

School facilities and principals' administrative job performance in public secondary schools in Cross River State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the predictive influence of school facilities on principals' administrative job performance in Cross River State, Nigeria. A correlational research design was adopted. The population comprised 297 principals and 297 vice principals across public secondary schools. Using proportionate and multistage sampling techniques, data were collected from 108 principals (36.4%) and 107 vice principals (36.0%) through structured questionnaires on a four-point Likert scale. Simple linear regression analysis showed a statistically significant but weak positive prediction of principals' administrative job performance by school facilities ($R = .162$, $R^2 = .026$, $p = .039$). This means school facilities accounted for only 2.6% of the variance in principals' administrative job performance. Descriptive findings showed that while some schools possessed basic facilities, many lacked functional libraries, ICT centres, well-equipped laboratories, and conducive administrative spaces. These deficiencies hinder principals' Job performance in executing supervision, teacher evaluation, communication, and school-community relations. The study recommends increased investment in school infrastructure, regular maintenance, and provision of facility-supportive budgets to enhance administrative performance.

Keywords: School facilities, administrative job performance, principals, Cross River State, school environment, educational management.

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INTRODUCTION

Effective school administration is central to the attainment of educational goals, particularly at the secondary school level, where principals play a pivotal leadership role. Principals are responsible for coordinating teaching and learning, supervising instruction, enforcing discipline, evaluating teachers, and fostering productive relationships between the school and the community. In Nigeria, however, many principals operate under challenging conditions characterised by inadequate infrastructure, limited resources, and deteriorating school environments, which constrain the effective discharge of these responsibilities.

School facilities refer to the physical and material resources that support school operations, including classrooms, instructional spaces, administrative offices, libraries, laboratories, playgrounds, equipment, and other infrastructural provisions (Limon, 2016). Adequate and functional facilities provide a conducive environment that enables principals to organise teaching and learning

effectively, ensure safety, promote discipline, and coordinate administrative activities efficiently. Administrative job performance, on the other hand, is the extent to which principals apply managerial and leadership skills effectively in coordinating a school's human, material, and financial resources to achieve educational objectives. Effective administrative performance depends largely on the availability and functionality of supportive school facilities. However, across many public secondary schools in Cross River State, essential facilities remain inadequate, obsolete, or poorly maintained, thereby limiting principals' capacity to perform their administrative duties optimally. School facilities enhance job performance by improving communication, fostering collaboration, and facilitating supervision. Conversely, poor facilities create disorder, limit instructional supervision, lower morale, and increase administrative stress. The researcher observed that many school principals in Cross River State struggle

with ineffective curriculum supervision, poor teacher evaluation practices, weak communication structures, and low community engagement, which may be largely due to poor school facilities.

In Cross River State, observations and reports indicate that many public secondary schools lack functional libraries, well-equipped laboratories, ICT facilities, and conducive office spaces for administration. If this situation persists, it may further weaken school leadership, reduce administrative efficiency, lower teacher morale, and ultimately affect the quality of education delivered. Despite this concern, empirical studies in Nigeria have largely focused on leadership style, funding, or teacher factors, with limited attention given to how school facilities predict principals' administrative job performance in Cross River State. This gap necessitated the present study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of school facilities

The term school facilities encompasses the physical and material resources provided to students and teachers to support the teaching-learning process, as well as the overall environment of the school or educational organisation (Ullah and Usman, 2023). These facilities include, but are not limited to, classrooms, libraries, science laboratories, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) centres, staff offices, playgrounds, and teaching aids such as books, computers, and laboratory equipment (Herwan et al., 2018; Ikegbusi, 2019). Essentially, school facilities serve as the tangible representation of the curriculum, providing the necessary space, tools, and environment for effective teaching, learning, and administrative activities (Alimi, 2014). Libraries, laboratories, and classrooms constitute the core categories of school facilities, and their value in the educational process cannot be overstated. Libraries, for instance, provide essential literature and resources that benefit both teachers and students, facilitating research, knowledge acquisition, and intellectual development (Ullah and Usman, 2023). Science laboratories and ICT centres provide hands-on learning experiences that enhance understanding and application of theoretical concepts.

The quality, availability, and maintenance of school facilities are critical determinants of educational performance. Studies consistently indicate that adequate and functional facilities positively influence teacher morale, instructional delivery, student engagement, supervision, and overall school performance (Ademola, 2020; Ikegbusi, 2019). Conversely, poor maintenance or insufficient resources can disrupt teaching and learning activities, undermine principals' administrative efficiency, and negatively affect students' academic outcomes (Ahmodu and Sheu, 2018; Ikegbusi et al., 2021). School facilities are not only essential for instructional purposes but also serve as strategic tools for enhancing organisational performance. Their suitability, sufficiency, and relevance

directly impact the productivity and efficiency of the school as an institution. Proper management and proactive maintenance of facilities ensure that the substantial financial investments made in educational infrastructure yield maximum benefits (Ademola, 2020). Upgrading and expanding school facilities, therefore present a practical avenue for improving principals' administrative job performance and advancing educational quality.

Principals' administrative job performance

Principals' administrative job performance refers to the effectiveness with which school principals carry out leadership and management responsibilities necessary for achieving educational goals. These responsibilities include instructional supervision, teacher evaluation, discipline management, communication, budgeting, record keeping, staff coordination, and school-community relations (Hallinger, 2011; Leithwood, 2012). As the chief administrative officers of schools, principals play a pivotal role in translating educational policies into practice and ensuring the smooth functioning of the school system. Administrative job performance, therefore, reflects the totality of professional behaviours, decisions, and actions through which principals manage human, material, and financial resources to enhance school effectiveness. It involves planning, organising, directing, coordinating, and controlling school activities in line with institutional objectives and established standards (Nwankwo, 2014).

Principals' administrative job performance can also be viewed as the extent to which principals successfully execute managerial roles that enhance teacher productivity and improve student learning outcomes (Ajayi and Ayodele, 2022). Beyond routine administrative functions such as timetable preparation, supervision, report writing, policy enforcement, and record management, effective performance requires contextual leadership roles, including mentoring teachers, promoting teamwork, and fostering innovation within the school (Olagboye, 2024). These combined roles underscore the multidimensional nature of principals' administrative responsibilities. The effectiveness of principals' administrative job performance may be influenced by the availability and quality of school facilities. Ajayi and Yusuf (2019) observed that school facilities can affect administrative efficiency, as inadequacies in basic infrastructure such as electricity, potable water, and functional classrooms often compel principals to devote excessive time to resolving operational challenges rather than focusing on instructional leadership. Such constraints limit opportunities for curriculum supervision, staff development, and school-community collaboration. Similarly, Oyesola (2020) noted that principals are frequently assessed based on their ability to manage both human and material resources, a task that may be facilitated by the availability of adequate facilities. Principals who operate in well-equipped and well-maintained school environments may be better

positioned to enforce discipline, schedule effective learning activities, and motivate teachers and students.

Theoretical framework

Systems theory (1940)

This theory views a school as an interconnected system where all components, including teachers, students, facilities, and leadership, interact and influence one another. Adequate facilities enhance effective leadership, supervision, and communication. Poor facilities disrupt the functioning of the entire system.

Path-goal theory (House, 1971)

This theory states that leaders must remove obstacles and provide necessary support for subordinates to achieve goals. Adequate school facilities enable principals to supervise effectively, communicate clearly, and motivate teachers, thereby improving administrative performance.

Empirical studies

Empirical studies within and outside Nigeria have established that school facilities significantly influence principals' performance, although findings vary across contexts. Adewale (2018) found that inadequate school facilities hinder principals' supervisory roles and limit effective school management. While Adewale's study and the present study both examined school facilities as the independent variable, Adewale focused on principals' supervisory roles, whereas the present study examines principals' overall administrative job performance. Adam et al. (2019) investigated principals' management of school facilities as a correlate of students' academic achievement in senior secondary schools in Adamawa State, using a descriptive survey design. The study revealed that effective management of school facilities significantly contributed to improved students' academic performance. Although both studies relate school facilities to school outcomes, Adam et al. focused on students' academic achievement as the dependent variable, while the present study focuses on principals' administrative job performance.

In East Africa, Namakula and Wanyenze (2018) reported that inadequate school facilities in Kenya and Uganda were associated with poor leadership performance among school administrators. This study is similar to the present study in linking school facilities with leadership performance; however, it was conducted outside Nigeria and did not specifically examine principals' administrative job performance. Despite these empirical contributions, few studies have specifically examined school facilities as a predictor of principals' administrative job performance in Cross River State,

thereby creating a contextual gap that the present study seeks to fill.

Objectives of the study

This study was guided by the following objectives:

- To examine the predictive value of school facilities and principals' administrative job performance.
- To provide evidence-based recommendations for educational management through school facilities provision.

Hypotheses

H₀: School facilities do not significantly predict principals' administrative job performance in Cross River State.

H₁: School facilities significantly predict principals' administrative job performance in Cross River State.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a correlational research design to examine the predictive relationship between variables. The population comprised 297 principals and 297 vice principals in public secondary schools in Cross River State. Using proportionate and multistage sampling, 108 principals (36.4%) and 107 vice principals (36.0%) were selected. Principals assessed school facilities, while vice principals rated their principals' administrative performance to enhance objectivity. This sample size is statistically adequate for populations below 1,000 (Krejcie and Morgan, 1970; Cohen et al., 2018). Data were collected using the 20-item School Facilities Questionnaire (SFQ) and the 25-item Principals' Administrative Job Performance Questionnaire (PAJPQ), with reliability coefficients of .82 and .88, respectively. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics and simple linear regression at the .05 significance level. The predictive strength of regression analyses was interpreted using R² values, with scores below 0.30 indicating weak prediction, 0.30 to 0.59 moderate prediction, and 0.60 and above strong prediction, following Uzoagulu's (2011) guidelines.

RESULTS

The result shows the value of the regression coefficient (R) and its corresponding R² of .162 and .026, respectively (Table 1). The regression analysis revealed a positive but weak prediction of principals' administrative job performance by school facilities (R = .162, R² = .026). This indicates that school facilities accounted for only 2.6% of the variance in principals' administrative job performance.

Table 1. Regression analysis predicting principals’ administrative job performance based on school facilities.

Model		Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	R	R ²
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	67.501	2.100			
	School Facilities	0.150	.072	.162	.162	.026

The result of the analysis gives a summary of the regression analysis. The F-value of 4.341 with a p-value of .039 indicates that the prediction was statistically

significant at the .05 level. Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected. (Table 2)

Table 2. ANOVA for regression analysis.

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	110.000	1	110.000	4.341	.039*
Residual	5415.000	213	25.422		
Total	5525.787	214			

* Significant at p < .05.039

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study reveal that school facilities significantly predict principals’ administrative job performance in Cross River State (R² = .026). This indicates that while school infrastructure matters, it is not the primary determinant of effectiveness. Factors such as teacher cooperation, financial resources, leadership style, school-community engagement, and individual competence may have a stronger influence. Thus, improvements in facilities correlate with better performance, but the predictive strength is limited—principals can still perform many duties despite inadequate infrastructure. However, poor facilities can hinder instructional supervision, teacher evaluation, communication, and coordination. For example, the absence of functional libraries, well-equipped laboratories, ICT centres, or adequate office space may impede curriculum monitoring, documentation, and collaboration. Inadequate facilities also increase workload, stress, and may reduce efficiency.

School facilities function as enabling tools rather than sole drivers of performance. Adequate and well-maintained resources allow principals to coordinate teaching, monitor staff, and engage with the school community effectively. ICT-equipped offices, reliable classrooms, and conducive administrative spaces facilitate communication, supervision, and program implementation, whereas deficiencies disrupt operations and limit leadership effectiveness. These findings align with previous Nigerian studies; for example, Adewale (2018) reported that sufficient and functional facilities support principals in performing supervisory and administrative tasks efficiently. While facilities are not the only factor affecting administrative performance, they remain a vital component of a supportive school

environment.

The findings have practical and policy implications. Investments in school infrastructure enhance principals’ ability to perform administrative tasks, reduce bottlenecks, improve staff supervision, and foster a positive school climate, ultimately benefiting teacher performance and student outcomes. Policymakers and school managers should prioritise the provision, maintenance, and equitable distribution of functional school facilities as part of broader efforts to strengthen educational leadership.

Conclusion

The study concludes that school facilities significantly influence principals’ administrative job performance in public secondary schools in Cross River State, although the magnitude of this influence is weak. While facilities alone cannot guarantee effective school leadership, adequate and well-maintained infrastructure provides a supportive environment that enhances administrative efficiency.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The government should increase funding for renovation, construction, and maintenance of school facilities.
2. Principals should be provided with facility-support budgets to ensure timely repairs.
3. School-community partnerships should be strengthened to support infrastructural development.
4. Regular facility audits should be conducted by the Ministry of Education.

5. ICT and modern learning resources should be prioritised to enhance administrative efficiency.

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