MANAGERIAL ROLES OF THE PRINCIPALS ON TEACHERS' INNOVATIVE TEACHING METHODOLOGY IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN FEDERAL CAPITAL TERRITORY ABUJA, NIGERIA

[1]WILLIAMS SAMUEL, Ph. D, [2]PIUS NUHU & [3]JIBRIN MAHMUD MOHMAMMED

1Department of Educational Management, Federal University Dutsin-Ma, Katsina State, Nigeria.
2&3Department of Educational Management, Faculty of Education, Nasarawa State University, Keffi, Nigeria.

Abstract

This study examined the influence of principals' managerial roles on teachers' innovative teaching methodology in public secondary schools in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, Nigeria. The study was guided by two components of principals' managerial roles: decision-making and planning and coordination. A survey research design was adopted. The population comprised 3,450 respondents, consisting of 56 principals and 3,394 teachers in public secondary schools in the FCT. A sample of 358 respondents was selected using simple random sampling and the Taro Yamane formula. Data were collected using a self-structured four-point Likert questionnaire. The instrument was validated through peer review and the reported reliability coefficient was 0.81. Research questions were answered using simple percentages, while the two null hypotheses were tested using chi-square at the 0.05 level of significance. The results, based strictly on the response frequencies contained in the supplied manuscript, showed strong agreement that principals' decision-making-related practices and planning and coordination practices are associated with conditions that support innovative teaching methodology. The corrected chi-square calculations also indicated statistically significant differences between the aggregate agree and disagree responses for both components. The study concludes that principals' managerial roles are important for creating the instructional conditions necessary for teachers to adopt innovative approaches. It recommends participatory decision-making, collaborative instructional planning, systematic monitoring of lesson preparation, and adequate provision of instructional resources.

Keywords: Principals' managerial roles, decision-making, planning and coordination, teachers' innovative teaching methodology

Introduction

Education remains a major instrument for individual development, social transformation and national development. In Nigeria, secondary education is expected to prepare learners for useful living within society and for higher education. Achieving these purposes depends not only on curriculum content and teacher qualifications but also on the quality of management exercised at school level. The principal occupies a central position in this process because the principal coordinates people, programmes and physical resources and translates educational policies into school-level practices (Federal Republic of Nigeria [FRN], 2014).

The managerial role of the principal is therefore broader than routine administration. It includes deciding on priorities, coordinating staff activities, planning instructional programmes, monitoring implementation, mobilizing resources, and creating an environment in which teachers can perform effectively. Busa et al. (2023) similarly emphasised the importance of

effective administration and supervision for improving educational outcomes in Nigerian secondary schools. Their argument reinforces the view that the quality of management and oversight provided by school leaders can shape the conditions under which teaching and learning take place.

Among the managerial functions of principals, decision-making is particularly important. School principals make decisions about instructional priorities, staff responsibilities, use of facilities, allocation of available resources, classroom conditions and strategies for addressing emerging problems. Where decisions are participatory and informed by teachers' professional knowledge, teachers may be more willing to experiment with new approaches. Evidence from research on shared instructional leadership also suggests that participatory leadership is positively associated with innovative school environments (Kandemir, 2022). Similarly, research using large-scale international data indicates that distributed leadership can promote teacher innovativeness through teacher autonomy and professional collaboration.

Planning and coordination constitute a second important component of principals' managerial roles. Planning enables the principal to establish instructional priorities, anticipate resource requirements, organise staff activities and provide a framework for monitoring implementation. Coordination links the activities of teachers, departments and school units so that teaching activities are not conducted in isolation. Busa et al. (2024) demonstrated, in a different Nigerian educational-management context, that systematic management of information and records can support administrative efficiency, accountability and organisation of educational programmes. The implication for school leadership is that effective coordination depends on timely information, clear procedures and deliberate managerial follow-up.

Innovative teaching methodology refers to the teacher's purposeful adoption, adaptation or combination of teaching approaches that improve learners' participation, understanding and application of knowledge. Innovation does not necessarily mean the use of sophisticated technology. It can include storytelling, demonstrations, discussion, problem-solving, field observation, collaborative learning, practical activities and learner-centered strategies. The supplied manuscript correctly recognizes that teaching should respond to individual differences, classroom environment and learners' needs. These practices are more likely to flourish when principals create supportive instructional conditions.

Recent evidence supports the relationship between school leadership and teacher innovation. Bada et al. (2020) found that principals' instructional leadership practices were significantly and positively associated with teachers' effectiveness in Nigerian secondary schools. Likewise, Kandemir (2022) reported a positive relationship between shared instructional leadership and innovative school characteristics. Research on distributed leadership has also shown that leadership practices can promote teacher innovativeness through professional collaboration and teacher autonomy. These findings suggest that principals' managerial roles should be understood as mechanisms through which the school environment can either encourage or constrain instructional innovation.

The Nigerian context makes this issue especially important. Public secondary schools operate under varying conditions of enrolment, staffing, infrastructure and resource availability. Principals are expected to maintain standards while responding to resource constraints,

changing curriculum expectations and the professional needs of teachers. Busa et al (2024) argued that educational leaders operating in complex and uncertain environments need adaptive leadership capacity, collaboration and policy innovation. These considerations reinforce the need to examine specific managerial functions rather than treating principals' managerial roles as a single undifferentiated construct.

Statement of the Problem

Ideally, public secondary schools should provide an environment in which teachers can use appropriate, varied and innovative teaching methods to address learners' individual differences and improve learning. Principals should support this process through timely and participatory decisions, collaborative planning, coordination of instructional activities, monitoring of lesson preparation and provision of necessary instructional support. However, the supplied manuscript identifies concerns about weak coordination of teaching and learning activities, inadequate attention to lesson plans and notes, insufficient consideration of class size and classroom environment, and inadequate attention to instructional materials and facilities. When such managerial functions are weak, teachers may have limited support for adapting their teaching methods to learners' needs. Conversely, effective managerial practices can provide the structure, direction and support needed for innovation. The problem, therefore, is not simply whether teachers know different teaching methods, but whether principals' managerial practices create the conditions that enable teachers to apply those methods innovatively. Although previous studies have examined instructional leadership and teacher effectiveness, there remains a need to focus specifically on the decision-making and planning-and-coordination components of principals' managerial roles in public secondary schools in the FCT. This study was consequently designed to examine these two components in relation to teachers' innovative teaching methodology.

Conceptual Model: The Managerial Roles Innovative Teaching (MRIT) Model

The Managerial Roles Innovative Teaching (MRIT) Model conceives of principals' decision-making and planning-and-coordination practices as inputs that do not act on teachers' innovative teaching methodology directly, but through an intervening instructional climate. This instructional climate comprises three observable conditions: a participatory culture in which teachers' professional knowledge is drawn into school-level decisions; the systematic coordination of lesson preparation, class size and instructional-resource considerations; and a feedback loop through which principals monitor implementation and adjust support. Where these three conditions are present, teachers are theorised to have both the confidence and the practical support required to adapt, combine or experiment with teaching approaches; where they are weak or absent, teachers may know a variety of teaching methods without being able to apply them innovatively in practice.

The model draws on two strands of the author's own prior work for its theoretical grounding. First, it is anchored in Total School Theory, which frames the school as an interdependent whole in which quality outcomes depend on the coordinated engagement of every stakeholder group rather than on the principal's authority in isolation (Busa, et al, 2025; Busa, et al, 2025). Applied here, Total School Theory suggests that teachers' innovative teaching methodology cannot be adequately explained by principals' managerial roles alone, but must be understood

as an outcome of the whole-school participatory ethos that those roles either build or undermine. Second, the model draws on a context-responsive reading of Fayol's principles of management for Nigerian educational settings, particularly unity of direction, order and initiative, which have been argued to require adaptation such as participatory leadership and flexibility when applied to Nigerian school administration (Busa, et al, 2025). These principles inform the model's emphasis on coordination and feedback as necessary complements to decision-making, rather than treating decision-making as sufficient on its own.

A further implication of the model is that it treats principals' managerial roles and teachers' innovative teaching methodology as connected by a feedback loop rather than a one-directional pathway. As teachers experiment with new approaches and report back on classroom conditions, this information is expected to feed into subsequent principal decision-making and planning, so that instructional innovation and managerial practice evolve together over time rather than the former being a fixed downstream product of the latter. Empirically testing the MRIT Model would require measuring the instructional-climate variables (participatory culture, coordination and feedback) as mediators between the two managerial-role components and teachers' innovative teaching methodology, using regression-based mediation analysis on raw respondent-level data rather than the aggregate percentages relied upon in the present revision.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of principals' managerial roles on teachers' innovative teaching methodology in public secondary schools in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. examine the influence of principals' decision-making role on teachers' innovative teaching methodology in public secondary schools in FCT, Abuja.
2. determine the influence of principals' planning and coordination role on teachers' innovative teaching methodology in public secondary schools in FCT, Abuja.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent does principals' decision-making role influence teachers' innovative teaching methodology in public secondary schools in FCT, Abuja?
2. To what extent does principals' planning and coordination role influence teachers' innovative teaching methodology in public secondary schools in FCT, Abuja?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at the .05 level of significance

1. There is no significant influence of principals' decision-making role on teachers' innovative teaching methodology in public secondary schools in FCT, Abuja.

2. There is no significant influence of principals' planning and coordination role on teachers' innovative teaching methodology in public secondary schools in FCT, Abuja.

Methodology

The study adopted a survey research design to examine principals' managerial roles and teachers' innovative teaching methodology in public secondary schools in FCT, Abuja. The population comprised 3,450 respondents, consisting of 56 principals and 3,394 teachers in public secondary schools in the Federal Capital Territory. The sample size was 358, determined using the Taro Yamane formula at a 0.05 level of precision. Simple random sampling was used in selecting the respondents. A self-structured questionnaire titled Principals' Managerial Roles on Teachers' Innovative Teaching Methodologies (PMRTITM) was used for data collection. The instrument employed a four-point modified Likert scale: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The questionnaire was subjected to peer review for content and face validation. The reported reliability coefficient was 0.81 following pilot testing outside the study area. The data were analysed using Simple percentages to answer the research questions. For the hypotheses, chi-square was used at the 0.05 level of significance

Results

Research Question One: To what extent does principals' decision-making role influence teachers' innovative teaching methodology in public secondary schools in FCT, Abuja?

S/N	Item	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Decision
1	Starting a class with storytelling helps students relax before teaching.	143 (39.94)	106 (29.61)	93 (25.98)	16 (4.47)	249 (69.55)	109 (30.45)	Agree
2	Poetic expression can help a teacher obtain students' attention before a lesson.	138 (38.55)	110 (30.73)	57 (15.92)	53 (14.80)	248 (69.27)	110 (30.73)	Agree
3	Learning is enhanced when teachers recognise individual differences.	140 (39.11)	105 (29.33)	95 (26.54)	18 (5.03)	245 (68.44)	113 (31.56)	Agree

S/N	Item	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Decision
4	Learning is enhanced when teachers recognise students' feelings and mood.	147 (41.06)	112 (31.28)	50 (13.97)	49 (13.69)	259 (72.35)	99 (27.65)	Agree
5	Consideration of the classroom environment supports teaching and learning.	167 (46.65)	143 (39.94)	34 (9.50)	14 (3.91)	310 (86.59)	48 (13.41)	Agree

Table 1 shows that all five items relating to principals' decision-making role recorded higher combined Agree percentages than Disagree percentages, ranging from 68.44% (item 3) to 86.59% (item 5). Respondents most strongly endorsed the view that consideration of the classroom environment supports teaching and learning (86.59% agreement) and that recognizing students' feelings and mood enhances learning (72.35% agreement). The overall decision on all five items is Agree, indicating that respondents perceive principals' participatory, learner-sensitive decision-making as supportive of conditions for innovative teaching methodology.

Research Question Two: To what extent does principals' planning and coordination role influence teachers' innovative teaching methodology in public secondary schools in FCT, Abuja?

S/N	Item	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD(%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Decision
1	Proper checking of teachers' lesson notes enhances teaching quality.	167 (46.65)	143 (39.94)	34 (9.50)	14 (3.91)	310 (86.59)	48 (13.41)	Agree
2	Proper examination of teachers' lesson plans enhances teaching methods.	140 (39.11)	105 (29.33)	95 (26.54)	18 (5.03)	245 (68.44)	113 (31.56)	Agree

S/N	Item	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD(%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Decision
3	Failure to plan with teachers in relation to class size can hinder effective teaching.	103 (28.77)	107 (29.89)	97 (27.09)	51 (14.25)	210 (58.66)	148 (41.34)	Agree
4	Failure to attend to teachers' instructional-material needs can affect teaching quality.	24 (6.70)	40 (11.17)	154 (43.02)	140 (39.11)	64 (17.88)	294 (82.12)	Disagree
5	Failure to consider classroom facilities can affect learning during teaching.	110 (30.73)	107 (29.89)	98 (27.37)	43 (12.01)	217 (60.61)	141 (39.39)	Agree

Table 2 shows a more mixed pattern for the planning-and-coordination component. Items 1, 2, 3 and 5 recorded majority Agree decisions, ranging from 58.66% (item 3) to 86.59% (item 1), indicating that respondents associate proper checking of lesson notes and lesson plans, joint planning around class size, and attention to classroom facilities with better teaching conditions. Item 4, however, produced a majority Disagree decision (82.12% disagreed that failure to attend to teachers' instructional-material needs affects teaching quality). Taken at face value, this suggests that respondents did not see instructional-material provision, on its own, as decisive for teaching quality in the way they viewed lesson-plan supervision and classroom facilities; the item is retained here as reported rather than adjusted, and is flagged for the author's attention as a possible candidate for item review or rewording in any future administration of the instrument, since it runs counter to the direction of the other four items in the same construct.

Test of Hypotheses

The two null hypotheses were tested using the chi-square goodness-of-fit statistic, comparing the aggregate observed Agree and Disagree responses (summed across the five items measuring each component, N = 1,790 responses per component) against an expected 50:50 split, at 1 degree of freedom and the 0.05 level of significance (critical value = 3.841).

Hypothesis One

H01: There is no significant influence of principals' decision-making role on teachers' innovative teaching methodology in public secondary schools in FCT, Abuja.

Component	Obs. Agree	Obs. Disagree	Expected (each)	df	χ^2 calc.	χ^2 crit.	Decision
Decision-making	1311	479	895.0	1	386.72	3.841	Significant

The calculated chi-square value ($\chi^2 = 386.72$) is greater than the critical value of 3.841 at 1 degree of freedom and the 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected. This means there is a statistically significant influence of principals' decision-making role on teachers' innovative teaching methodology in public secondary schools in FCT, Abuja.

Hypothesis Two

H02: There is no significant influence of principals' planning and coordination role on teachers' innovative teaching methodology in public secondary schools in FCT, Abuja.

Component	Obs. Agree	Obs. Disagree	Expected (each)	df	χ^2 calc.	χ^2 crit.	Decision
Planning and coordination	1046	744	895.0	1	50.95	3.841	Significant

The calculated chi-square value ($\chi^2 = 50.95$) is likewise greater than the critical value of 3.841 at 1 degree of freedom and the 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected. This means there is a statistically significant influence of principals' planning and coordination role on teachers' innovative teaching methodology in public secondary schools in FCT, Abuja, notwithstanding the reversed pattern observed on item 4 of Table 2.

Discussion of Findings

The finding that principals' decision-making role significantly influences teachers' innovative teaching methodology ($\chi^2 = 386.72$, $p < .05$) supports the view, expressed in the MRIT Model proposed earlier in this paper, that participatory and learner-sensitive decision-making builds the instructional climate within which teachers feel able to experiment with new approaches. Respondents' strong endorsement of items on recognizing students' feelings, individual differences and the classroom environment (Table 1) suggests that decision-making is valued less as an abstract managerial function and more as a channel through which principals demonstrate attentiveness to classroom realities. This is consistent with evidence from shared instructional leadership research showing that participatory leadership styles are positively associated with more innovative school environments (Kandemir, 2022), and with findings from Al-Mahdy et al. (2018), whose Omani study found that principal instructional leadership, exercised in a participatory manner, was linked to stronger collective teacher efficacy, a condition closely associated with teachers' willingness to try new instructional approaches. It also echoes Bamgboye's (2024) finding, from Nigerian public secondary schools, that instructional leadership behaviors by principals were significantly associated with students'

academic achievement, an outcome that plausibly runs through the same teacher-innovation pathway examined here.

The finding on planning and coordination ($\chi^2 = 50.95$, $p < .05$) similarly supports the second component of the MRIT Model, though the effect size is visibly smaller than for decision-making and the pattern across items is less uniform. Respondents agreed that checking lesson notes and lesson plans, joint planning around class size, and attention to classroom facilities matter for teaching conditions, in line with Busa et al (2024) observation that systematic management of information and records supports administrative efficiency and organization of educational programmes. This is also broadly consistent with Danbaba et al (2022), whose Sokoto-based study associated coherent school leadership practices with organizational effectiveness. However, the majority Disagree decision on the item concerning instructional-material provision (Table 2, item 4) complicates a straightforward reading of the coordination component. One plausible interpretation, consistent with the MRIT Model's emphasis on an intervening instructional climate, is that respondents distinguish between coordination activities that are directly visible in day-to-day supervision and resource-provision functions that are often outside an individual principal's direct control in the Nigerian public-school funding context; teachers may therefore not hold principals primarily responsible for material shortfalls, even while still valuing the coordination that principals can directly exercise. This reading is offered as an interpretation rather than as a finding directly supported by the data collected, and would benefit from qualitative follow-up.

Taken together, the two significant chi-square results reinforce the paper's central argument that principals' managerial roles operate as inputs into an instructional climate that either enables or constrains teachers' innovative teaching methodology, rather than acting on innovation directly. The comparatively larger effect for decision-making than for planning and coordination also lends some support to the Total School Theory grounding of the MRIT Model (Busa et al., 2025a; Busa et al., 2025b), in that decisions taken with visible teacher input appear to carry more weight for teachers than coordination mechanisms that are procedurally important but less immediately participatory.

Conclusion

Principals' managerial roles matter for innovation in the classroom. Decision-making shows the stronger, more consistent link; planning and coordination matters too, but less evenly, especially where resource provision is involved. Managing well is not optional support for teaching; it is part of what makes innovative teaching possible in the first place.

Recommendations

Based on the findings relating to Research Question One (principals' decision-making role), it is recommended that:

1. School authorities should institutionalize participatory decision-making structures, such as regular staff and departmental meetings, through which teachers' professional judgment on classroom conditions, learner needs and instructional approaches feeds directly into principals' decisions.

2. Principals should be deliberately trained, through Ministry of Education and Universal Basic Education Commission workshops, to factor learner-centred considerations into routine decisions on timetabling, class organization and resource allocation, since these were the items, respondents endorsed most strongly.

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