



Decision Making Styles as Correlates of Principals' Managerial Effectiveness in Public Secondary Schools in Umuahia Educational Zone, Abia State Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between decision-making styles and the managerial effectiveness of principals in public secondary schools within the Umuahia Educational Zone of Abia State, Nigeria. A correlational research design was employed, guided by two research questions and two null hypotheses tested at a 0.05 significance level. The sample for the study consisted of 269 participants, including 184 teachers and 85 principals from public secondary schools randomly selected across local government areas (LGAs). Data collection was carried out using a self-developed questionnaire created by the researchers. The instrument was validated by three experts, and reliability was ensured through the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient method. Two self-structured questionnaires, namely the "Consultative Decision-Making Styles Principals Managerial Effectiveness Questionnaire (CDMSPMEQ)" and the "Consensus Decision-Making Styles and Principals' Managerial Effectiveness Questionnaire (CDMSPMEQ)," were developed, validated, and used for the study. The instruments exhibited strong internal consistency reliability, with Cronbach's Alpha estimates of 0.75 and 0.70 for CDMSPMEQ and CDMSPMEQ, respectively. Data analysis involved calculating means and standard deviations to address the research questions. Furthermore, Pearson Product Moment correlation was employed to test the null hypotheses at a 0.05 significance level. The findings revealed that both consultative and consensus decision-making styles are associated with positive managerial effectiveness among principals in schools. Consequently, it is crucial that principals execute effective decision-making processes, ensuring their decisions receive support from all school stakeholders, especially teachers. This support plays a vital role in decision implementation. As a recommendation, it is suggested that schools should develop specialized leadership and team-building training programs or workshops for principals and teachers in underperforming schools.

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INTRODUCTION

Secondary schools all over the world, including Nigeria, are important institutions in the

achievement of the educational policy of any country. As a formal organization, it has a bureaucratic administrative structure with

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established rules and regulations, aimed at providing the needed opportunities for the educational development of the learners and staff of the schools, and usually under the leadership of the principal. In their views, Hariri, Monypenny and Prideaux, (2016) and Ejimabo (2015) described education as a vital tool in the development of the learners, through the transmission of worthwhile values such as skills, knowledge and planned activities that can develop the learners' potentials for the benefit of the society. Education, thus provides for the development of the citizens, and is achieved through the implementation of the necessary school curricula and education policy of the state. In Nigeria, the education policy anchors on five cardinal objectives, basically a free and democratic society, which are; a just and egalitarian society; a united, strong and self-reliant nation; a great and dynamic economy; a land full of bright opportunities for all citizens (FGN, 2013). In addition, Olatunji (2015), stated that Nigeria's philosophy of education is a complex one that requires adequate administrative procedure to ensure its practical achievement of its stated goals, hence the desirability of achieving of both the Nigerian education policy and philosophy of secondary education requires effective decision making style of the principal to ensure the achievement of its objectives.

The word "decision-making" conjures up the image of choice among alternative courses of action in a way appropriate to the demand of the situation. It is a process of selecting alternative actions to achieve certain goals (Kumar & Gautam, 2018). Operationally, decision-making is the process of selecting the best/most preferred and workable action among other options or alternative courses of action available, either towards solving problems or the achievement of an objective. Decision-making is a sequential process ending in a single decision or series of decisions (choices) which stimulate or cause some actions. Effective teaching and learning activities can only occur in an enabling environment where the principal possesses a high level of imagination, initiative, vision, and techniques in making a decision (Duze, 2018). Since the school is made up of the principal,

teachers, students, and by extension, many other stakeholders who are committed towards the progress of the school; significantly, the extents to which teachers are involved in decision-making determine the level of their commitment to instructional tasks performance and students' academic achievement. Observably, the quality of teachers' instructional task performance is enhanced by their level of awareness and involvement in decision making process. Teachers are motivated when they are given sense of belonging in decision making and they perform their instructional tasks with enthusiasm, without being compelled, with less monitoring, and they are highly innovative, creative and imaginative in the application of teaching methods to achieve quality learning outcome. The rationale for teachers' participation in school decision making is to facilitate better decisions, because teachers are the closest to the students and they know best how to improve their performance (Cheng, 2009). In a bid to make quality decisions, principals must carry teachers along by adopting collaborative and participatory decision making strategies that will encourage teachers' inputs and commitment to the implementation of curricula and co-curricula programmes/activities and attainment of the set goals in secondary schools. Decision making begins with identifying a problem, mapping out activities and implementation strategies in needed time. Its process also involves policies (the definition of objectives), resources (people, money, materials and authority), and means of execution (strategies).

Decision-making style on the other hand is seen as a habitual response pattern learned and exhibited by an individual when confronted with a decision situation (Scott & Bruce, 2005). The pattern adopted when making a decision is not a characteristic of personality traits (Loveren, 2007), but a habit-based propensity to react in a certain way in a specific decision context, regardless of cognitive skills. According to Rehman (2010), in his classic work on management decision making, decision making is a management process in itself, which comprises three stages, namely: the identification of situations that require decision

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making; the discovery of the various courses of action available and the choice of the most appropriate course of action. The school is a decision system where each person participates and formulates an opinion, according to their motivation, personality, and attitudes, i.e., decision making is influenced by the set of interventions of all people, subordinates, or managers. Decision making is the moment to choose one of several alternatives: this moment when the leader selects the course of action that seems most suitable to him or her to achieve the previously set goals (Ngussa, & Gabriel, 2017). However, Ngussa and Gabriel (2017) revealed that decision making style reflects an individual characteristic for perceiving and responding to a decision making process. According to him. The following are the four types of decision making styles: directive, consultative, conceptual and consensus. From his perspective, directive decision making style is basically an art adopted by the autocratic leaders in our society. Its leaders are authoritative in nature and the person in charge in such a leadership style makes his own decisions based on the knowledge and experience he holds. They have a low tolerance for ambiguity and make sure it is imposed. In another sense, the consultative decision-making style is the one where one takes the action based on the consultation of other subordinates working with him within the team. It is a very favored decision-making style as it allows different individuals to share their feedback before a decision is made. Regarding the conceptual style, it is completely opposite of the directive decision making style. Here, the person who is about to make the decision usually takes a more subtle and serene approach. The leaders who are used to the conceptual decision making style do not shy away from tough decisions. They have a clear conceptual mind and whatever decision they make is based on data. It is a well-informed & well-researched decision, the chance of error in such decision making is fairly low. On the other hand, people with consensus decision making style is one such where a single leader is never held accountable for the decision taken. As the name suggests, it is a decision making style where a

group debates the issue and then reaches to a conclusion together. Here every member or individual is encouraged to give voice to their opinion and deliver their say in what they believe is right or wrong. It isn't necessary that in a consensus styled leadership, everyone is supposed to agree with the idea.

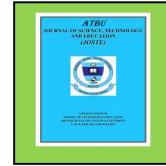
School principals vary the way they make decisions, some of which engage in long deliberations, others need an immediate sense of courage, and make cognitive and systematic decisions, while others take a more affective and disorderly approach. (Jonathan & Olukayode, 2022). How these principals respond to alternatives will depend, in part, on personal issues such as goals, opinions, values, and so on. In this line of thought, the Decision-Making Styles Inventory - DMI was developed to measure these individual differences in decision-making styles. However, individuals are considered to have a dominant style and prevail over others, even if they use more than one style to make decisions. Researchers (Nygren, 2012), revealed that using DMI showed that people who are analytical are more likely to make rational decisions, act less impulsively, and use cognition. Thus, people who follow such a decision-making style would have a greater amount of regret than those who follow a very intuitive decision-making style (Evans, 2008). The more decisions a person makes, the more likely they are to take risks, be impulsive, have more self-esteem, and believe in luck (Evans, 2008). Most analytical decision-makers tend to spend much of their time and effort planning around decisions, while intuitive decision-makers tend to make decisions quickly without much effort (Nygren 2012).

Thus, the principals' managerial effectiveness and quality secondary school performance in its simplistic state is the realization of educational policies of the secondary schools objectives; while the burden of achieving managerial effectiveness and quality performance within a school system lies directly on the decision making style, as they are required to make and implement decision/strategies that will result in achieving the stated educational goals and objectives of the secondary schools. The objective

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of this research, therefore, is to examine decision making styles as correlates of principals managerial effectiveness in public secondary schools, using Umuahia Educational zone, Abia state Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

The general low performance of the secondary school system currently, both on the teacher and students side is an important issue that needs to be considered seriously by the management at the school management level because it harms the development of the people around it. Therefore, the management at school level needs to direct their efforts to improving school performance; hence several management factors that affect the general school effective performance at secondary school level have been identified in this research to include, principal decision-making style. Principal decision making in secondary schools is increasingly becoming complex because of the challenges of increased enrolment, congested classrooms, inadequate learning materials, poor funding, low staff strength and demands for quality instruction and better learning outcome by the stakeholders in education. It is only through a shared decision making process that effective implementation of school curriculum and achievement of the set goals can be assured, but it is not uncommon that many school principals often dominate school affairs and give little or no regard to school staff involvement in decision making process. The common slogan from them is "wait for your time", which has partly staff disenchantment in instructional tasks and resulted in low school performance of such schools.

Evidently, the weighted average of the percentage level of performance of students who obtained credit level passes in five subjects and above, including English Language and Mathematics in the Senior School Certificate Examination conducted by the West African Examinations Council (WASSCE) between 2010 and 2019 is still below average (43.32%) in Umuahia Educational zone, Abia state Nigeria (Ministry of Education, 2020). Hence the low academic performance indicates a gap in

curriculum implementation and the perceived inadequacies in decision making strategies adopted by the school principals. It is therefore necessary to investigate the extent to which decision making styles correlates with principals general managerial effectiveness in public secondary schools, using Umuahia Educational zone, Abia state Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to examine decision making styles as correlates of principals managerial effectiveness in public secondary schools in Umuahia Educational zone, Abia state Nigeria. Specifically, the study is designed to identify:

1. Relationship between consultative decision-making styles and principals' managerial effectiveness in public secondary schools in Umuahia Educational zone, Abia state
2. Relationship between consensus decision-making styles and principals' managerial effectiveness in public secondary schools in Umuahia Educational zone, Abia state

Research Questions

The following research questions were put forward to guide the study:

1. What is the relationship between consultative decision-making styles and principals' managerial effectiveness in public secondary schools in Umuahia Educational zone, Abia state?
2. What is the relationship between consensus decision-making styles and principals' managerial effectiveness in public secondary schools in Umuahia Educational zone, Abia state?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide to study;
HO₁: There is no significant relationship between consultative decision-making styles and principals' managerial effectiveness in public

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secondary schools in Umuahia Educational zone, Abia state.
HO₂: There is no significant relationship between consensus decision-making styles and principals' managerial effectiveness in public secondary schools in Umuahia Educational zone, Abia state.

METHODOLOGY

The research design adopted for this study was a correlational research design. This is because it seeks to establish a relationship and association between two or more variables that do not readily lend themselves to experimental manipulation. Two research questions guided the study and two null hypotheses were posed and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The sample size for the study was 269 respondents consisting of 184 teachers and 85 principals of the public secondary schools who were randomly selected from the population across the LGAs while a researchers' self-developed questionnaire served as the instrument for data collection. Three experts validated the instrument and a cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient was determined. Two self-structured questionnaires titled: Consultative Decision-Making styles and Principals' Managerial Effectiveness Questionnaires (CDMSPMEQ) and Consensus Decision-Making styles and Principals' Managerial Effectiveness

Questionnaire (CDMSPMEQ) were developed, validated and used for data collection. The instruments consisted a total of 20 content items, 10 items each in both instruments. The instruments were designed using a four point scale of 4, 3, 2, and 1; Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree respectively. The instruments were validated by three experts in the Department of Educational management, College of Education, Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike. The reliability of the instruments was analyzed using Cronbach's Alpha statistics, in which the reliability index of 0.75 and 0.70 were obtained for CDMSPMEQ and CDMSPMEQ respectively.

A total of 269 copies of questionnaires were administered to the respondents. The questionnaires were administered by hand with the help of 7 trained research assistants and all the copies were returned. The data collected were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistics.

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

Research Question One: What is the relationship between consultative decision-making styles and principals' managerial effectiveness in public secondary schools in Umuahia Educational zone, Abia state?

Table 1: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis of Consultative decision-making styles and Principals managerial effectiveness of in Umuahia Educational Zone, Abia state

Variables	N	X	SD	DF	r-cal	r-crit	Level of sig.	Deci.
Consultative decision-making styles	269	19.52	4.56	974 0	.1980	.062	0.05	Sign
Principals managerial effectiveness	269	15.29	3.23					

In table 1, the 'r' calculated value of 0.198 was greater than the critical value of 0.062. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected. Since the computed correlation coefficient is greater than zero ($r > 0$), it is an indication of positive linear relationship between consultative decision-making styles and principals managerial effectiveness, and individuals' scores did not vary on both variables. This implies that there was a

significant relationship between consultative decision-making styles and principals' managerial effectiveness in public secondary schools in Umuahia Educational zone, Abia state.

Research Question Two: What is the relationship between consensus decision-making styles and principals' managerial effectiveness in

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public secondary schools in Umuahia Educational zone, Abia state?

Table 2: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis of Consensus Decision-making styles and Principals' Managerial Effectiveness in Umuahia Educational zone, Abia state

Variables	N	X	SD	DF	r-cal	r-crit	Level of sig.	Deci.
Consensus decision-making styles	269	21.30	5.25	974	0.1990	.061	0.06	Sign. Rel.
Principals managerial effectiveness	269	13.51	2.54					

In table 2, the 'r' calculated value of 0.199 was greater than the critical value of 0.061. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected. Since the computed correlation coefficient is greater than zero ($r > 0$), it is an indication of positive linear relationship between consensus decision-making styles and principals managerial effectiveness, and individuals' scores did not vary on both variables. This implies that there was a significant relationship between consensus decision-making

styles and principals' managerial effectiveness in public secondary schools in Umuahia Educational zone, Abia state.

Hypothesis one

There is no significant relationship between consultative decision-making styles and principals' managerial effectiveness in public secondary schools in Umuahia Educational zone, Abia state

Table 3: Correlation of consultative decision-making styles and principals' managerial effectiveness in Umuahia Educational zone, Abia state

Variables	N	Consultative decision-making styles	Principals managerial effectiveness	Sig.
Consultative decision-making styles	269	1	.333**	.000
Principals managerial effectiveness	269	.333*	1	

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

A Pearson Product – Moment correlation was run to determine the relationship between consultative decision-making styles and principal's managerial effectiveness. The data showed no violation of linearity. There was a positive correlation between consultative and principal's managerial effectiveness which was statistically significant ($r = .333$, $n = 1274$, $p < .005$). Thus we reject the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between

consultative decision-making styles and principal's managerial effectiveness in public secondary schools in Umuahia Educational zone, Abia state.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant relationship between consensus decision-making styles and principals' managerial effectiveness in public secondary schools in Umuahia Educational zone, Abia state

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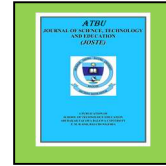


Table 3: Correlation of mean consensus decision-making styles and principals' managerial effectiveness in Umuahia Educational zone, Abia state.

Variables	N	Consensus decision-making styles	Principals managerial effectiveness	Sig.
Consensus decision-making styles	269	1	.640**	.001
Principals managerial effectiveness	269	.640*	1	

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

A Pearson Product–Moment correlation was run to determine the relationship between consensus decision-making styles and principals' managerial effectiveness. The data showed no violation of linearity. There was a positive correlation between consensus decision-making styles and principals managerial effectiveness which was statistically significant ($r=.640$, $n=1274$, $p<.005$). Thus we reject the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship consensus decision-making styles and principals managerial effectiveness in public secondary schools in Umuahia Educational zone, Abia state.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Relationship between Consultative decision-making styles and principals' managerial effectiveness

Table 1 revealed a positive linear relationship between consultative decision-making styles and principals' managerial effectiveness. This implies that the principal consultative decision-making styles was perceived as highly influential in classroom management and its layout, working within the constraints of the school environment to coordinate and collaborate with stakeholders in the school community to proactively plan and maintain a learning environment that could influence improved academic performance. The result further revealed that allowing staff suggestions to count in vital issues in the school helps in quality academic goals attainment. This findings is in agreement with Zulfqar, Valcke, Devos, Tuytens, and Shahzad (2016), who stated that consultative decision making occur when the decision maker (administrator) seeks the advice or

opinions from his staff, and makes decision himself. He further stated that, if the staffs are expertise, he will be endowed with enough information from the staff.

The researcher revealed that consultative principals' decision making style induced the fact that the school administrator is indeed the servant to the group of individuals he is leading. The subordinate exhibits powers thereby engaging in consultations with the school administrator (leader) giving contributions and suggestion which might aid the growth of the organization. More so, Ainomugisha (2019) also stated consultative school administrators 'aims at developing the people ability in order to influence, stimulates and motivates rather than impose and force on them their authority, involving subordinates effectively in making and handling challenges. There was a positive correlation between consultative decision-making styles and principals' managerial effectiveness in public secondary schools in Umuahia Educational zone, Abia state. The relationship is statistically significance at .000 level of significance.

Relationship between Consensus decision-making styles and principals' managerial effectiveness

Table 2 reviewed that consensus decision-making styles affect positively the principals' managerial effectiveness. Hence, quality improvement in school goals attainment can come as a result of allowing collective decision about capacity development. Acting according to consensus guidelines enables a group to take advantage of all group members' ideas. By combining their thoughts, people can often create

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a higher quality decision than a vote decision or a decision by a single individual. Further, consensus decisions can be better than vote decisions because voting can actively undermine the decision. People are more likely to implement decisions they accept, and consensus makes acceptance more likely. These findings are also consistent with the literature of Rossmiller, 1992) who revealed that the consensus decision making is positively related to job satisfaction and help to enhance teachers' job satisfaction and consequently their performance (Judge & Klinger, 2007. More so, the corresponding hypothesis established a relationship between consensus decision making styles and principals' managerial effectiveness. There was a positive correlation between climate change and mental principals' managerial effectiveness in public secondary schools in Umuahia Educational zone, Abia state. The relationship is statistically significance at .001 level of significance.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated decision making styles as correlates of principals' managerial effectiveness in public secondary schools in Umuahia educational zone, Abia state Nigeria.

From the findings, the study concluded that:

1. Consultative decision-making styles has a positive correlate of principals' managerial effectiveness in Umuahia educational zone, Abia state.
2. The study also revealed that there is significant relationship between consensus decision making styles and principals' managerial effectiveness in Umuahia educational zone, Abia state

Hence, the study maintained that effective school administration is to a high extent dependent on good decision-making styles of the school principals.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. Teachers should be given more opportunities to participate in decision

making so as to increase their level of commitment to instructional task performance that will in turn improve students' learning outcome in secondary schools.

2. Authoritative decision making styles should be utterly abhorred in secondary school administration if the school must experience progress.
3. Principals and teachers alike should be exposed to relevant seminars and workshops that could build their capacities in decision making to improve the quality of instructional management in secondary schools.
4. The principal should from time to time call a general meeting of the staff in order to have a collective binding force on the decisions that will be reached.
5. Principals should share responsibility with teachers to better manage schools and improve students' academic achievement in public secondary schools

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