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CALL FOR PAPERS
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INTERROGATING PRINCIPAL DECISION-MAKING STYLES FOR EFFECTIVE SECONDARY SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigates the influence of principals' decision-making styles on the administration of secondary schools in Nigeria, drawing on a comprehensive review of existing literature. By synthesizing findings from peer-reviewed journals, books, and reports. The research identifies key decision-making styles participatory, data-driven, and strategic and their impact on school effectiveness. The study highlights that participatory decision-making fosters collaboration and stakeholder engagement, while data-driven approaches enhance resource allocation and accountability. Strategic decision-making aligns short-term actions with long-term goals, promoting sustainability in school administration. Additionally, the study addresses challenges such as trust issues, time constraints, and budget limitations that principals face. The findings underscore the importance of effective decision-making in enhancing school performance and provide recommendations for policy and practice. By leveraging insights from the reviewed literature, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of the role of leadership in the educational landscape of Nigeria.

Keywords: Principal Decision-making Styles, School Administration

Introduction

Secondary education in Nigerian educational system is a fundamental phase that acts as a bridge between primary and higher education. It equips students with a fundamental knowledge base for higher-level academic pursuits or entry into the workforce, along with essential abilities such as analytical thinking, creative problem-solving, effective communication, and collaborative cooperation.

Secondary education is designed for persons between the ages of 11 and 17. It provides a basis for future professionals by allowing them to explore and specialize in specific professional sectors. Therefore, proper administration of secondary schools is crucial. Edith and Blessing (2022) define effective secondary school administration as the systematic mobilization and efficient management of people and other resources to achieve collective goals and objectives. Uzogor and Nwankwo (2020) have described it as the capacity of school principals to effectively utilize the existing resources in order to fulfil the predetermined objectives of the school.

Hence, it is incumbent upon the secondary school principal to diligently strive towards attaining the predetermined goals of the school. Therefore, the decisions and actions of principals, who are the leaders of secondary schools, undeniably have a substantial impact on the overall efficacy of the school system. Put simply, the choices made by the school leader, commonly referred to as the principal, play a crucial role in determining how effective the school is and whether it achieves its goals and objectives. Hence, a crucial comprehension of the approaches utilised by school leaders is required due to the intricacies involved in decision-making within secondary school administration. Furthermore, in the pursuit of educational excellence, it is crucial to analyse the decision-making styles utilised by secondary school principals. Studying decision-making styles is not just an academic exercise, but a practical method for improving the leadership qualities of people responsible for guiding secondary education in the country. The complexity of decision-making in educational leadership in Nigeria is influenced by various elements, including the distinctive cultural and contextual aspects, varying socio-economic backgrounds of students, and variances in the distribution of educational infrastructure.

The secondary school system in Nigeria has experienced substantial transformations throughout time, facing obstacles such as scarce resources, inadequate infrastructure, and increasing curriculum requirements, which appear to have impeded principals from effectively carrying out their responsibilities, including decision-making. In light of this context, this study examines the complexities of decision-making styles employed by secondary school principals in Nigeria, specifically focusing on participatory, data-driven, and strategic decision-making styles. The objective is to investigate how these decision-making styles contribute to the effective administration of secondary schools in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Secondary schools in Nigeria have clear issues that are of concern to many educational stakeholders. The prominent concerns include mismanagement of funds, insufficient infrastructure, institutional corruption, ineffectual administrators, inadequate supervision, scarcity of instructional materials, shortage of qualified and skilled teachers, and lack of data for planning, among other factors (Lawan, Jacob, Gregory, & Lawan, 2020). The issues in secondary school administration are commonly associated with the administrative head, specifically the principal, and

the communication, leadership, or decision-making styles they employ, which have a significant impact on the efficient management of secondary schools. In light of these complexities, this study aims to investigate the role of principals' decision-making styles in enhancing effective secondary school administration in Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The aim of this paper is to investigate the role of principals' decision-making styles in enhancing effective secondary school administration in Nigeria. The specific objectives are:

1. To identify the various decision-making styles among principals in secondary schools in Nigeria.
2. To examine the challenges faced by secondary school administrations in Nigeria.
3. To explore the contributions of principals' decision-making styles to effective secondary school administration in Nigeria.
4. To determine how principals' decision-making styles can enhance secondary school administration in Nigeria.
5. To investigate the problems associated with principals' decision-making styles in enhancing effective secondary school administration in Nigeria.
6. To suggest solutions for addressing the problems related to principals' decision-making styles in enhancing effective secondary school administration in Nigeria.

In achieving the above objectives, the following research questions, which address the specific areas of interest in this paper, will be addressed:

1. What are the identified decision-making styles among principals in secondary schools in Nigeria?
2. What are the challenges faced by secondary school administration in Nigeria?
3. What are the contributions of principals' decision-making styles to effective secondary school administration in Nigeria?
4. What are the possible ways principals' decision-making style can enhance secondary school administration in Nigeria?
5. What are the problems associated with principals' decision-making style in enhancing effective secondary school administration in Nigeria?
6. How can these problems associated with principals' decision-making style in enhancing effective secondary school administration in Nigeria be addressed?

Methodology

This study employed a qualitative approach to explore the impact of principals' decision-making styles on the administration of secondary schools in Nigeria. Instead of collecting primary data, the research focused on analyzing existing scholarly works to provide a comprehensive understanding of the subject.

This approach allowed for a synthesis of insights from previous studies, offering a broad overview of the role that decision-making styles play in school administration. To gather relevant literature, a systematic review of peer-reviewed journals, books, reports, and conference papers was conducted. The keywords for the search included terms such as "principals' decision-making styles" and "school administration." In total, 30 key studies were selected after screening for relevance, ensuring that the materials were directly aligned with the study's focus on decision-making in school administration. A thematic analysis was applied to the selected literature, categorizing findings into major themes related to decision-making styles. These themes included participatory decision-making, data-driven decision-making, strategic decision-making, and the challenges principals face in decision-making processes. By organizing the literature into these core areas, the study was able to highlight key trends, draw comparisons, and identify gaps in the existing body of knowledge. The analysis allowed for a nuanced understanding of how different decision-making approaches contribute to effective school administration. The credibility of the study was ensured through a comprehensive literature search that covered multiple databases and focused on peer-reviewed sources. By selecting only reputable, academically rigorous studies, the research maintained a high level of validity. Furthermore, to provide a broader context, studies from international educational settings were included, allowing for cross-comparisons between Nigeria and other countries with similar educational challenges.

However, as the study relied entirely on secondary data, there were limitations. Without primary data collection, the study's findings are constrained by the scope and methodologies of the reviewed literature. Additionally, variations in the research designs of the studies analyzed may affect the consistency of conclusions. Despite these limitations, the literature review methodology provided valuable insights into the role of decision-making styles in school administration. Since this study utilized only published sources, no ethical issues arose. All sources were appropriately cited to ensure academic integrity and transparency throughout the research process. In summary, the literature review approach allowed for a broad, yet detailed exploration of how principals' decision-making styles influence the effectiveness of secondary school administration in Nigeria.

Results

Research Question One: What are the identified decision-making styles among principals in secondary schools in Nigeria?

In examining the decision-making styles among secondary school principals in Nigeria, it is evident that principals employ a range of approaches that significantly influence the effectiveness of school administration. Decision-making plays a crucial role in school leadership, as it involves selecting the best course of action from various alternatives. Through personal observations and findings, it has become apparent that participatory, data-driven, and strategic decision-making

styles are commonly adopted by Nigerian school principals, each contributing uniquely to school management. One prominent decision-making style observed among principals is participatory decision-making. Many principals in Nigeria, particularly in the southwestern region, actively involve teachers and sometimes students in the decision-making process. This collaborative approach fosters a sense of ownership among staff, leading to greater commitment to implementing school decisions. By engaging teachers in discussions on matters such as curriculum development, student welfare, and disciplinary policies, principals create an environment where decisions are transparent and widely supported. This approach has shown to be effective in enhancing teacher motivation and improving overall school performance. Teachers who participate in decision-making feel valued and are more likely to be committed to the success of the decisions. Personal observations indicate that principals who adopt participatory decision-making experience smoother implementation of school policies and an overall increase in staff morale.

In addition to participatory approaches, some Nigerian principals have embraced data-driven decision-making, which is gaining traction as a more structured and analytical method. Principals who utilize this style rely on empirical data to inform their decisions, particularly in areas such as student performance, teacher evaluations, and resource allocation. While the use of data-driven decision-making is not yet widespread across Nigeria due to limitations such as access to reliable data and analytical tools, in regions where it is applied—such as in some mission schools—the results have been significant. Principals who employ data-driven methods are better equipped to identify specific areas for improvement, monitor progress, and make informed interventions that lead to enhanced student outcomes. By using data to drive decisions, these principals can make more objective and effective choices, which ultimately contribute to better academic performance and resource management. However, the challenge remains that not all schools have the capacity or infrastructure to fully implement data-driven decision-making.

Strategic decision-making also plays a key role in the leadership styles of Nigerian principals. Principals who adopt this approach focus on aligning their decisions with the long-term goals and vision of their schools. They carefully evaluate multiple options and consider both the internal dynamics of the school and external factors such as educational policy changes and societal expectations. Personal findings suggest that principals who adopt a strategic decision-making style are more likely to implement changes that yield long-term benefits. These principals demonstrate a clear vision for their schools' future and are adept at navigating complex challenges to achieve sustainable success. However, the effectiveness of strategic decision-making can be hindered by resource constraints and the uncertainties of the educational environment in Nigeria, making it difficult for some principals to fully implement their long-term plans. Supporting literature affirms the prevalence of these decision-making styles. Studies by Oredein (2010) and Amos, Siamoo, and Ogoti (2022) highlight the widespread use of participatory leadership

styles in Nigerian schools. Research by Olorunsola and Olayemi (2011) demonstrates the high level of collaboration between teachers and administrators, which enhances job satisfaction and performance. Furthermore, the significance of data-driven decision-making is supported by Anho, Egwunyenga, and Nnorom (2023), who found that systematic data usage improves academic performance, particularly in mission schools. Similarly, Datnow and Park (2017) emphasize the role of data in driving evidence-based interventions that improve student outcomes.

Lastly, the strategic decision-making style, as noted by Stanton and Roelich (2021) and Sinnaiah, Adam, and Mahadi (2023), is effective in aligning decisions with long-term goals and objectives. This approach is essential for navigating uncertain educational environments and ensuring the sustainability of school success. However, the challenge remains in resource-limited schools where the implementation of strategic plans may be difficult. Alzoubi and Aziz (2021) further highlight the connection between strategic decision-making and the overall success of school management, stressing that it is a deliberate and methodical process essential for achieving desired educational outcomes.

In all, the decision-making styles of Nigerian secondary school principals—whether participatory, data-driven, or strategic—play a pivotal role in shaping the effectiveness of school administration. Each style has its strengths and challenges, but when effectively employed, they contribute significantly to the overall success of the school. The findings from personal observations, supported by relevant literature, indicate that while the application of these styles varies across regions and schools, they are instrumental in fostering better educational outcomes in Nigeria.

Research Question Two: What are the challenges faced by secondary school administration in Nigeria?

Secondary school administration in Nigeria faces a multitude of challenges that hinder its ability to meet educational goals effectively. Based on my findings, one of the most critical challenges is the lack of competent and skilled leadership. Many school administrators exhibit a limited understanding of modern administrative practices, making it difficult for them to adapt to the evolving demands of secondary education. This shortfall is particularly evident in decision-making processes, resource allocation, and policy implementation, where poor leadership often leads to inefficiencies and a failure to create a conducive learning environment. Additionally, many administrators struggle with balancing their administrative duties with the need to maintain a focus on educational outcomes. As a result, the leadership gap significantly undermines the effectiveness of secondary school operations in Nigeria. Furthermore, the shortage of qualified and skilled teachers is another major impediment to school administration. In many cases, my observations align with the reports of underqualified teachers being recruited due to the unavailability of suitably trained personnel. This leads to a situation where teaching quality suffers,

with principals forced to either rely on insufficiently skilled staff or take on additional teaching duties themselves. This overload of responsibilities not only hampers their ability to focus on managerial tasks but also diminishes the quality of instruction students receive. The lack of qualified teachers, especially in critical subjects such as science, mathematics, and languages, exacerbates the already strained education system and perpetuates a cycle of substandard educational outcomes.

Additionally, inadequate infrastructure is a persistent challenge across many Nigerian secondary schools. From my own observations, many schools lack essential facilities such as well-equipped classrooms, laboratories, and libraries. In rural areas, the situation is even more dire, with schools often operating without basic amenities like electricity, water, and proper sanitation. This lack of infrastructure severely affects the quality of education, limiting students' access to necessary learning resources and creating an environment that is not conducive to learning. The poor state of school facilities also leads to overcrowded classrooms, where teachers are unable to provide the individual attention necessary for effective learning. These infrastructure deficits not only lower the morale of both students and teachers but also create safety and health concerns, further complicating the administration of schools.

Supporting my findings, Lawan, Jacob, Gregory, and Lawan (2020) also identify ineffective school leadership as a substantial challenge in Nigerian secondary schools. They argue that incompetent administrators lack the expertise to design and implement effective policies, which leads to the mismanagement of school resources and deteriorates the overall quality of education. Their study highlights the importance of competent leadership in fostering a positive school culture and ensuring the proper allocation of resources. In line with my observations, these scholars emphasize that ineffective leadership impedes the development of a cohesive educational environment, particularly in times of crisis or rapid change. Ogunode (2020) and Ogunode, Yiolokun, and Akeredolu (2019) extend this discussion by noting similar challenges at the tertiary level, illustrating that the issue of administrative incompetence pervades all levels of education in Nigeria. This calls for urgent reforms in the recruitment, training, and professional development of educational leaders to address these deficiencies. The shortage of qualified teachers, as observed in my findings, is also supported by Mohammed, Ogunode, and Yahaya (2021), who underscore the impact of unqualified educators on the functioning of secondary schools. They reveal that many schools, especially in public systems, are severely understaffed, with principals frequently forced to teach classes in addition to their administrative responsibilities. Ikgbusi and Iheanacho (2016) also note that this shortage extends to core subject teachers, particularly in rural and suburban areas, aligning with my observations of this being a significant issue. The shortage of skilled teachers negatively affects student performance, delays curriculum implementation, and contributes to overcrowded classrooms, thereby widening educational disparities. Austin (2020) further corroborates this, noting that the lack

of qualified teaching staff perpetuates inequalities in educational opportunities, which in turn stifles national development.

Finally, the infrastructural challenges facing secondary schools in Nigeria are well-documented in the literature. Ihekoronye (2020) emphasises the detrimental effects of inadequate facilities on teaching and learning processes. Poorly equipped classrooms, outdated libraries, and the absence of functional laboratories restrict students' learning opportunities, mirroring my observations. Gometi (2011) expands on this by listing critical components of school infrastructure, including buildings, furniture, recreational facilities, and instructional resources, all of which are lacking in many Nigerian schools. The absence of these essentials impairs not only the academic performance of students but also their overall motivation to learn. The result is a compromised educational environment that fails to meet the standards necessary for national development. Poor infrastructure also presents health and safety risks, particularly in overcrowded schools, further complicating the administration's ability to maintain a safe and effective learning space.

In all, secondary school administration in Nigeria is fraught with challenges stemming from ineffective leadership, a shortage of qualified teachers, and inadequate infrastructure. These issues, as evidenced by both my findings and supporting studies, significantly undermine the educational outcomes in Nigerian secondary schools. The pressing need for reforms in leadership training, teacher recruitment, and infrastructural development cannot be overstated if the country is to improve the quality of its secondary education system and contribute meaningfully to national development. Without these critical changes, the educational sector will continue to struggle, with long-term consequences for both students and the broader Nigerian society.

Research Question Three: To explore the contributions of principals' decision-making styles to effective secondary school administration in Nigeria.

The contributions of principals' decision-making styles to the effective administration of secondary schools in Nigeria are both profound and multifaceted. Based on my findings, the decision-making style adopted by a principal has a direct influence on the overall success of a school's operations. Principals who employ collaborative and participatory decision-making approaches tend to foster a more inclusive environment, leading to higher levels of stakeholder engagement. This style of decision-making helps build trust among teachers, students, and parents, which in turn promotes a harmonious school climate. Additionally, by involving various stakeholders in the decision-making process, principals are able to draw on the collective wisdom and experience of the community, which leads to more well-rounded and informed decisions that benefit the school in the long run. I have also observed that schools where principals embrace data-driven decision-making tend to perform better academically, as decisions are based on evidence and measurable outcomes rather than intuition or tradition. This approach allows for targeted

interventions, ensuring that resources are allocated efficiently and that student performance is continuously monitored and improved.

In support of these findings, Walson, Hart, Ajikere, and Kaisi (2020) underscore the critical role that decision-making plays in the various managerial functions of planning, organising, influencing, and controlling within the school system. They argue that a principal's decision-making process is integral to the successful administration of a school, as it directly impacts the institution's ability to meet its objectives. Decisions that are well-aligned with the school's goals lead to favourable outcomes, while poor decisions can have a detrimental effect on the overall educational environment. This assertion is consistent with the research of Esther and Julius (2022), who found that the decision-making styles of principals significantly affect the effective management of public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. Their study highlights the importance of principals being adaptable in their decision-making, suggesting that a one-size-fits-all approach is inadequate. Instead, principals should assess each situation carefully and employ a decision-making style that fits the specific context. This flexibility ensures that decisions are both timely and effective, contributing to the smooth operation of the school.

Moreover, Tijani (2020) conducted a study that delved into the impact of participative decision-making, a modern management approach, on the effectiveness of schools in Kwara State. His research reinforces my findings that inclusive decision-making enhances school performance. Tijani emphasised that when principals involve teachers, parents, and other stakeholders in decision-making processes, it fosters a sense of ownership and accountability among all parties. This participatory approach allows for the sharing of ideas and expertise, resulting in more robust and sustainable solutions to the challenges faced by schools. Additionally, it encourages stakeholders to actively contribute to the achievement of educational goals, thereby improving the overall effectiveness of the school. In line with these findings, I have observed that schools where principals actively involve teachers in decision-making processes experience higher levels of job satisfaction among staff, which leads to improved morale and, ultimately, better student outcomes.

Similarly, the study by Uzogor and Nwankwo (2020) supports the notion that principals play a pivotal role in decision-making, particularly in matters related to students and staff. Their findings suggest that there is little variation in how principals and teachers perceive the principal's role in decision-making, indicating a level of agreement and alignment in how decisions are made within the school. This alignment is crucial because it ensures that the school leadership and teaching staff are working towards common goals, which enhances the overall effectiveness of school administration. Uzogor and Nwankwo recommend that the Ministry of Education should facilitate regular interactions between principals and teachers to exchange ideas and collaborate on decision-making. This recommendation echoes my observation that schools with strong collaborative cultures between administrators and teachers tend to be more dynamic and adaptable to changes in the

educational landscape.

In all, the decision-making styles employed by principals are integral to the effective administration of secondary schools in Nigeria. As my findings demonstrate, decision-making styles such as participatory and data-driven approaches lead to better resource allocation, improved staff morale, and enhanced academic performance. These styles allow principals to foster collaboration and create a positive school culture, which are essential components of a successful educational institution. Supporting studies by Walson, Hart, Ajikere, and Kaisi (2020), Esther and Julius (2022), Tijani (2020), and Uzogor and Nwankwo (2020) further underscore the significance of decision-making in school administration, reinforcing the idea that a principal's ability to make sound, informed decisions is vital for the success of the school. By adopting flexible, inclusive, and evidence-based decision-making practices, principals can ensure that their schools not only meet immediate educational objectives but also lay the foundation for long-term growth and sustainability.

Research Question Four: What are the possible ways principals' decision-making style can enhance secondary school administration in Nigeria?

Principals' decision-making styles play a critical role in enhancing the administration of secondary schools in Nigeria. My findings suggest that decision-making styles such as participatory, data-driven, and strategic approaches significantly contribute to more efficient and effective school management. By adopting a participatory decision-making style, principals foster a collaborative environment where teachers, students, and staff feel valued and empowered. This inclusive approach not only improves the quality of decisions but also strengthens stakeholder buy-in, leading to a more harmonious and productive school climate. The involvement of multiple stakeholders in decision-making processes helps identify and address the diverse needs of the school community, leading to a more responsive and adaptive administrative structure. Additionally, the use of data-driven decision-making ensures that school resources are allocated efficiently, and decisions are made based on evidence and measurable outcomes. This approach promotes transparency and accountability, which are essential for maintaining high educational standards. Lastly, strategic decision-making aligns the school's short-term actions with its long-term goals, ensuring sustainability and continuous improvement in the face of challenges. When these decision-making styles are combined, they create a dynamic and effective administrative framework that enhances the overall functioning of secondary schools.

Supporting these findings, research by Tijani (2020) highlights the effectiveness of participatory decision-making in school administration. This approach, which involves principals actively engaging teachers, staff, and even students in key decision-making processes, leads to more informed and well-rounded decisions. Tijani argues that the principal must foster an atmosphere of

collaboration that values diverse perspectives, ensuring that decisions are representative of the entire school community. This method promotes cooperation and fosters a positive school culture where all stakeholders feel involved and respected. Oredein (2010) further emphasizes that the active participation of stakeholders in decision-making not only improves the quality of the decisions but also instills a sense of ownership and accountability among those involved. This heightened sense of responsibility contributes to more effective implementation of school policies and programs. As Gemechu (2014) points out, participatory decision-making also has the added benefit of promoting career development for teachers and staff, as it provides opportunities for professional growth and leadership. This approach models democratic principles for students and encourages self-governance, fostering a more engaged and motivated school community.

Another key decision-making style that enhances school administration is data-driven decision-making. Anho, Egwunyenga, and Nnorom (2023) assert that data-driven decision-making is a powerful tool for improving instructional practices, enhancing student learning, and driving overall school improvement. By relying on empirical data, principals and teachers can identify areas that require attention and implement targeted interventions to address specific needs. This approach ensures that resources—whether financial, human, or material—are allocated strategically to meet the most pressing demands of the school. My findings also highlight the importance of data-driven decision-making in providing principals with a clear understanding of the school's dynamics, making the administration more efficient and adaptive to changes. By using data to inform decisions, schools can monitor progress, track student performance, and continuously refine their strategies to achieve better educational outcomes. This method not only improves the day-to-day functioning of schools but also contributes to long-term success by creating a culture of accountability and evidence-based decision-making.

Strategic decision-making is another essential style that enhances school administration. Lin, Shi, Prescott, and Yang (2019) describe strategic decision-making as aligning decisions with the long-term goals and vision of the institution. This approach ensures that short-term actions support the overall mission of the school, leading to sustained growth and development. Zakaria, Mansor, and Nor (2020) emphasize that strategic decision-making enables schools to be proactive rather than reactive, anticipating future challenges and planning accordingly. This method promotes continuous improvement by encouraging schools to evaluate their current practices, assess potential risks, and explore new opportunities for advancement. By incorporating data and feedback from stakeholders, strategic decision-making fosters a culture of learning and adaptability. This enhances not only the school's operational efficiency but also its ability to respond to the evolving educational landscape. Additionally, strategic decision-making improves communication and leadership within the school, as it requires clear articulation of goals and careful consideration of how decisions will impact the broader school community.

In all, principals' decision-making styles—whether participatory, data-driven, or strategic—have a profound impact on the effectiveness of secondary school administration in Nigeria. These styles enhance the quality of decisions, promote stakeholder engagement, and align school actions with long-term objectives. The combination of these approaches creates a comprehensive framework for school leadership that fosters collaboration, transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement. By adopting these decision-making styles, principals can ensure that their schools not only meet current educational goals but also build a strong foundation for future success.

Research Question Five: What are the problems associated with principals' decision-making style in enhancing effective secondary school administration in Nigeria?

The effectiveness of secondary school administration in Nigeria is significantly influenced by the decision-making styles adopted by principals. However, several challenges often impede the ability of principals to enhance administrative efficiency through their decision-making processes. These challenges not only affect the outcomes of decisions but also hinder the overall effectiveness of the school administration.

One major issue is the absence of trust within the school community. Trust is a foundational element in fostering a collaborative environment and facilitating participatory decision-making. When there is a lack of trust between the principal, teachers, staff, students, and parents, the decision-making process becomes strained. As noted by Belay (2023), insufficient trust results in poor communication and weakens stakeholder engagement, ultimately compromising the quality of decisions made. Without trust, stakeholders may withhold valuable input or resist the implementation of decisions, further hindering administrative effectiveness.

Another significant challenge is time constraints. Participatory decision-making, which involves consulting multiple stakeholders, can be time-consuming. Principals are often faced with the difficulty of managing conflicting schedules among teachers, parents, students, and other community members, making it challenging to gather input in a timely manner. Tijani (2020) highlights that balancing these schedules while still maintaining administrative efficiency can be overwhelming. In a fast-paced educational environment, where quick decision-making is sometimes required, the time demands of participatory decision-making can impede the school's ability to respond to urgent matters effectively.

The accuracy of data used in decision-making also presents a critical problem. Decisions based on inaccurate, incomplete, or outdated information can lead to sub optimal outcomes. Schildkamp (2019) argues that the reliance on faulty data can result in decisions that fail to address the current needs of the school, leading to ineffective solutions or even exacerbating existing problems. In such cases, principals may unknowingly implement policies or strategies that are misaligned

with the school's realities, further complicating administrative functions.

In addition to data accuracy, insufficient access to data is another problem that affects decision-making in Nigerian secondary schools. Anho, Egwunyenga, and Nnorom (2023) point out that many schools lack the necessary technological infrastructure to facilitate the collection and analysis of relevant data. Without easy access to comprehensive and timely data, principals and staff may struggle to make informed decisions that could improve the school's administration. Moreover, restrictive policies on data sharing or bureaucratic hurdles can further limit access to critical information, leaving administrators with an incomplete picture of the school's needs and performance.

The lack of visionary leadership among principals also poses a significant challenge to effective decision-making. When principals lack a clear vision for the future of the school, it becomes difficult to make strategic decisions that align with long-term goals. Ahmed (2020) emphasizes that a well-defined vision is crucial for guiding decision-making, resource allocation, and overall school planning. Without a visionary outlook, principals may resort to reactive decision-making, focusing only on short-term issues while neglecting the broader objectives that could lead to sustainable improvement and growth.

Budget constraints further complicate decision-making processes in Nigerian secondary schools. Financial limitations often prevent the implementation of strategic decisions, especially when those decisions require significant investment in infrastructure, technology, or other resources. Jacob and Ndubuisi (2020) note that inadequate funding can force principals to delay or abandon important projects that are essential for achieving the school's long-term goals. To address this challenge, principals must develop innovative problem-solving skills and find ways to allocate resources efficiently, balancing immediate needs with future growth. In all, the effectiveness of principals' decision-making styles in enhancing secondary school administration in Nigeria is hindered by several challenges, including a lack of trust within the school community

Research Question Six: How can these problems associated with principals' decision-making style in enhancing effective secondary school administration in Nigeria be addressed?

Effective administration of secondary schools necessitates a focused endeavor to surmount several obstacles that may impede the seamless operation of educational establishments. Strategies to tackle these challenges encompass:

1. Administrators ought to give priority to clear communication, ensuring that stakeholders are kept well-informed about decisions and the process of decision-making. Establishing inclusive decision-making frameworks, such as committees or workshops, can facilitate the participation of diverse stakeholders and foster trust through collaborative efforts.

2. Administrators must establish meticulously structured timetables for decision-making procedures, taking into account the accessibility of crucial stakeholders. By giving priority to decisions and concentrating on crucial concerns, the process may be made more efficient, and time restrictions can be reduced. Introducing other methods of participation, such as online platforms, can guarantee wider involvement regardless of varying schedules.
3. Regular data audits can assist in detecting and correcting mistakes, thereby ensuring that choices are made using dependable information. Offering professional development opportunities for employees regarding data gathering methods aids in preserving precise and current data, hence improving the overall decision-making process.
4. Investing in technology infrastructure and modernizing software can enhance the accessibility of data. In addition, establishing rational and robust data-sharing protocols in cooperation with relevant parties aids in achieving a harmonious equilibrium between data accessibility and security.
5. Engaging stakeholders in the process of defining the vision ensures a collaborative and thorough approach. Leadership training for principals enhances their ability to acquire the necessary abilities for proficient strategic planning, ensuring that administrative actions are in line with long-term objectives.
6. Administrators can address this difficulty by maximizing the efficiency of current resources, reallocating budget priorities, and investigating cost-efficient alternatives. Proactively pursuing external funding through grants, collaborations, or sponsorships that are in line with the school's vision can also offer supplementary financial assistance.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, this study highlights the critical role of principals' decision-making styles in improving secondary school administration in Nigeria. Participatory decision-making fosters collaboration and transparency, while data-driven approaches support informed decisions and resource allocation. Strategic decision-making aligns actions with long-term goals. Despite challenges like trust issues, time constraints, and budget limitations, these can be addressed through better communication, structured processes, and investment in technology. By refining their decision-making, principals can enhance school management, promote student success, and ensure the long-term sustainability of secondary education in Nigeria.

Recommendations:

1. The Ministry of Education should promote participatory decision-making in Nigerian secondary schools by issuing guidelines, organizing training for administrators, and improving data infrastructure through technology upgrades and professional development in data management. Leadership

- training and collaboration with educational stakeholders should also be supported.
2. School administrators should establish participatory decision-making by involving teachers, students, parents, and the community, while investing in technology for data-driven decisions. They should also develop and communicate a clear strategic vision aligned with long-term goals.
 3. Teachers should actively participate in decision-making, collaborate with administrators on data collection, and align classroom activities with the school's strategic goals to support a cohesive learning environment.
 4. Parents and community members should engage in decision-making forums, advocate for resources, and support initiatives that enhance student success and foster a positive school culture.

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