

INFLUENCE OF PRINCIPALS' AWARENESS AND INVOLVEMENT IN CURRICULUM LEADERSHIP ON EFFECTIVE CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION AMONG TEACHERS IN ASABA DELTA STATE

Adewunmi F. Ayo-Vaughan, Ph.D

*Department of Curriculum and Instruction,
Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba*

Abstract

Effective curriculum implementation is central to holistic learning. Though teachers are the major stakeholders when it's up to curriculum implementation, curriculum leadership no doubt plays a vital role in this feat. This study therefore, was carried out to examine principals' awareness and involvement in curriculum leadership in a bid to achieve effective curriculum implementation. The study adopted a descriptive survey design, guided by three research questions. The population consisted of all public secondary school principals and vice-principals in Oshimili North & South Local Government Area, Asaba. Comprehensive sampling technique was used to select the sample size of twenty-five schools that participated in the study while purposive sampling technique was used to select both principal and vice-principal in each school making a total sample size of fifty. A structured 16-item questionnaire titled "Principals' Awareness and Involvement in Curriculum Leadership Roles Questionnaire (PAICLRQ) was used to gather data. It was face and content validated and tested for reliability using Test-Retest method thereby obtaining a reliability co-efficient of 0.88. Descriptive statistics of frequency counts, mean and standard deviation were used to analyze data gathered. Findings revealed that principals are aware and to a high extent involved in curriculum leadership roles. Also, principals awareness and involvement in curriculum leadership roles influences effective curriculum implementation. The study recommends among others that incentives such as award of excellence and training grants should be given to best performing principals in order to motivate others and sustain the tempo of principals' awareness and involvement in curriculum implementation.

Keywords: Curriculum leadership; Curriculum implementation; Leadership roles, Curriculum awareness

Introduction

Education is one of the most important instruments for achieving human and national development. This is probably the reason why education is offered as a basic right to all children irrespective of race, sex, cultural background, religious

affiliations and ethnicity. To achieve the goals of education, schools are established and teachers employed to teach different curricula that are compartmentalized into various subject areas (Ikegbusi & Ihenacho, 2016).

In this regard, Edozie in Ayo-Vaughan et al. (2023) stated that teachers are the major stake holders when it comes to curriculum implementation under the supervision of school heads (principals, headmasters, headmistress etc.) who are to provide curriculum leadership. Therefore, school heads need to be aware and involved in curriculum leadership roles as it seems to have a positive bearing on effective curriculum implementation among teachers (Oyedeji, 2012).

Effective curriculum implementation aids in the attainment of a high level of academic excellence which entails the inculcation of the right type of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to the learner to enable him function efficiently and effectively within the society and ensure societal survival. Curriculum leadership thus, involves a careful balance of instructional and administrative leadership roles and responsibilities affecting student achievement, including professional development, professional accountability and curriculum development (Ogawa & Bossert, 2015).

In recent times however, the Nigerian education system is reportedly suffering from setbacks that range from poor funding, accountability and lack of awareness and involvement in curriculum leadership roles on the part of the school heads. These setbacks allegedly impact negatively and act as impediments to curriculum implementation (Angga & Sofyan, 2022). By implication, teachers seem not to be showing commitment to their roles and this cannot be disconnected from the role of the school head who is supposed to supervise and monitor them. This study was therefore carried out to examine the influence of principals'

awareness and involvement in curriculum leadership on effective curriculum implementation among teachers in Asaba, Delta State

The research questions guiding the study therefore are:

1. To what extent are Principals aware of curriculum leadership roles expected of them?
2. To what extent are Principals consistently involved in carrying out curriculum leadership roles?
3. In what ways does Principal's awareness and involvement in curriculum leadership roles influence teacher's effective implementation of the curriculum?

Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

The development of this study is based on Beatty (2022) theory of inter-individual differences in perception as influenced by Erikson's work on 'Identity' in 1968. Betty's unique exploration of individuals and comparative perceptions provides a solid foundation on which this study is designed. The theory states that differences in individual brain structure or factors such as culture, upbringing and environment have effect on the perception of humans. These effects on perception include individual's past experiences, education, values, culture, preconceived notions and present circumstances. Betty (2022) summarizes the three major influences on perception as the characteristics of the person being perceived, the particular situation, and the perceiver. The theory of inter-individual differences in perception is significant to this study because it supports the notion that each school principal's unique background of education, experiences and cultural values influences his/her perception of curriculum leadership roles in the school.

Principals and Curriculum Leadership Roles

Curriculum leadership roles involve a professional, continuous and cooperative exercise that covers all aspects of the

life of a school. It implies cooperative exercise that has to do, with all that is concerned in running a school. It covers the entire sub-system of the school and influences them. It covers the teachers, learners, school plant and non -teaching staff. It means all that interact to bring about education are part of curriculum (Sowell, 2018). This is so because every element is important in the system.

The Wallace Foundation (2013) developed the five key responsibilities of a school principal in playing his or her curriculum leadership role:

1. Supervision
2. Shaping a vision of academic success for all students
3. Creating a climate hospitable to education
4. Cultivating leadership in others
5. Improving instruction

The above responsibilities are in line with the assertion of Glatthorn in Edozie (2016) that one of the tasks of curriculum leadership is to use the right methods to bring the written, the taught, the supported, and the tested curricula into closer alignment, so that the learned curriculum is maximized.

In this regard, a principal as school curriculum leader who is aware of and involves in curriculum leadership will exert strong leadership to support the school dynamic curriculum by helping staff and any curriculum workers contemplate and select a curriculum design to suit the student needs (Ediger, 2014). To serve as an effective curriculum leader, (Sowell, 2018) pinpointed that a principal must have skills in observation, analysis, improvement of teaching, learning theory, and approaches to instructional planning as curriculum leadership skills could be improved by professional development (Townsend et al., 2018).

Furthermore, Nnebedum and Akinfolarin (2017) stated that involvement in curriculum leadership roles sees the principal

taking actions that involves mentorship and monitoring subordinates or teachers and provide supportive and conducive atmosphere for improvement in the instructional process. It implies a coordinated effort between a principal who should be more experienced and the teacher who is perceived to be relatively less experienced with a focus on improving the instruction process.

Numerous studies have demonstrated that principal's awareness of and involvement in leadership roles is significantly related to teachers' performance. For instance, Honest (2022), Robert (2022) and Etudor et al. (2013) in separate studies revealed that principal's awareness and involvement in the implementation of subject curriculum influenced teachers' effectiveness in the classrooms. Similarly, Iroegbu and Etudor-Eyo (2016) in an ex-post facto study on principals and teachers there is a significant difference in teachers' effectiveness based on principal's classroom observation, analysis/ strategy, pre-teaching and post-teaching analysis. Howbeit, Cole-Foppe (2016) found that though curriculum leadership influenced effective curriculum implementation, teachers' still perceived of principals to have devoted insufficient amount of time in school curriculum matters. The school principals in the study also concurred that they could have done more in their role as curriculum leaders.

On the other hand, Onyali and Akinfolarin (2017) conducted a similar study and found that teachers disagreed that principals monitor and supervise them regularly. In the same vein, Naidoo and Petersen (2015), reported that principals mainly interpreted their roles and functions as school principals to be purely managerial. Sasson (2016) indicated that school principals were only moderately involved in instructional leadership activities and Shaked (2019) reported that school principals demonstrated limited direct involvement in curriculum leadership.

This disparity in findings call for more research in this area in order to confirm what is obtainable among teachers in Delta State.

Methodology

The study adopted descriptive survey design. The choice of the design became very appropriate because of its expanded way of collecting information from a large group of people and the comprehensive nature of the techniques involved in getting information (data) for the study without manipulating the variables involved. The study was conducted in Oshimili North and South Local Government Areas of Delta State which covers Asaba, Afadia, Oko-alana, Oduke, Okwe, Oko (Oshimili South) and Okpanam, Ugbolu, Ibusa, Ilah, Akwukwu-Igbo and Atuma Iga areas (Oshimili North). Over the last four years, series of teacher professional training had been carried out by the previous state government. Oshimili North and South Local Government Areas were therefore purposively selected as a representation of other local governments in the state to determine the research focus. The population of the study involved public secondary school principals and vice principals. There are 15 approved public secondary schools in Oshimili North and 13 in Oshimili South, making a total of 28 public secondary schools (deltastatemobse.net/Schools List.aspx). Comprehensive sampling technique was used to select the twenty-eight schools, though three schools opted out due to environmental reasons, making a total of twenty-five schools that participated in the study. Purposive sampling technique was then used to select both principal and vice-principal in each school making a total sample size of fifty.

A structured 16-item questionnaire titled “Principals’ Awareness and Involvement in Curriculum Leadership Roles Questionnaire (PAICLRQ) was used to gather data. The instrument was rated on a 4-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree,

Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree (SD) and in some sections, on the scale of Very High Extent, High Extent, Low Extent and Very Low Extent according to the nature of the research questions. The options were weighted as follows SA (4 points), A (3 points), D (2points) and SD (1point) and the same weighting applied to the measure on extents resulting in the mean score average of 2.50 as decision rule. The instrument was face and content validated and tested for reliability using Test-Retest method thereby obtaining a reliability co-efficient of 0.88. Data was collected using on-the-spot approach in order to guarantee a 100% return rate. Descriptive statistics of frequency counts, mean and standard deviation were used to analyze data gathered.

Results

RQ 1: To what extent are Principals aware of curriculum leadership roles expected of them?

Table 1: *Mean Table on Respondents' rating on the extent to which Principals are aware of the curriculum leadership roles expected of them*

S/N	STATEMENT	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	$\bar{x}$	SD	DECISION
1	Principals build and maintain a vision that focuses on improving the quality of teachers and overall performance of students in the school	31	9	9	1	3.56	0.44	High Extent
2	Principals involve in creating awareness on curriculum contents for effective curriculum implementation	25	13	8	4	3.18	0.37	High Extent
3	Principals provide leadership role in interpreting nitty gritty areas for clarity and effective implementation	33	8	5	4	3.40	0.41	High Extent
4	Principals provide a	30	11	6	3	3.36	0.40	High Extent

	supervisory leadership role on teachers implementation efforts							
5	Principals are aware of their leadership roles in curriculum implementation	23	14	9	4	3.12	0.36	High Extent
Grand Mean/SD						3.32	0.39	High Extent

Table 1 shows that respondents agree to a high extent with all statements as reflected in their mean scores which were above the mean score average of 2.50. This implies that Principals to a high extent are aware of the curriculum leadership roles expected of them as shown by the grand mean of 3.32. The standard deviation of 0.39 further indicates that respondents were not far apart in their responses.

RQ 2: To what extent are Principals consistently involved in carrying out curriculum leadership roles?

Table 2: *Mean Table on Respondents' rating on the extent to which Principals are consistently involved in carrying out curriculum leadership roles*

S/N	STATEMENT	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	$\bar{x}$	SD	DECISION
6	Principals perform the role of supervising teachers to make sure that they perform their duties as expected	32	8	8	2	3.40	0.41	High Extent
7	Principals perform the role of checking and marking the lessons plans and notes of teachers	19	21	2	8	3.02	0.45	High Extent
8	Principals perform the role of training teachers in order to achieve educational goals	32	7	6	5	3.32	0.39	High Extent
9	Principals perform the	11	27	8	4	2.90	0.33	High Extent

	role of managing the human, material and financial resources of the school for effective curriculum implementation							
10	Principals keep the important records related to curriculum requirements such as CA scores etc	25	16	6	3	3.26	0.38	High Extent
Grand Mean/SD						3.18	0.39	High Extent

Table 2 shows that respondents agree to a high extent with all statements as reflected in their mean scores which were above the mean score average of 2.50. By implication, principals are highly involved in curriculum leadership roles in their schools such as supervising teachers, proof-reading teacher’s lessons notes and ensuring other quality assurance measures as shown by the grand mean of 3.18. The standard deviation of 0.39 further indicates that respondents were not far apart in their responses.

RQ 3: In what ways does Principal’s awareness of and involvement in curriculum leadership roles influence teacher’s effective implementation of the curriculum?

Table 3: *Mean Table on Respondents' rating on how Principal’s awareness of and involvement in curriculum leadership roles influences teacher’s effective implementation of the curriculum*

S/N	STATEMENT	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{x}$	SD	DECISION
11	Principals encourage teachers and other staff to be regular at work	37	4	3	6	3.44	0.41	Agree
12	Principals encourage teachers to be punctual to school which aids daily implementation of the curriculum	27	16	6	1	3.38	0.40	Agree
13	Principal ensures that teachers	25	13	9	3	3.20	0.37	Agree

	mark pupil's class work regularly thereby aiding curriculum implementation							
14	Principals ensure that teachers cover the scheme of work in record time	29	11	7	3	3.32	0.39	Agree
15	Principals ensure that teachers conform to set rules and regulations concerning curriculum implementation	31	11	8	0	3.46	0.38	Agree
16	Principals sign teachers lesson plans and notes on daily basis to ensure curriculum implementation	22	18	8	2	3.20	0.37	Agree
Grand Mean/SD						3.33	0.38	Agree

Table 3 shows that respondents agree with all statements as reflected in their mean scores which were above the mean score average of 2.50. This implies that principal's awareness and involvement in curriculum leadership roles puts a quality check on teachers' effectiveness in curriculum implementation as indicated by the grand mean of 3.33. The standard deviation of 0.38 further indicates that respondents were not far apart in their responses.

Discussion of Findings

This study revealed that principals, to a high extent, are aware of the curriculum leadership roles expected of them in their various schools necessary for effective teacher curriculum implementation. This finding is in line with the findings of Honest (2022), Robert (2022) and Etudor et al. (2013) who in separate studies revealed that principal's awareness and involvement in the implementation of subject curriculum influenced teachers' effectiveness in the classrooms. In other words, principals' awareness of curriculum leadership roles enables them to monitor and mentor teachers; providing them the

supportive and conducive atmosphere for the improvement of the instructional process.

In addition, this study found that principals are highly involved in curriculum leadership roles in their schools such as supervising teachers, proof-reading teacher's lessons notes and ensuring other quality assurance measures. This finding is not in agreement with Cole-Foppe (2016) who reported that though curriculum leadership influenced effective curriculum implementation, teachers' still perceived of principals to have devoted insufficient amount of time in school curriculum matters. It is also not in agreement with Onyali and Akinfolarin (2017) who found that teachers disagreed that principals monitor and supervise them regularly.

Similarly, it slightly disagrees with Sasson (2016) who indicated that school principals were only moderately involved in instructional leadership activities and also Shaked (2019) who maintained that school principals demonstrated limited direct involvement in curriculum leadership. The possible reason for this disparity in findings may lie in the recency of the researches. The previous studies were conducted at least eight years before this current study. This implies that there must have been an improvement in principals curriculum leadership roles over the years possibly as a result of intense professional development. Townsend et al., (2018) noted that curriculum leadership skills could be improved by professional development.

Furthermore, the study found that principal's awareness and involvement in curriculum leadership roles influences teachers' effectiveness in curriculum implementation. This finding is in agreement with Nnebedum and Akinfolarin (2017) that involvement in curriculum leadership roles sees the principal taking actions that involves mentorship and monitoring subordinates or teachers and provide supportive and conducive

atmosphere for improvement in the instructional process. It also aligns with Glatthorn in Edozie (2016) that when curriculum leadership employs the right methods to bring the written, the taught, the supported, and the tested curricula into closer alignment, the learned curriculum is maximized.

Conclusion: Effective curriculum implementation is the ultimate goal of teaching and though teachers are the major stake holders in the matter, principals and school heads generally are not left out of the picture. If teachers must effectively implement the curriculum, principals must carry out their curriculum leadership roles. Principals must perform their curriculum leadership roles in a manner that will serve as a motivation to the teachers. Notably, principal's awareness of curriculum leadership roles alone without involvement in the curriculum leadership roles would not automatically lead to teacher's effective implementation of the curriculum.

Recommendations: Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that, the Delta State government should put in place incentives such as award of excellence, prize-based monthly score card and training grants for best performing principals in order to motivate others and sustain the current tempo of principals' awareness and involvement in curriculum implementation. In addition, since this study seems to depart from previous studies in terms of principal's involvement in curriculum leadership roles, more recent studies should be carried out in different locations to ascertain this study's finding.

References

Ayo-Vaughan, A.F., Ajani, D & Oyeade, M.O. (2023) Secondary school teachers technology pedagogical content knowledge (TPACK) levels and its implications for curriculum implementation in Delta State. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science (IJRISS)*, 7(10), 1364-1373.

- Angga, & Sofyan, I. (2022). Kepemimpinan Kepala Sekolah dalam Mewujudkan Merdeka Belajar di Sekolah Dasar. *Jurnal Basicedu*, 6(3), 5295–5301. <https://doi.org/10.31004/basicedu.v6i3.2918>.
- Beatty, C. (2022). *Interindividual differences in perception?* <https://questionstoknow.com>.
- Cole-Foppe, L.A. (2016). Principals as instruction leaders, determiners of school climate, and facilitators of student achievement. (Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation), McKendree University.
- Ediger, M. (2014). The changing role of the school principal. *College Student Journal*, 48(2), 265–267.
- Edozie, G.C. (2016). *Fundamentals of curriculum studies* (2nd ed. Revised). Ambik Press Ltd.
- Honest, U.K. (2022). The principal's leadership role in implantation of the curriculum in school. *Journal of ilmiah School*. 6, 680-688.
- Ikegbusi, N.G. & Ihenacho, R.C (2016). Factors militating against effective administration of secondary schools in Anambra State. *World Journal of Educational Research*, 3(1), 213-226.
- Iroegbu, E.E. & Etudor-Eyo, E. (2016). Principals' instructional supervision and teachers' effectiveness. *British Journal of Education*.4 (7), 99-109.
- Naidoo, P., & Petersen, N. (2015). Towards a leadership program for primary school principals as instructional leaders. *South African Journal of Childhood Education*, 5(3), 371. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1187278.pdf>
- Nnebedum, C. & Akinfolarin, (2017). Principal's supervisory techniques as correlates of teacher's job performance in secondary schools. *Educational Leadership*, 1(1), 13- 22.
- Ogawa, R., & Bossert, R. (2015). Leadership as an organizational quality. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 31(2), 224–244.
- Onyali, L.C & Akinfolarin, A.V. Principal application of instructional leadership practices for secondary school effectiveness in Oyo state. *Journal of the Nigerian Academy of Education*. 12, 33-47.
- Oyedemi, N.B. (2012). Supervision and standard of education in Nigerian primary schools. *Educational Research and Development Journal*, 25, 82–98.
- Sasson, D.G. (2016). Principals' perceptions of their instructional leadership behaviors in Jewish day schools: A quantitative and qualitative study. (Unpublished Doctoral dissertation), Yeshiva University.
- Shaked, H. (2019). Perceptual inhibitors of instructional leadership in Israeli principals. *School Leadership & Management*, 39(5), 519–536.
- Sowell, M. (2018). It's what principals do: Influencing teachers to support students. *Current Issues in Middle Level Education*, 23(1), 1–21. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1191666.pdf>