropriate for examining the relationship between two or more variables. This design was considered suitable because it enabled the researcher to determine the nature and degree of relationship between principals' administrative skills and teachers' performance in mission schools.

The population of the study comprised all the three hundred and fifty-five (355) principals and eight thousand two hundred and twenty-eight (8,228) teachers in the three hundred and fifty-five (355) public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. From this population, a sample size of eight hundred and twenty-three (823) respondents, representing 15% of the total population, was selected. The sample consisted of 121 principals and 702 teachers.

A cluster sampling technique was employed to group the respondents into the three senatorial zones of Rivers State-Rivers East, Rivers West, and Rivers South-East. Subsequently, a simple random sampling technique was used to select schools from two Local Government Areas in each senatorial zone. This procedure resulted in a total of seventy-seven (77) public

senior secondary schools, from which seven hundred and two (702) teachers participated in the study.

Data for the study were collected using two self-developed instruments titled “School-Based Management Scale (SBMS) and Quality Administration Scale (QAS)”. The SBMS was structured into two subsections reflecting the major variables of the study: school-based personnel management and participatory decision-making. Similarly, the QAS comprised four subsections covering the administration of staff personnel, school curriculum, school facilities, and student personnel. Each instrument consisted of two sections: Section ‘A’ elicited demographic information from the respondents, while Section ‘B’ contained the research items.

Responses were measured using a modified Likert scale with four response options: Strongly Agree (4 points), Agree (3 points), Disagree (2 points), and Strongly Disagree (1 point). The reliability of the instruments was determined using the Cronbach’s Alpha method to assess internal consistency. The instruments were administered once to 20 teachers who were not included in the study sample. The reliability coefficients obtained were .731 for the SBMS and .782 for the QAS, indicating acceptable reliability levels. To establish the validity of the instruments, draft copies were submitted to the research supervisor and experts in Test and Measurement for scrutiny. Their suggestions regarding content coverage and clarity were incorporated into the final versions of the instruments.

The researchers assisted by two trained research assistants, administered the instruments. The assistants were adequately briefed on the purpose of the study and the administration procedures to ensure effective distribution and retrieval of the questionnaires. Data collected were analyzed using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC), while the null hypotheses were tested using the z-test associated with the PPMCC.

RESULTS

Research Question One: What is the relationship between school-based personnel management and quality administration in public secondary schools in Rivers State?

Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between school-based personnel management and quality administration in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 1: Summary of Pearson Moment Correlation coefficient analysis and z-ratio on the relationship between school-based personnel management and quality administration in public secondary schools in Rivers State

Variables	N	Df	r-cal	z-ratio	r-crit.	Sig.	P-critical	Decision
School-based Personnel Quality Administration	823	821	0.881	29.37	1.96	0.001	0.05	Statistically significant

From the result of the above table, the correlation coefficient ($r = 0.881$) between school-based personnel management and quality administration is very strong and positive. The coefficient of determination ($r^2 = 0.78$) indicates that 78% of quality administration can be explained by school-based personnel management. With the degree of freedom of 821, the calculated z-ratio value of 29.37 is greater than the z-critical value of 1.96. Also, the significant value of .001 ($p < 0.01$) reveals a significant relationship. Based on that, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Therefore, there is a significant relationship between school-based personnel management and quality administration in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Research Question Two: What is the relationship between participatory decision making and quality administration in public secondary schools in Rivers State?

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant relationship between participatory decision making and quality administration in public secondary schools in Rivers State

Table 2: Summary of Pearson Moment Correlation coefficient analysis and z-ratio on the relationship between participatory decision making and quality administration in public secondary schools in Rivers State

Variables	N	Df	r-cal	z-ratio	r-crit.	Sig	P-critical	Decision
Participatory Decision-Making Quality Administration	823	821	.911	30.03	1.96	.013	0.05	Statistically significant

From the result of the above table, the correlation coefficient ($r = .911$) between participatory decision-making and quality administration is very strong and positive. The coefficient of determination ($r^2 = 0.83$) indicates that 83% of quality administration can be explained by participatory decision-making. With the degree of freedom of 821, the calculated z-ratio value of 30.03 is greater than the z-critical value of 1.96. Also, the significant value of .013 ($p < 0.05$) reveals a significant relationship. Based on that, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between participatory decision making and quality administration in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

DISCUSSION

School-Based Personnel Management and Quality Administration in Public Secondary Schools

There is a high positive and significant relationship between school-based personnel management and quality administration in public secondary schools in Rivers State. The finding of the study showed that school-based personnel management is a key process in the administration of secondary school for quality educational delivery. This is important as there is great need for coordination at the school level. And that includes the coordination of material and human resources to achieve quality administration. Aspects of school-based personnel management identified in the study include recruitment, training, capacity building) promotion, reward, etc. The relationship between these aspects and quality administration has been rated high by the responses of the respondents.

This finding is in corroboration with similar findings Ololube (2017) and Bush (2020). They posited that improvement of personnel in the school is synonymous with quality administration and other aspects of the school system; there is therefore, a high correlation between school-based personnel management and quality administration. The similarity in findings could be attributed to the significance of manpower in every establishment to achieve set goals and objectives. The school, like every other organization, needs the efficient and effective management to achieve school objectives.

Participatory Decision-making and Quality Administration in Public Secondary Schools

The relationship between participatory decision-making and quality administration in public secondary schools in Rivers State was highly positive as well as statistically significant. This process is crucial for quick dissemination of information broadly so that school based management participants can make informed decisions about the school organization and all stake-holders are also kept informed about school performance. This finding is in line with the assertion of Ololube & Wome (2025) that teachers, principals, students and parents' participation in the process of decision- making enhance free flow of information for all stakeholders to contribute to quality administration in secondary school.

In the same vein, Lunenburg (2011) declared that participatory decision making process can also lead to delegation of responsibility to trusted hands. School Based Management will work when the principal play key roles in dispersing, power, promoting school-wide commitment to learning and growth in skills and knowledge. Teachers will be encouraged to participate in instructions and curriculum as well as in collecting information about students' performance. This assertion gives credence to the findings of this study in regard to the contribution of every member of the school management system in making critical decision in the school. These assertions are similar to the finding of the study as decision that affects everybody in an organization can be best implemented when they are all include in the process.

However, other scholars have rejected this stance. Scholars like Gutbrie (2006) claimed that such agreement must explicitly state the standards against which each school administrator could be held accountable, again, each school should produce an annual performance and planning report covering how well the school is meeting its goals, how it deploys its resources and what plans it has for the future. His concern is on the delay that could be attributed to the process of involving everyone in the process of making critical decision.

CONCLUSION

The researchers concluded based on the findings of this study that school-based personnel management and participatory decision-making are significant predictors of quality administration in public secondary schools in Rivers State. Accordingly, effective personnel management ensures that principals' supervision and motivation of teachers appropriately promotes professional environment that enhances staff commitment, productivity and overall school performance. Similarly, participatory decision-making empowers teachers and other stakeholders to contribute to school policies and administrative processes, promoting ownership, accountability and collaborative problem-solving. The integration of these practices creates a positive organizational climate, strengthens leadership effectiveness and improves the management of human and material resources in public secondary schools. Consequently, schools that implement structured personnel management alongside inclusive decision-making strategies are more likely to achieve higher administrative quality and better educational outcomes. Policymakers and school leaders should therefore place emphasis on training and capacity-building programs that enhance principals' skills in personnel management and participatory leadership to sustain effective school administration in Rivers State.

Recommendations

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

- School administrators in public secondary schools should give attention to the needs of the workers in form of interpersonal relationship, training, recruitment based on merit, adequate reward system, etc. in order to improve the quality of their administration.
- Teachers as well as every other stakeholder in the school should be encouraged to contribute in the process of decision making in the school to get their ideas on how best school administration can be improved.

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