# ASSESSING PRINCIPALS' LEADERSHIP AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SKILLS ON EFFECTIVE ADMINISTRATION IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN DELTA STATE

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| Article history: | | Abstract: |
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| **Received:**<br>**Accepted:**<br>**Published:** | October 18th 2023<br>November 17th 2023<br>December 23rd 2023 | The study examined principals' leadership and information technology skills for effective administration in public secondary schools in Delta State. In carrying out the study, two research questions were answered and two hypotheses were tested. The study covered all public secondary school principals and teachers in Delta State. The sample of the study is 219 principals and 743 teachers in Delta State public secondary schools. The sampling procedure used is the stratified random sampling technique. A questionnaire was used to collect data from the respondents, and the data were analyzed using coefficients of determination to provide answers to the research questions, while product moment correlation statistics were used to test the hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. The findings from the study showed that there is a positive relationship between principals' leadership skills and effective administration. There is a positive relationship between principals' information technology skills and effective administration. It was concluded that principals' leadership skills and principals' information technology skills positively relate to effective administration. It was recommended, among others, that the principal should acquire the necessary leadership and information technology skills relevant to the school system to enhance effective administrative performance for the growth and development of the institution. |

**Keywords:** Leadership and information technology skills, ADMINISTRATION in public secondary schools

## INTRODUCTION

The future of a country depends on the quality of education given to its citizens, because education assures the development and progress of society and provides continuity. The success of any organization, be it an educational institution or a production industry, largely depends on the ability to manage the organization efficiently by those in charge who are normally experienced, capable, and competent in organizational management. For this reason, educational managers responsible for educational institutions have important responsibilities in ensuring quality outputs. This is because the educational system is in continuous interaction with the social, political, cultural, and economic systems that surround it (Abayomi, 2021). Abayomi (2021) argued that Nigeria is reaching a period where teaching is fast becoming the last hope for the hopeless; that is, a profession for those who have nothing else better to do. This presents a challenge for dynamic instructional leadership in Nigerian secondary schools, where the head is expected to create a conducive atmosphere that will give both staff and students hope and encouragement.

Education is aimed at imparting knowledge and skills and inculcating human values, which help in personal and professional growth. Education, which constitutes an essential pre-requisite for achieving the national goal of inclusive development and equitable justice for society at large, Giving quality education is the priority of each and every nation in the world because the quality of education forms the basis of socio-economic and personal growth, an indicator of national progress. Of late, there have been high expectations from schools in terms of transparency and accountability to improve the quality of education. This demand has augmented the need for principals' leadership skills to improve activities in the school setting. Emphasizing the role of principals' leadership skills, Lockheed and

Verspoor (2016) observed that the quality of education partly depends on how well teachers are trained, directed, coordinated, and supervised since they are one of the key inputs to educational delivery.

However, there is strong support for effective administration through principals' professional competencies. Leadership refers to a set of knowledge, attitude, skills, and other personal dependent characteristics that affect the major part of a job and are correlated with job performance, which can be measured according to totally accepted standards and improved by retest and experience (Watson, 2019).

Leadership skills are the sum of the experiences, knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes acquired during the course of doing an assigned task or responsibilities. It increases the ability to perform adequately in one's field, and it shows how effective and efficient the performance of duties is. According to Hollyns (2020), leadership skills are skills, knowledge, and attributes that are specifically valued by the professional associations, organizations, and bodies connected to your future career. Lace (2021) sees leadership skills as the habitual and judicious use of communication, emotion, knowledge, technical skills, clinical reasoning, values, and reflection in daily practice for the benefit of the individual and community being served. Competences build on the foundation of basic clinical skills, scientific knowledge, and moral development (Harris, 2020).

Schools need skilled leaders and managers if they are to provide learners with quality education (Ikediugwu, 2016). Nwune, Nwogbo, and Okonkwo (2016) contend that schools do not only require trained and committed teachers but also the leadership of highly competent principals to manage and oversee what the teachers do and ensure that learners are provided with quality education. Management is the art of getting things done through and with people (Heller, 2012). It is a process that aims at achieving pre-determined objectives and involves planning, organizing, directing, controlling, and co-coordinating (Hissom, 2009).

Ikediugwu (2016) contends that a skilled principal ensures, through the use of knowledge, skills, and an appropriate leadership style, that indiscipline is minimized or eradicated. This makes the school a haven of peace in which every staff member feels safe and secure, which enhances effective administration. Furthermore, being able to communicate effectively is perhaps the most important of all administrative skills. It is what enables the principal to pass information to his or her subordinate and to understand what he or she said. Communication skills are needed to speak appropriately with a wide variety of people while maintaining good eye contact, demonstrating a varied vocabulary, and tailoring the language to your audience. Communication is one of the most basic functions of management; the manager can make a good decision, think out well-conceived plans, establish a sound organizational structure, and even be well-linked by his associates. Communication is essential for achieving managerial and administrative effectiveness. Good communication helps employees become more involved in their work and helps them develop a better understanding of their jobs. Effective communication provides both written and verbal feedback as well as for maintaining morale and activities within the school system.

A leader is the person who mobilizes other people to undertake collective action in pursuit of a common goal. Principal leadership styles affect all schools' learning situations, including teachers' job satisfaction. Leadership is the central process in any organization. Oboegbulem and Onwurah (2011) see leadership as a process of influencing, directing, acquiring normative personal characteristics and power, and coordinating group activities to make individuals in an organization strive willingly towards the attainment of organizational goals. According to Billingsley (2015), he found out that teachers with positive perceptions of their principals' leadership styles also had job satisfaction. UNESCO (2006) and Mbiti (2007) recognized the important role played by school management in the achievement of school goals and its implications for the overall performance of both teachers and students. The principal's leadership style plays an important role in determining productivity among the teachers in the school.

The role of principals in transmitting educational policy into action cannot be overemphasized. No wonder an adage says that no nation can rise above the quality of its teachers. Nevertheless, it appears that most principals in secondary schools failed to carry out their duties in school, which could be a result of the principals' incompetence. Principals fall short of the desired competence and skills, so there is no cordial relationship with the teachers, and as such, there is bound to be disorder and chaos in the school's system.

However, it was observed that principals cannot carry out their administrative duties effectively, which could be a result of a lack of professional competence such as leadership skills, lack of IT skills, communication, inability to delegate, poor problem-solving skills, poor decision-making, excellent listening, and poor planning skills, as well as the demotivation of teachers, which could result in poor administration. The principal's duty as the school leader is to ensure the quality and timely delivery of educational services, and the successful realization of school goals depends on his ability to manage educational resources, both human and material, effectively.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) competencies are the skills and abilities of school principals for using computers to store and retrieve information when needed (Edafiogho, 2017). The increasing complexity of the education business and the corresponding pressure on available resources demand that school administrators depend on powerful management information systems to achieve effective school management. ICT provides administrators with opportunities that enable them to learn and reach out to other sources of administrative knowledge. In fact, according to Edafiogho (2017), as administrators become increasingly information-literate, they develop skills in processing, interpretation, analyzing, and conveying knowledge. He further remarked that ICT has the capacity for automatic processes and saves time, thereby allowing school administrators to concentrate as well as improving the quality of contact time with staff and students.

Principals who lack administrative skills are rather said to scare teachers with their superior airs, dictating and circulating programs of events and even the timetable without involving those earlier assigned with those responsibilities. The above action(s) would invariably result in negative attitudinal changes in many teachers, which would quickly slow down administration. In such a scenario, some subordinates may decide to sabotage the efforts of the principal, and this could result in the ineffectiveness of the administration. Therefore, there is a need for principals to acquire enough administrative skills (competencies) to make them more goal-oriented. It is on this background that the study tends to investigate principals' leadership and information technology skills for effective administration in public secondary schools in Delta State.

### Research Questions
The following research questions were raised to guide the study:
1. What is the relationship between principals' leadership skills and effective administration in public secondary schools in Delta State?
2. What is the relationship between principals' information technology skill and effective administration in public secondary schools in Delta State?

### Hypotheses
The following hypotheses are formulated to guide the study.
1. There is no significant relationship between principals' leadership skills and effective administration in public secondary schools in Delta State.
2. There is no significant relationship between principals' information technology skill and effective administration in public secondary schools in Delta State.

### METHOD
This study is a correlational survey adopting the ex-post-facto research design. The reason why this study employs an ex-post facto research design is because the cause and effect of the variables of interest have already occurred. The population for this study comprised all public secondary school principals and teachers in Delta State. There are currently 479 public secondary schools in Delta State, made up of 479 principals and 14,877 teachers in the twenty-five (25) local government areas of Delta State. The sample for this study is 962 respondents. The breakdown is 219 principals and 743 teachers in Delta State public secondary schools selected from 12 local government areas. The sampling procedure used is the stratified random sampling technique. The instrument used for the study is a self-developed questionnaire titled 'Principals' Professional Competences and Effective Administration Questionnaire' (PPCEAQ).

The instrument was given to the project supervisor to determine the relevance of each item and the scope of the items. These questions or items were vetted objectively by the researchers' supervisor. Thereafter, the instrument was given to one other specialist in educational management and foundations from Delta State University, as well as one expert who criticized it and made useful suggestions. The questionnaire was administered to ten (10) principals and twenty (20) teachers in public schools in Edo State in order to ensure reliability. Their responses were scored and analyzed using the Cronbach's alpha formula. A value of 0.85 was obtained, thus making it suitable for the study. The researcher employed coefficients of determination to provide answers to the research questions, while Pearson's product moment correlation statistics were used to test the hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance.

### RESULTS
**Research Question One:** What is the relationship between principals' leadership skills and effective administration in public secondary schools in Delta State?

**Table 1: Principals' Leadership Skills and Effective Administration**

| Variables | N | Mean | SD | r | $r^2$ | $r^2$% | Decision |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Principals' Leadership Skills | 920 | | | | | | |
| | | 2.83 | 1.02 | .750 | .563 | 56.3 | positive Relationship |
| Effective Administration | 920 | | | | | | |

**Source: Field work, 2023**

Table 1 shows the relationship between principals' leadership skills and effective administration in public secondary schools in Delta State. The result shows that the correlation coefficient (r) principals' leadership skills and effective administration is 0.750, with a coefficient determination of ($r^2$) of 0.563. principals' leadership skills contributed 56.3 percent to effective administration. This implies that there is a positive relationship between principals' leadership skills and effective administration in public secondary schools in Delta State.

**Research Question Two:** What is the relationship between principals' information technology skill and effective administration in public secondary schools in Delta State?

**Table 2: Principals' Information Technology Skill and Effective Administration**

| Variables | N | Mean | SD | r | $r^2$ | $r^2$% | Decision |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Principals' Information Technology Skills | 920 | | | | | | Positive Relationship |
| | | 2.93 | 0.95 | .379 | .144 | 14.4 | |
| Effective Administration | 920 | | | | | | |

**Source: Field work, 2023**

Table 2 shows the relationship between principals' information technology skill and effective administration in public secondary schools. The result shows that the correlation coefficient (r) principals' information technology skills and effective administration is 0.379, with a coefficient determination of ($r^2$) of 0.144. Principals' information technology skill 14.4 percent to effective administration. This means that there is positive relationship between principals' information technology skill and effective administration in public secondary schools in Delta State.

**Hypothesis One**: There is no significant relationship between principals' leadership skills and effective administration in public secondary schools in Delta State.

**Table 3:** Showing the analysis of the relationship between principals' leadership skills and effective administration

| Variables | N | Mean | SD | r-cal | Sig | Decision |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Principals' Leadership skills | 920 | | | | | $Ho_2$ is significant |
| | | 2.83 | 1.02 | .606* | .0084 | |
| Effective Administration | 920 | | | | | |

**Source: Field work, 2023**

From Table 3, the value of r is 0.606; at an alpha level of .05, the p-value is .0084; since the p-value is less than the alpha level, the null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, there is a significant relationship between principals' leadership skills and effective administration in public secondary schools in Delta State.

**Hypothesis Two**: There is no significant relationship between principals' information technology skills and effective administration in public secondary schools in Delta State.

**Table 4:** showing the analysis of the relationship between principals' information technology skills and effective administration

| Variables | N | Mean | SD | r-cal | Sig | Decision |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Principals' Information Technology Skills | 920 | | | | | $Ho_3$ is significant |
| | | 2.95 | 0.95 | 1.000* | .000 | |
| Effective Administration | 920 | | | | | |

**Source: Field work, 2023**

From Table 4, the value of r is 1.000; at an alpha level of.05, the p-value is.000; since the p-value is less than the alpha level, the null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, there is a significant relationship between principals' information technology skills and effective administration in public secondary schools in Delta State.

**DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**
The study's findings are discussed under the following sub-headings:
**Principals' Leadership Skills and Effective Administration**
The study revealed that there is a positive relationship between principals' leadership skills and effective administration in public secondary schools in Delta State. This means that the higher the leadership skills of principals, the higher the effectiveness of their administration in schools. The finding is in line with Billingsley's (2015) finding

that principals' leadership skills influence the achievement of school goals and have implications for the overall performance of both teachers and students. The principals' leadership skills play an important role in determining productivity among the teachers in the school.

**Principals' Information Technology Skill and Effective Administration**

The study further revealed that there is a positive relationship between principals' information technology skills and effective administration in public secondary schools in Delta State. This implies that the use of proper information technology skills by school principals effectively influences school administration. The findings confirm those of Patrick (2020), who reported that the need for ICT in Nigerian schools cannot be overemphasized. In this technology-driven age, everyone and organizations require ICT competence to survive. It will be of added advantage to managers or school heads who have knowledge of information and communication technology skills, as it will harness effective administration. Similarly, Bishop (2012) also pointed out that the principal's knowledge and competence in ICT are essential to effective school administration.

## CONCLUSION

On the basis of the findings and discussions of the study, it was concluded that principals' leadership skills and principals' information technology skills positively relate to effective administration.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher made the following recommendations:
1.  The principal should acquire the necessary communication skills relevant to the school system to enhance effective administrative performance for the growth and development of the institution.
2.  Principals of secondary schools should possess various leadership skills to improve staff functional performance and enhance effective administrative functions in the school for improvement and development.

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