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PRINCIPALS INNOVATIVE PRACTICES AND INSTRUCTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS OF TEACHERS IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN BAYELSA STATE

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Abtract

This paper examined the relationship of principals' innovative practices and the instructional effectiveness of tutors in secondary schools in Bayelsa State. The research was driven by the need to understand how modern leadership approaches, specifically reward and recognition, affect teaching outcomes in a dynamic educational landscape. A descriptive survey design was adopted, and a structured questionnaire was administered to a sample of 364 who were randomly selected from different schools across the state using random sampling techniques. The analysis was done using mean and standard deviation and Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC). Findings revealed that all two innovative practices investigated had a significant positive correlation with instructional effectiveness. Specifically, principals' reward practices motivated teachers, increased their engagement, and improved classroom delivery. Recognition boosted teacher morale and encouraged higher commitment. The paper suggested that the Ministry of Education adopt policy reforms that promote reward systems and recognition programmes in schools. It also emphasised the need for training principals in distributed leadership to foster delegation and collaboration.

Keyword: Instructional Effectiveness, Innovative Practice, Teachers, Public Secondary Schools, Bayelsa State

Introduction

The issue of instructional effectiveness among teachers in Nigerian secondary schools has become a growing concern for stakeholders in the education sector. Recently, there has been increased attention on the calibre of teaching and learning in public schools due to the perceived decline in student academic performance, especially in national examinations (Ogundele & Olanipekun, 2018). Instructional effectiveness is a critical determinant of student outcomes, referring to how well teachers deliver content and engage students in the learning process

(Adeyemi & Adu, 2013). In Nigeria, secondary school teachers face multiple challenges, such as limited access to training, outdated teaching methods, and inadequate support, all of which impact their ability to teach effectively (Adeyemi, 2020). Such an issue necessitates a focus on innovative practices by school leaders, particularly principals, to foster instructional effectiveness and improve educational outcomes. Principals' innovative practices are creative leadership strategies and novel approaches to school management and instruction intended to improve learning outcomes and institutional effectiveness (e.g., integrating new technologies, fostering teacher collaboration, or redesigning school processes). (Çınar, 2023). Principals' innovative practices are essential in maintaining instructional effectiveness in secondary schools. Research has shown that school leadership significantly influences teaching quality and student performance (Hallinger & Heck, 2018).

As the leaders of their schools, principals play a crucial role in creating a conducive environment for teaching and learning. By implementing innovative practices, principals can provide the support and resources teachers need to perform their duties effectively. Often, the failure of teachers to meet instructional standards stems from the lack of leadership initiatives that promote innovative teaching strategies and professional development (Nwachukwu & Onyeneho, 2016). Therefore, principals must embrace innovation as a tool to reconcile traditional teaching methods with modern educational demands. Recognition and reward systems have been considered critical innovative measures used to promote instructional effectiveness among teachers (Çınar, 2023; Ofojebe & Ezugoh, 2010; Ololube et al, 2016).

A study has shown that teachers who feel appreciated and recognised for their hard work are more motivated and committed to delivering high-quality instruction (Abdullahi, 2020). Principals can implement reward systems that acknowledge teachers' efforts, such as awards for best teaching practices, promotions, or other forms of recognition. Such systems not only boost morale but also encourage teachers to innovate and improve their instructional methods, resulting in more effective teaching (Johnson & Samuel, 2019). Several empirical studies support the relationship between principals' innovative practices and instructional effectiveness. The study by Ofojebe and Ezugoh (2010) found that motivational factors such as recognition and rewards are essential for boosting teachers' commitment and job performance. They noted that rewards for teachers' efforts foster a sense of responsibility and commitment to duty. Research carried out by Ololube (2006) found that principals who show appreciation for teachers' efforts increase their morale and encourage innovation in teaching. He highlighted that non-monetary rewards, like recognition, significantly improve job satisfaction and productivity among tutors.

Despite the evidence supporting the positive impact of principals' innovative practices on instructional effectiveness, there is still a gap in the literature, particularly regarding the specific context of Bayelsa State, Nigeria. While several studies have explored the role of school leadership in promoting effective teaching, few have focused on the unique challenges faced by principals in this region. Bayelsa State is characterised by significant educational challenges, including limited resources, low teacher morale, and poor student outcomes.

Therefore, there is a need for research that examines how principals in Bayelsa State are using innovative practices like reward and recognition to overcome these concerns and improve instructional effectiveness in secondary schools. This study seeks to fill this gap by exploring how principals' innovative practices influence the instructional effectiveness of teachers in this region.

Statement of the Problem

The ideal condition for instructional effectiveness in secondary schools requires that teachers consistently deliver content in a way that is engaging, relevant, and impactful for students. Instructional effectiveness is characterised by a combination of teacher competence, the use of innovative pedagogical practices, and supportive school leadership. In an effective instructional environment, teachers are expected to actively engage students in learning, provide feedback, and use various teaching methodologies that promote critical thinking and problem-solving. Ideally, principals should play a supportive role in fostering such environments by employing innovative practices that empower teachers and enhance their instructional abilities. However, this ideal condition is far from the reality in many Nigerian secondary schools.

In Bayelsa State, Nigeria, as in many other regions of the country, teachers face numerous challenges that hinder their instructional effectiveness. A major concern is the lack of continuous professional development and support from school leadership, which prevents teachers from updating their teaching methods and adapting to the evolving educational landscape (Nwachukwu, 2016).

Moreover, many schools are underresourced, leading to limited access to teaching materials and technology that could otherwise enhance instructional delivery. Principals in these schools often lack the training or capacity to implement innovative leadership practices that promote effective teaching. The result is a persistent gap between the ideal state of instructional effectiveness and the current reality in public secondary schools (Alabi, 2021). Given the persistent challenges in secondary schools in Bayelsa State and the clear gaps in the literature, this study aims to investigate the impact of principals' innovative practices on instructional effectiveness among teachers in public secondary schools in Bayelsa State.

Research Questions

In view of the above problems, the study provided answers to the following questions:

1. To what degree do principals' reward practices influence the instructional effectiveness of teachers in public secondary schools in Bayelsa State, Nigeria?
2. To what degree does principals' recognition influence the instructional effectiveness of teachers in public secondary schools in Bayelsa State, Nigeria?

Hypotheses

1. Principals' reward practices do not significantly relate to the instructional effectiveness of teachers in public secondary schools in Bayelsa State, Nigeria.
2. Principals' recognition does not significantly relate to the instructional effectiveness of teachers in public secondary schools in Bayelsa State, Nigeria.

Aims and Objectives of the Study

The goal of this paper is to explore principals' innovative practices and its influences on instructional effectiveness of teachers in public secondary schools in Bayelsa state, Nigeria. The exact objectives include:

1. To ascertain the degree to which principals' reward practices influence the instructional effectiveness of teachers in public secondary schools in Bayelsa State, Nigeria.
2. To ascertain the degree to which principals' recognition influence the instructional effectiveness of teachers in public secondary schools in Bayelsa State, Nigeria.

Methodology

The paper used a correlational design. This design is relevant for this study because it attempts to determine the relationships between existing independent and dependent variables in it. The population of this study comprised of four thousand seventy-four (4074) teachers in public secondary schools in Bayelsa State for the 2024/2025 academic session (Post Primary Secondary Schools Boards, Yenagoa). The sample size of the study consists of three hundred and sixty-four (364) teachers. The Taro Yamane formula was used to determine the sample size because of the large size of the population. The simple random sampling technique was used to select 121 teachers from each senatorial district in Bayelsa State, Nigeria, for the 2024/2025 academic session. The study used an instrument titled "Principals' innovative practices and instructional effectiveness of teachers (PIPIET)" questionnaire in gathering primary data. The PIPIET instrument was measured on a 4-point rating scale.

The validity of the instrument was executed by two experts at the Niger Delta University, Bayelsa State. The PIPIET instrument was administered to 30 teachers of public secondary schools in Rivers State who were not part of the study's main population. The Cronbach's alpha analysis that was applied yielded a reliability coefficient value of 0.89. Out of the three hundred and sixty-four (364) copies of questionnaires that were distributed, four (5) copies were not returned, and thirteen (8) copies were not completely filled, hence were rejected.

Thereby, a total of three hundred and fifty-one (351) respondents formed the sample size used for the study. The mean and standard deviation were used to answer research questions, while the PPMC was utilised to test the hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Research Questions

Research Question One: To what degree do principals' reward practices influence the instructional effectiveness of teachers in public secondary schools in Bayelsa State, Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation of reward system and instructional effectiveness

SN	ITEMS	N	Mean	STDD	Remark
1	Principals in my school provide rewards that motivate me to improve my instructional delivery.	351	&	0.518	Agree
2	I am more committed to instructional duties when the principal acknowledges my performance.	351	3.55	0.678	Agree
3	Principals' reward practices in term of financial benefits promote a competitive and effective teaching environment in my school.	351	3.15	0.739	Agree
4	I strive to meet instructional targets because I know good performance is rewarded by the school leadership.	351	3.46	0.735	Agree
5	Principal rewarding my teaching efforts has positively impacted my lesson planning and classroom engagement.	351	3.11	0.858	Agree
	Grand	**351**	**3.314**	**0.7056**	**Agree**

Table 1 depicts how principals' reward practices influence the instructional effectiveness of tutors in public secondary schools in Bayelsa State, Nigeria. The five (5) items used to answer research question one had item mean scores (3.3, 3.55, 3.15, 3.46 & 3.11) which are above the criterion mean score of 2.50. This implies that principals often provide rewards that improve instructional delivery. Practices such as performance acknowledgement and provision of financial benefits promote a competitive and effective teaching environment, committed to instructional duties, and impact lesson planning and classroom engagement.

The grand mean of 3.314 implies that respondents agreed that principals' reward practices contribute to the instructional effectiveness of tutors in public secondary schools in Bayelsa State, Nigeria.

Similarly, the grand mean of 0.7056 suggests that respondents generally agreed on the items measured, and there was no disparity in the way people answered the above research question.

Research Question Two: To what degree does principals' recognition influence the instructional effectiveness of teachers in public secondary schools in Bayelsa State, Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation of recognition and instructional effectiveness

SN	ITEMS	N	Mean	STDD	Remark
1	Principals who consistently recognize teacher achievements are more likely to motivate teachers to improve their instructional practices.	351	3.14	0.787	Agree
2	A well-structured recognition plan can enhance teachers' job satisfaction and reduce turnover rates.	351	3.04	0.957	Agree
3	Principals who provide timely and meaningful feedback on teacher performance can significantly improve instructional effectiveness.	351	3.46	0.691	Agree
4	Recognition is based on objective performance criteria are more effective in motivating teachers than those that are subjective or arbitrary.	351	3.01	0.746	Agree
5	When principals publicly acknowledge teachers' accomplishments, it can create a positive and supportive school culture that enhances instructional effectiveness.	351	2.98	1.034	Agree
	Grand	**351**	**3.126**	**0.843**	**Agree**

Table 2 depicts how principals' recognition of real-time feedback influences the instructional effectiveness of tutors in public secondary schools in Bayelsa State, Nigeria. The five (5) items used to answer research question four had item mean scores (3.14, 3.04, 3.46, 3.01 & 2.98) which are above the criterion mean score of 2.50. This implies that principals who consistently recognise teacher achievements are more likely to motivate teachers to improve their instructional practices. Through timely and meaningful feedback on teacher performance and tying recognition to performance criteria and openly acknowledging teachers' accomplishments, enhances teachers' job satisfaction, motivates, and creates positive and supportive school culture that improves instructional effectiveness.

The grand mean of 3.126 implies that respondents agreed that principals' recognition influences the instructional effectiveness of tutors in public secondary schools in Bayelsa State, Nigeria.

Similarly, the grand mean of 0.843 suggests that respondents generally agreed on the items measured, and there was no variance in the way respondents answered the above research question.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One: Principals' reward practices do not significantly relate to the instructional effectiveness of teachers in public secondary schools in Bayelsa State, Nigeria.

Table 3: Pearson correlation between reward system and instructional effectiveness

Correlations			
		Reward	Instructional Effectiveness
Reward	Pearson Correlation	1	.453**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	351	351
Instructional Effectiveness	Pearson Correlation	.453**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	351	351
****. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).**			

Table 3 above shows the type and strength of interplay between principals' reward practices and the instructional effectiveness of teachers in public secondary schools in Bayelsa State, Nigeria. The correlation coefficient, r = 0.453, indicates a moderate and positive association between the reward practices of principals and the instructional effectiveness of secondary school teachers. Again, the p-value 0.000 is less than the 0.05 alpha level adopted for the study. It implies that the relationship between principals' reward practices and instructional effectiveness of teachers is statistically significant.

Thus, the null hypothesis, which states that "principals' reward practices do not significantly relate to the instructional effectiveness of teachers in public secondary schools in Bayelsa State, Nigeria", is rejected.

Hypothesis Two: Principals' recognition does not significantly relate to the instructional effectiveness of teachers in public secondary schools in Bayelsa State, Nigeria.

Table 4: Pearson correlation between recognition and instructional effectiveness

Correlations			
		Recognition	Instructional Effectiveness
Recognition	Pearson Correlation	1	.993**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	351	351
Instructional Effectiveness	Pearson Correlation	.993**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	351	351
****. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).**			

Table 4 shows the type and strength of relationship between principals' recognition and the instructional effectiveness of teachers in public secondary schools in Bayelsa State, Nigeria. The correlation coefficient, r = 0.993, indicates a robust and affirmative association between the recognition of principals and the instructional effectiveness of secondary school teachers. Again, the p-value 0.000 is less than the 0.05 alpha level adopted for the study. This implies that the relationship between principals' recognition and instructional effectiveness of teachers is statistically significant.

Thus, the null hypothesis, which states that "principals' recognition does not significantly relate to the instructional effectiveness of teachers in public secondary schools in Bayelsa State, Nigeria", is rejected.

Discussion

The result in Table 1, grand mean = 3.314, revealed that principals' reward practices, such as performance acknowledgement, financial incentives, and verbal appreciation, enhance instructional effectiveness. Furthermore, Table 3 ($r = 0.453$, $p < 0.05$) indicates that reward practices and instructional effectiveness are significantly related. This implies that as principals increase reward mechanisms, there is a notable improvement in instructional outcomes. The null hypothesis is rejected, which confirms that rewards significantly influence teachers' behaviour and foster professional growth. The study corroborates the views of Ofojebe and Ezugoh (2010), who emphasised that motivational factors such as recognition and rewards are essential for boosting teachers' commitment and job performance. This evidence is consistent with the work of Ofojebe and Ezugoh (2010), who found that rewards for teachers' efforts foster a sense of responsibility and commitment to duty.

The result in Table 2, with a grand mean = 3.126, indicates a positive perception among teachers that recognition by principals enhances instructional performance. This implies that principals' acknowledgement of achievements, whether through verbal praise, performance reviews, or public commendations, fosters a culture of motivation and job satisfaction. The result in Table 4 ($r = 0.993$, $p < 0.05$) affirms that a positive association exists between recognition and instructional effectiveness.

This view is supported by the motivational theory of Maslow, which suggests that recognition fulfils esteem needs and enhances individual performance. Furthermore, Luthans's literature (2005) emphasises that non-monetary rewards, like recognition, significantly improve job satisfaction and productivity among tutors. Also, the work of Ololube (2006) found that principals who show appreciation for teachers' efforts increase their morale and encourage innovation in teaching.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study examined how principal innovative practices relate to the instructional effectiveness of tutors in secondary schools in Bayelsa State, Nigeria. The result revealed that principals' reward practices and principal recognition both significantly enhance instructional effectiveness. The study's findings suggest that principals who recognise and reward performance foster an environment that promotes initiative, creativity, and sustained effort among educators, ultimately enhancing the quality of instructional outcomes. The paper concludes that principal recognition and acknowledgement of achievements serve to elevate morale, whereas the act of delegating responsibilities fosters both capability and a profound sense of accountability, thereby

contributing to the enhancement of instructional efficacy. Consequently, this has a favourable impact on student engagement and the learning process.

In view of the conclusion reached, the following recommendations are presented:

1. The Ministry of Education should develop structured reward schemes for teachers to incentivise and reinforce outstanding instructional performances.
2. School administrators should formally acknowledge teachers' efforts through awards, verbal appreciation, and public commendation to boost morale.

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