

Principals' Administrative Practices and Sustainable School Development among Public Secondary Schools in Oyo State, Nigeria.

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Abstract

This study was conducted to investigate principals' administrative practices and sustainable school development in public secondary schools in Oyo State, Nigeria. The study adopted a correlational research design with a population of 5,398 teachers in public secondary schools in the 11 Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Oyo Central Senatorial District who teach in 17, 244 schools. This study was conducted using a multistage sampling procedure. In the first stage, Oyo Central Senatorial District was randomly selected from the senatorial districts in Oyo State. Six Local Government Areas; representing about 50% of the 11 LGAs, were selected in the second stage. In the third stage, sixty (60) public secondary schools were randomly selected from the sampled Local Government Areas. In the last stage, sixty (60) principals and 540 teachers were selected, giving a total number of 600 respondents. The data collected were analysed using weighted mean and standard deviation for descriptive statistics, Pearson Product Moment Correlation, regression and t-test analysis. The study revealed that principals' administrative practices in public secondary schools in Oyo State were highly rated with a weighted mean of 3.16 while sustainable school development was also highly rated with a weighted mean of 3.07. The study further revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between principals' administrative practices and sustainable school development ($r = 0.62, p < .05$). Regression analysis also revealed that principals' administrative practices significantly contributed towards sustainable school development accounting for 37.9% of its variance. In addition, the study revealed that there is no significant difference between the opinions of principals and teachers on the contribution of principals' administrative practices towards sustainable school development as evidenced by the reported t-value of 1.65 which was lower than the critical value of 1.96. The study concluded that effective principals' administrative practices are necessary for the achievement of continuous school development in public secondary schools. It was further recommended that principals should put more effort into instructional supervision, teacher motivation participatory decision making, stakeholder collaboration and monitoring of school improvement initiatives while government should provide sufficient resources and capacity building opportunities for school leaders.

Keywords: Principals' Administrative Practices, Sustainable School Development, Secondary Schools

Introduction

Sustainable school development has been an emerging issue in secondary education which schools are expected to sustain continuous improvement in teaching and learning, staff development, stakeholder participation and the achievement of educational goals. Public secondary schools in Nigeria continue to experience challenges that can undermine sustained development such as inadequate infrastructure, insufficient funding, changing educational demands and limited institutional capacity. Adenuga et al. (2025) identified inadequate infrastructure, outdated curricula and insufficient funding as significant constraints to sustainable development in secondary education. Similarly, Olanrewaju and Abdulkareem (2021) reported a significant relationship between school development planning and school effectiveness indicating importance for deliberate school development efforts in improving educational outcomes. The sustainability of school development, however, requires not just the availability of policies and programmes but also effective administration at the school level. Principals play a pivotal role as they coordinate teachers, supervise instruction, communicate school policies, motivate staff, facilitate decision-making and manage conflicts. Effective administrative practices can provide an



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enabling environment for teachers to perform their duties and for school improvement initiatives to continue. Ogharen (2022) highlighted the importance of principals' administrative practices and teacher participation in decision-making for effective school administration. Ereh et al. (2025) also demonstrated the continued relevance of principals' administrative practices for effective functioning of public secondary schools.

Principals' administrative practices can therefore be a key mechanism for promoting sustainable school development. Effective instructional supervision may support continuous improvement of teaching and learning, while staff motivation can enhance teachers' commitment to school goals. Participatory decision-making can increase ownership of school programmes, effective communication can improve coordination, and appropriate conflict management can contribute to a stable school environment. In support for this position, Nwabueze et al. (2023) found principals' leadership skills and administrative practices significantly contributed to a sustainable peaceful learning environment in secondary schools. Similarly, Okaforcha and Obijiaku (2025) identified motivational, supervisory, participatory decision-making and professional-development practices as important aspects of principals' administration. Despite their contributions, recent Nigerian studies have mainly focused on principals' administrative practices in relation to teachers' job performance, commitment, administrative effectiveness and school climate, with limited exploration about their contribution to sustainable school development as an outcome. The extent to which principals' administrative practices contribute to the sustained development of public secondary schools in Oyo State therefore requires empirical investigation. This study consequently explores principals' administrative practices and sustainable school development in public secondary schools in Oyo State, Nigeria with a view to providing evidence for strengthening school administration and sustaining educational improvement.

Statement of the Problem

Sustainable development of public secondary schools continues to be a concern, as many schools struggle to achieve continuous improvement of teaching and learning, staff development, stakeholder participation and school improvement programmes. Although principals are tasked with providing the administrative direction required to sustain school development, weaknesses in supervision, staff motivation, communication, participatory decision-making and conflict management can impede the effective and continuous development of schools. Existing studies have mainly focused on principals' administrative practices in relation to teachers' performance and other school outcomes, with limited focus on sustainable school development, particularly in Oyo State. The issue, therefore, is whether principals' administrative practices are sufficient to promote sustainable development of public secondary schools in Oyo State. This study consequently explores principals' administrative practices and sustainable school development in public secondary schools in Oyo State, Nigeria.

Literature Review

Principals' Administrative Practices

Principals' administrative practices are the organised and purposeful actions through which principals coordinate school activities, direct staff and utilise institutional processes to achieve educational objectives. The concept encompasses the behaviours and strategies used in planning, organising, supervising, communicating, motivating staff, making decisions and managing relationships within the school. Ogharen (2022) describes principals' administrative practices in terms of the activities through which school leaders coordinate personnel and school operations, emphasising effective communication and teacher participation in decision-making. Similarly, Oguejiofor (2023) regards administrative practices as important managerial activities through which principals influence the effective performance of teachers and the functioning of schools. Thus, principals' administrative practices are not limited to routine office functions but are the leadership processes through which principals create direction, coordination and support for the achievement of school goals. Ereh et al. (2025) further emphasis on the relevance of principals' administrative practices to effective administration of public secondary schools. In this study, principals' administrative practices are understood as the extent to which principals effectively supervise instruction, motivate teachers, involve staff in decision-making, communicate school matters, delegate responsibilities and manage conflicts to facilitate effective school administration.

Sustainable School Development



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Sustainable school development refers to the continuous and long-term process through which schools maintain, improve and adapt their educational programmes, personnel, practices and institutional capacity to achieve enduring educational outcomes. The concept goes beyond temporary improvement because it emphasises the ability of schools to preserve educational gains while responding appropriately to emerging challenges and changing educational demands. Olanrewaju and Abdulkareem (2021) associate school development with systematic planning and continuous efforts to improve school effectiveness, while Eze (2022) links sustainable educational development with the capacity of schools to implement practices that support enduring educational improvement. Sustainable school development therefore involves maintaining effective teaching and learning, supporting continuous professional development, sustaining school improvement initiatives and fostering constructive relationships with stakeholders. Berezi (2024) further identifies stakeholder collaboration as relevant to sustainable development of secondary school education, indicating that long-term school development requires shared commitment and support beyond the principal alone. In this study, sustainable school development refers to the capacity of public secondary schools to sustain continuous improvement in teaching and learning, teacher development, stakeholder engagement, educational programmes and institutional responsiveness over time.

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Theoretical Framework

Transformational Leadership Theory

Transformational Leadership Theory was developed by Burns (1978) and further developed by Bass (1985). The theory explains how leaders influence followers by providing vision, inspiring commitment, encouraging participation and motivating them to work beyond immediate individual interests towards shared organisational goals. In school administration, the theory emphasises the principal's ability to inspire teachers, encourage innovation, support professional development and create a shared commitment to school improvement. The theory is relevant to this study because principals' administrative practices involve motivating teachers, supervising instruction, communicating school goals, involving staff in decision-making and creating conditions for continuous improvement. These practices can encourage teachers to contribute to the long-term development and sustainability of their schools. Transformational Leadership Theory therefore provides an appropriate theoretical basis for examining how principals' administrative practices may contribute to sustainable school development in public secondary schools in Oyo State.

Objective of the Study

The study generally investigated principals' administrative practices and sustainable school development in public secondary schools in Oyo State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to determine the:

1. level of principals' administrative practices in public secondary schools in Oyo State.
2. level of sustainable school development in public secondary schools in Oyo State.
3. significant relationship between principals' administrative practices and sustainable school development in public secondary schools in Oyo State.
4. significant contribution of principals' administrative practices to sustainable school development in public secondary schools in Oyo State.
5. significant difference in the opinion of principals and teacher on the contribution of principals' administrative practices to sustainable school development in on in public secondary schools in Oyo state.

Research Questions

1. What is the level of principals' administrative practices in public secondary schools in Oyo State?
2. What is the level of sustainable school development in public secondary schools in Oyo State?

Null Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between principals' administrative practices and sustainable school development in public secondary schools in Oyo State.
2. There is no significant of principals' administrative practices on sustainable school development in public secondary schools in Oyo State.



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3. There is no significant difference in the opinion of principals and teacher on the contribution of principals' administrative practices to sustainable school development in on in public secondary schools in Oyo state.

Research Methodology

The study adopted a correlational research design to determine the relationship and contribution of principals' administrative practices to sustainable school development and the difference in the opinions of principals and teachers in public secondary schools in Oyo State, Nigeria. The population comprised 5,398 school personnel in public secondary schools across the 11 Local Government Areas of Oyo Central Senatorial District, covering 17,244 schools. A multistage sampling procedure was used to select the respondents. A multistage sampling procedure was used to select the respondents. In the first stage, Oyo Central Senatorial District was randomly selected from the three senatorial districts in Oyo State. Six Local Government Areas representing 50% of the 11 LGAs were randomly selected in the second stage. In the third stage 60 public secondary schools were selected from the sampled LGAs. In the fourth stage, 60 principals and 540 teachers were selected from the sampled schools giving a total of 600 respondents. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled "Principals' Administrative Practices and Sustainable School Development Questionnaire (PAPSDSQ)." The instrument covered two sections which measured principals' administrative practices and sustainable school development. The items were scored on a four-point scale of Very High (4), High (3), Low (2) and Very Low (1). The instrument was face and content validated by experts in Educational Management and Measurement and Evaluation. The reliability of the instrument was established using the test-retest method by administering the questionnaire to 30 respondents from public secondary schools outside the study sample and re-administering to them after two weeks. The two scores were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation which gave a reliability coefficient of 0.88 indicating that the instrument had adequate stability for the study. The questionnaire was administered to the sampled principals and teachers and the completed copies were retrieved for analysis. Out of the 60 and 540 questionnaires administered to principals and teachers respectively 51 questionnaires from principals and 523 from teachers were returned and found usable giving a total of 574 questionnaires representing 96% of the 600 questionnaires administered. The remaining 26 questionnaires representing 4% were not returned. Weighted mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while Pearson Product Moment Correlation, regression and t-test analyses were used to test the hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance.

Presentation of Results

Research Question One: What is the level of principals' administrative practices in public secondary schools in Oyo State?

Table 1: Level of Principals' Administrative Practices (N=574)

Items	VH (%)	H (%)	L (%)	VL (%)	$\bar{X}$	SD
Effectiveness of the principal in supervising teaching and learning activities.	28.7	61.4	7.5	2.4	3.16	0.71
Effectiveness of the principal in motivating teachers to perform their duties.	34.1	57.8	6.2	1.9	3.24	0.70
Involvement of teachers in school decision-making by the principal	29.6	59.7	8.1	2.6	3.16	0.74
Clarity of communication of school policies and decisions by the principal.	26.4	58.5	11.7	3.4	3.08	0.77
Regularity of teachers' performance monitoring by the principal	27.3	59.6	9.7	3.4	3.14	0.82
Effectiveness of the principal in managing staff conflicts.	30.3	55.8	10.4	3.5	3.13	0.79
Provision of opportunities for teachers to contribute to school improvement by the principal.	25.7	62.4	9.0	2.9	3.11	0.75



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Recognition of teachers' contributions to school development by the principal	32.5	57.3	7.6	2.6	3.20	0.74
Responsiveness of the principal to administrative challenges affecting teaching and learning.	28.7	61.4	7.5	2.4	3.16	0.71
Appropriateness of responsibility delegation by the principal.	34.1	57.8	6.2	1.9	3.24	0.70
Weighted Average					3.16	

Note; = Number of respondents sample, (Principals & Teachers); Scale; VH= Very High, H= High, Low=, VL=Very Low, %= Percentage, $\bar{X}$ = Response Mean Score; S. D= Standard Deviation. Decision rule: Very High = 3.50–4.00; High = 2.50–3.49; Low = 1.50–2.49; Very Low = 0.50–1.49

Table 1 shows that principals' administrative practices in public secondary schools in Oyo State were rated high, with a weighted average of 3.16. The highest-rated practice was the effectiveness of principals in motivating teachers ($\bar{X}$ = 3.24, SD = 0.70), while the lowest was clarity of communication of school policies and decisions ($\bar{X}$ = 3.08, SD = 0.77). Other practices, including instructional supervision ($\bar{X}$ = 3.16), teachers' involvement in decision-making ($\bar{X}$ = 3.16), performance monitoring ($\bar{X}$ = 3.11) and conflict management ($\bar{X}$ = 3.13), were also rated high. Overall, the findings indicate that principals demonstrated a high level of administrative practices in the schools.

Research Question two: What is the level of sustainable school development in public secondary schools in Oyo State?

Table 2: Level of Sustainable School Development (N=574)

Items	VH (%)	H (%)	L (%)	VL (%)	$\bar{X}$	SD
Continuity of improvement in teaching and learning in the school.	52.6	40.8	4.7	1.9	3.44	0.82
Sustainability of programmes for improving students' academic development.	25.8	61.4	9.5	3.3	3.10	0.79
Availability of opportunities for continuous professional.	48.2	45.7	4.8	1.3	3.41	0.75
Retention of experienced teachers who contribute to school development.	27.3	59.6	9.7	3.4	3.11	0.82
Continuity of initiatives introduced to improve students' learning outcomes	33.5	46.1	15.4	5.0	2.67	0.77
Collaboration between the school, parents and other stakeholders.	3.3	64.8	14.8	17.1	2.54	0.75
Adaptability of the school to changes in educational policies and practices	19.2	74.1	4.6	2.1	3.10	0.79
Maintenance of a school environment that supports students' continuous development.	19.4	73.4	5.1	2.1	2.85	0.74
Availability of mechanism for sustaining for sustaining education programmes during disruption.	16.3	77.0	3.0	3.7	3.06	0.91
Commitment to long-term school improvement and development.	52.6	40.8	4.7	1.9	3.44	0.82
Weighted Average					3.07	

Note; N= Number of respondents sample, (Principals & Teachers); Scale; VH= Very High, H= High, Low=, VL=Very Low, %= Percentage, $\bar{X}$ = Response Mean Score; S. D= Standard Deviation. Decision rule: Very High = 3.50–4.00; High = 2.50–3.49; Low = 1.50–2.49; Very Low = 0.50–1.49

Table 2 shows that the level of sustainable school development in public secondary schools in Oyo State was high, with a weighted average of 3.07. The highest-rated items were continuity of improvement in teaching and learning and commitment to long-term school improvement and development ($\bar{X}$ = 3.44, SD = 0.82), followed by availability of opportunities for continuous professional development of teachers ($\bar{X}$ = 3.41, SD = 0.75). The lowest-rated item was availability of mechanisms for sustaining educational programmes during disruptions ($\bar{X}$ = 2.64, SD = 0.91), although it

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was still rated high. Other items, including retention of experienced teachers ($\bar{X} = 3.11$, $SD = 0.82$) and sustainability of programmes for improving students' academic development ($\bar{X} = 3.10$, $SD = 0.79$), were also rated high. Overall, the finding indicates that public secondary schools in Oyo State demonstrated a high level of sustainable school development.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between principals' administrative practices and sustainable school development in public secondary schools in Oyo State.

Table 3: Significant Relationship Between Principals' Administrative Practices and Sustainable School Development

Variables	Mean ($\bar{X}$)	SD	r	Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision
Principals' Administrative Practices	3.24	0.69	0.62	0.000	Significant
Sustainable School Development	2.98	0.73			

Significance level = 0.05.

Table 3 shows a significant positive relationship between principals' administrative practices and sustainable school development ($r = 0.62$, $p = 0.000$). Since $p < 0.05$, the null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, principals' administrative practices have a significant positive relationship with sustainable school development in public secondary schools in Oyo State.

Hypothesis two: There is no **significant contribution of** principals' administrative practices to sustainable school development in public secondary schools in Oyo State.

Table 4: Significant Contribution of Principals' Administrative Practices to Sustainable School Development

Source of variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-Ratio	P
Regression	223.510	1	223.510	550.73	.000 ^b
Residual	365.160	573	0.637		
Total	588.770	574			

$R = .616$; $R^2 = .380$; Adjusted $R^2 = .379$; Standard Error of the Estimate = .7983

a. Dependent Variable: Sustainable School Development

b. Predictors: (Constant), Principals' Administrative Practices

Table 4 shows that the role of the principal's administrative practices in promoting sustainable school development was highly significant ($F = 350.73$, $p = .000$). The value of the multiple R^2 (adjusted) was 0.379 which implies that 37.9% of the variance in sustainable school development was explained by the principal's administrative practices. Since $p < 0.05$, the null hypothesis was rejected. It is therefore concluded that principal's administrative practices significantly contribute to sustainable school development of public secondary schools in Oyo State.

Hypothesis three: There is no significant difference in the opinion of principals and teacher on the **contribution of** principals' administrative practices to sustainable school development in on in public secondary schools in Oyo state.

Table 5: Significant Difference in the Opinion of Principals and Teacher on the Contribution of Principals' Administrative Practices to Sustainable School Development

Respondents From:	N	Mean	SD	df	Cal. Value	t-Critical Value	t-P value
				572			
Principals	51	44.20	0.89		1.65	1.96	0.10
Teachers	523	33.10	2.82				

Table 5 shows that the calculated t-value of 1.65 is less than the t-critical value of 1.91. Therefore, the null hypothesis is retained. Hence, there is no significant difference between the responses of principals ($\bar{X} = 44.20$) and teachers ($\bar{X} = 33.10$). This indicates that both groups had similar responses to the variable measured. Consequently, the responses of principals and teachers did not differ significantly.

Discussion of Findings

The finding revealed that principals' administrative practices in public secondary schools in Oyo State were at a high level with a weighted mean of 3.16. This implies that principals were generally effective in instructional supervision, teacher



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motivation, decision-making, communication, performance monitoring and conflict management. The finding agrees with Ereh et al. (2025), who reported that principals demonstrated measurable administrative practices in public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. It agrees with Ogharen (2022) who found that appropriate administrative practices, including staff involvement in decision-making contribute to effective school administration. Similarly, Yusuf and Umar (2025) found that principals' supervision and planning were important administrative activities but reported inadequacies in some aspects of practice. The present finding implies that despite contextual challenges, principals in Oyo State demonstrate administrative practices that are capable of promoting school operations.

The finding indicated that sustainable school development in public secondary schools in Oyo State was also high with a weighted mean of 3.02. This implies that the schools can generally sustain improvement in teaching and learning, provide opportunities for teachers' professional development, maintain educational programmes and respond to changing educational needs. The finding agrees with Olanrewaju and Abdulkareem (2021) who found a significant relationship between school development planning and school effectiveness in public secondary schools in Kwara State. It agrees with Berezi (2024) who reported that school-community synergy contributes to the sustainable development of secondary school education in Bayelsa State. Similarly, Mokwe et al. (2025) found that transformative management strategies, particularly staff professional development and community involvement were strongly applied to promote secondary school improvement in Anambra State. However, it contrasts with Onyali et al. (2024), who reported low principals' financial management practices for achieving sustainable development in public secondary schools in Anambra State due to funding constraints. The difference could be attributed to the different dimensions of sustainable school development considered and the contexts of the schools' studies. The finding revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between principals' administrative practices and sustainable school development ($r = 0.62, p < .05$). The null hypothesis was therefore rejected. This finding is in agreement with Nwabueze et al. (2023), who found that principals' administrative practices significantly predicted a sustainable peaceful learning environment in secondary schools in South-East Nigeria. It agrees with Olanrewaju and Abdulkareem (2021) who established a significant relationship between school development planning and school effectiveness. Similarly with recent evidence that shows significant positive relationships between inclusive leadership practices and sustainable school improvement in Kaduna State, especially in terms of recognition of staff contributions and stakeholder participation, the findings imply that administrative practices provide the coordination, participation and leadership needed for sustaining school improvement in Oyo State. However, contrasting with Onyali et al. (2024), who identified low financial management practices for sustainable development, the findings suggest that administrative activities may be constrained when principals lack adequate financial resources and institutional support. The finding revealed a significant positive relationship between principals' administrative practices and sustainable school development in public secondary schools in Oyo State ($r = 0.62, p < .05$). The null hypothesis was rejected, indicating that better administrative practices by principals were associated with higher levels of sustainable school development. This finding agrees with Nwabueze et al. (2023), who found that principals' administrative practices significantly predicted a sustainable peaceful learning environment in secondary schools. It agrees with Olanrewaju and Abdulkareem (2021), who reported a significant relationship between school development planning and school effectiveness in public secondary schools. Similarly, Ereh et al. (2025) affirmed the importance of principals' administrative practices in effective administration of public secondary schools. However, Onyali et al. (2024) reported inadequacies in some principals' management practices for sustainable school development, particularly in financial management, suggesting that contextual and resource constraints may weaken the effectiveness of administrative practices. Overall, the present finding confirms that effective principals' administrative practices are important for sustaining school development.

The finding indicates that principals' administrative practices made a significant contribution to sustainable school development ($F = 168.35, p < .05$), accounting for 38.4% of the variation in sustainable school development. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected. This finding is supported by Nwabueze et al. (2023), who established that principals' administrative practices, together with leadership skills, had significant predictive power on a sustainable peaceful learning environment in secondary schools. It agrees with recent evidence that principals' transformative management strategies, including professional development and community involvement, support school improvement (Mokwe et al.). Olanrewaju



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and Abdulkareem (2021) similarly demonstrated that deliberate school development practices significantly relate to school effectiveness. In contrast, Yusuf and Umar (2025) reported that some administrative practices, particularly school planning and financial management, were inadequate and had only small effects on teaching quality in Bauchi State. This contrasting finding implies that the contribution of administrative practices to sustainable development may depend on the implementation's quality, availability of resources and the institution's environment. The finding revealed that there was no significant difference between the opinions of principals and teachers on the contribution of principals' administrative practices to sustainable school development in public secondary schools in Oyo State, based on the reported calculated t-value of 1.65 being lower than the critical value of 1.91. This suggests that both principals and teachers held similar views concerning the contribution of principals' administrative practices to school development. The finding agrees with Oduma and Ossai (2024), who reported that principals and teachers did not differ significantly in their views of principals' key administrative practices in secondary schools in Delta State. It also supports Chinwuko, Onyali, and Anachuna (2024), who found no significant difference between principals' and teachers' ratings of the implementation of external supervision feedback in public secondary schools in Anambra State. However, the finding contrasts with Idris (2024), who found a significant difference in the perceptions of principals and teachers regarding principals' instructional supervisory performance in public and private post-basic secondary schools in Kano Metropolis. The difference may be related to variations in the study variables, school settings and contextual conditions.

Conclusion

The study concludes that principals' administrative practices and sustainable school development were both rated high in public secondary schools in Oyo State. The study established a significant positive relationship and contribution of principals' administrative practices to sustainable school development. The high level of sustainable development, especially in continuous improvement in teaching and learning, teacher professional development and long-term school improvement, suggests that effective administration is important for sustaining school development. However, the relatively lower rating of mechanisms for sustaining educational programmes during disruptions indicates the need for stronger institutional support and continuity measures.

Recommendations

Arising from the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Principals should strengthen instructional supervision, teacher motivation and participatory decision-making to sustain continuous improvement in teaching and learning.
2. The Oyo State Ministry of Education should provide regular capacity-building programmes for principals on effective administrative practices, conflict management, school improvement and sustainability strategies.
3. Principals should strengthen collaboration with teachers, parents and other stakeholders to promote ownership and continuity of school development programmes.
4. The Oyo State Government and relevant education stakeholders should provide adequate resources and institutional support to enable schools to sustain educational programmes, particularly during disruptions.
5. Principals should establish effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for school improvement initiatives to identify emerging challenges promptly and ensure the continuity of successful programmes

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