

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE AND SUSTAINABLE EDUCATION MANAGEMENT IN PUBLIC SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN PORT HARCOURT METROPOLIS

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ABSTRACT: This study examined the relationship between school administrative structure and sustainable education management in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State. The study utilised a correlational research survey design with a population of 1,933 comprising 48 principals and 1,885 teachers in the 48 public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis. The sample size of this study was 368 respondents which consisted of 48 principals and 320 teachers selected from the population using the Krejcie and Morgan Table. The instrument for data collection were two sets of questionnaires titled “School Administrative Structure Questionnaire and Sustainable Education Management Questionnaire. The instruments were validated by three experts, one in the field of Educational Management, and two in Measurement and Evaluation both in Rivers State University. The internal consistency of the instrument yielded reliability coefficients of 0.80, 0.85, 0.77, 0.77, 0.84 and 0.81, which showed that the instruments were reliable. The research questions were answered and the Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Statistics was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05

level of significance using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The result of the analysed data revealed that there is a high positive relationship between School administrative structure and sustainable education management. Based on the findings, it recommended among others that: School administrators of public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis should strike a balance between decentralization, matrix structure and participative structure to maximise benefits.

Keywords: *Administrative Structure, Decentralised Structure, Matrix Structure, Participative Structure, Sustainable Education Management*

INTRODUCTION

Education is a systematic training and instruction that prepares an individual for a lifelong living in the society (Akudo, 2022). It involves acquisition of knowledge, abilities, skills, development of character and mental power resulting from such training and instruction. One important fact in education is the building of knowledge and sharing it with learners so that at the end of schooling, the individual acquires the necessary knowledge, skills and expertise that will enable him/her developed and contribute constructively to the development of the nation. In corroboration with this assertion, Nigeria like other nations of the world, has embraced education as the instrument, per excellence for developing her manpower in order to enhance rapid national development, achieve social change, social justice, democracy and sustainability (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013). Hitherto, education remains a vital component of human development and its effective management is crucial for achieving sustainable development (UNESCO, 2019). Schools, as the primary platforms in formal education, play a critical role in shaping the minds of future generations (World Bank, 2018). Sustainable education management refers to the ability of educational institutions to manage their resources effectively, efficiently, and responsibly to achieve the goal of education while minimizing their impact on the environment (UNESCO, 2019). Sustainable education management is critical for ensuring that educational institutions continue to provide quality education to future generations. However, the effectiveness of schools in achieving their goals is influenced by various factors, including their administrative structure (Hallinger & Murphy, 2015).

Every school has a defined structure meant to regulate the operations and functions of its departments. Members of the school are expected to adhere to the dictates of the structure in pursuit of the stated goals and objectives of the organisation. The school structure determines how resources are shared among members in different departments and it defines the leader of each department. Chizyuka and Daka (2019) posited that departments in a school set-up are categorized according to functional or subject areas; these departments are meant to be interconnected to shape the structure of the school. The structure of a school is meaningless unless it is supported by appropriate systems. Research has shown that school administrative structure can impact teacher morale, student achievement and overall school effectiveness (Galati, 2020).

A decentralized structure involves delegating decision-making authority to lower levels of the organisation, such as school administrators or department heads (Ewelum & Mbara, 2016). This approach promotes autonomy, flexibility, and responsiveness to local needs. Decentralized structures have been found to improve student outcomes, increase teacher satisfaction, and enhance community involvement (Glewwe & Muralidharan, 2016). A decentralised structure promotes organisational learning because the flow of information is not controlled in such a system. The same study claims that the involvement of members in decision-making increases their motivation and commitment to continuous learning (Basami, 2022).

The concept of decentralisation has become a pervading force in governance and management over the past few decades. It has permeated various organisations including public services, private enterprises, public-private partnerships, cooperatives or non-government bodies and also state machinery (Smoke, 2015). It has also been advocated by various international organisations such as World Trade Organisation, International Monetary Fund and United Nations (Rana, 2014) and adopted by national and state governments as a policy remedy to improve governance and productivity and thereby enhance development outcomes.

Matrix structure is a combination between the functional structure and the project structure. This represents a fusion between the vertical lines that are the responsibility and the authority (bottom-up and top-down) run by the project and the

horizontal lines of authority and responsibility that are the attribute of functionality (departmentalization) (Akudo, 2022). Therefore, this systematization of lines means a network structure.

The concept of matrix structure is a type of organizational design that combines functional and project-based structures (Akudo, 2022). In the context of school administration, matrix structures have been explored as a means of promoting sustainable education management (Basami, 2022). A matrix structure is a hybrid organizational design that superimposes a project-based structure onto a functional structure. In a matrix structure, employees report to multiple managers, both functional and project-based, which creates a complex network of relationships (Okasha, Mohamed & Mansour, 2016). This design allows for flexibility, adaptability, and the sharing of resources across different projects and functions.

Participative structure grew out of the human relations movement in the 1920's where workers have their right to voice out their opinions about their current work environment. The origin of participative structure was born as a result of industrial democracy where employees want to be part of the decision-making team (Ewelum & Mbara, 2016). An employee-centered approach to leadership has gained more attention for horizontal organizational structure which focuses on the ability of employees to come up with innovative solutions that emphasize teamwork and collaboration (Amadi, Ineye-Briggs & Iniekalanyo, 2025). Participatory management focuses on empowering employees to achieve organizational goals. It is considered to be more effective than vertical organizational structure due to recognition of employee opinion and idea (Hawthorne 2020).

Participative structure refers to the management approach where the subordinates of an organization are fully involved in the active management and decision-making processes of the organization (Hawthorne, 2020). Participatory structure style offers the entire workers opportunities to make input to workplace policies and decisions that achieve business goals while promoting career satisfaction. As opposed to an autocratic management style, where the manager assumes operational control and makes all the decisions unilaterally (Jones & Filos, 2015), the participative manager asks for contribution from team members and considers every one opinion to find

effective solutions to deal with organizational problems and put into practice to meet deadlines. Consequently, workers feel more valued and strive to achieve management objectives.

Statement of the Problem

The effectiveness of school administrative structure in promoting sustainable education management has become a pressing concern in recent years (UNESCO, 2019). Despite efforts to improve education outcomes, many schools continue to face challenges in providing quality education, managing resources efficiently and ensuring long term sustainability. Public Senior Secondary School in Port Harcourt Metropolis have been grappling with ineffective leadership, hindering the delivery of quality education and its sustainability. This failure can be attributed to administrative failure among other factors, principals in secondary schools either lack the requisite knowledge but feel reluctant in implementing this administrative structure. They put up lackadaisical attitude towards their jobs in effective decision making, supervision and tolerate all kinds of misconduct among teachers, students and other staff (Amadi *et al*, 2025). This poor administration leads to poor performance of teachers and this ultimately affects sustainable education management. Therefore, the question now is does the adoption of effective administrative structures have a relationship with sustainable education management in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt metropolis? Answer to this question, is the reason for this study.

Purpose and Objectives of the study

The purpose of this study was to ascertain the relationship between school administrative structure and sustainable education management in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. ascertain the relationship between decentralized administrative structure and sustainable education management in public senior secondary school in Port Harcourt Metropolis.

2. find out the relationship between matrix administrative structure and sustainable education management in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis.
3. examine the relationship between participative administrative structure and sustainable education management in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis.

Research Question

The following research question guided the study:

1. What is the relationship between decentralized administrative structure and sustainable education management in public secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis?
2. What is the relationship between matrix administrative structure and sustainable education management in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis?
3. What is the relationship between participative administrative structure and sustainable education management in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses guided the study:

1. There is no significant relationship between decentralized administrative structure and sustainable education management in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis.
2. There is no significant relationship between matrix administrative structure and sustainable education management in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis.
3. There is no significant relationship between participative administrative structure and sustainable education management in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis.

Literature Review

School administrative structure is the way responsibilities and power are allocated, and work procedures are carried out among organizational members. They designate the nature and mean of formal reporting relationships as well as the groupings of individuals within the organization (McNamera, 2018). According to Chowdhury (2016), different structures arise in response to a variety of internal and external forces, including technological demands, organizational growth, environmental turbulence, size and business strategy. One of the characteristics of high performing schools is their flexible structure (Daka, Chipindi, Phiri, Mulenga, Mvula & Chirwa, 2021).

Sustainable development is a clarion call from the United Nations (UN) for states to speed up their human and economic development and meet the needs of the people without compromising the earth. The earth has been severely damaged and brought to great ruins by the indiscriminate activities of man. Moreover, research has shown that humans are overusing productive land, the oceans are under threat because of pollution; humans are destroying nature, accelerating climate change, endangering biodiversity, and depleting natural resources as a result of the more highly industrialized livestock-based food systems (McNeill, 2022). Natural occurring resources such as sand, water, fossil fuel, trees, and soil have been overused and depleted at almost double the rate at which they can regenerate (McNeill, 2022). The United Nations (UN) report reminds the world that the present generation has the responsibility to bequeath to future generations a planet that is not irreversibly damaged by human activities (United Nations Report, 2019). Environmental, economic, and social indicators show that the world's current method of progress is unsustainable and looming great danger if not checked. Sustainable development is seen as a decision-making framework that responds to the deteriorating environmental conditions around the world and strives to ensure that development is just, balance and environmental protective and restorative with the slogan "humans are to live in harmony with nature rather than at its expense" (Dernbach & Cheever, 2015).

Education is a key to unlocking sustainable development, it is a veritable tool in inculcating values, skills, critical thinking and capabilities in the individual (Wey-Amaewhule & Onyemauche, 2022). It will help to accelerate the rate of sustainable development and impact the well-being of man. Hence, education needs to be properly managed and reoriented to build a better future for all (McNeil, 2022). The aim of this research is to examine the relationship between school administrative structure and sustainable education management and to critically analyze the transformative roles of educational managers in helping to conserve, restore and use nature sustainably in Nigeria schools.

Kawinzi, Redempta and Mulwa (2023) carried out a study on School Structure as an Institutional Determinant of Strategic Plan Implementation in Public Secondary Schools in Kenya. This study found that school structure in school development plan has a positive and significant influence on the strategic implementation in schools.

Kameshwara, Shields and Sandoval-Hernandez (2023) carried out a study on Decentralisation in School Management and Student Achievement: Evidence from India. The results from the analysis therefore problematises decentralisation initiatives such as school-based management to improve student achievement.

Jiayan, Rajanthran, Fuyu and Qiaochuan (2023) examined the Impact of hierarchical, horizontal and team-based organisational structures on full time teachers' performance in Chinese secondary schools. The study reveals that the most effective and recommended management structure involves amalgamating the strengths inherent in these different structures to create a hybrid system that is responsive to the needs of teachers. This hybrid approach is shown to have a positive impact on teacher performance.

Nyathi and Bhebhe (2020) carried out a study on the organisational structure and teachers' performance in high schools: Perceptions from head teachers and teachers. The findings of the study reveal that there are benefits in high flexible structures which foster conditions that are more conducive to teaching and learning than "rigid" structures. Flexible structures enhance greater control, higher motivation and more collective learning opportunities for both teachers and learners; this exerts a

definitive impact on students' progress in diverse aspects of their development. The study also found that high performing school structures promoted creativity and enhanced collective decision making.

Methodology

The study adopted a cross-sectional and correlational survey design. The study was carried out in Obio Akpor and Port Harcourt City Local Government Areas of Rivers State also known as Port Harcourt Metropolis. The population of the study consisted of 1,933 principals and teachers (48 principals and 1,885 teachers). The Krejcie and Morgan sample size determination table was adopted for the study. The sample size of the study was 368 respondents which consisted of 48 principals and 320 teachers in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt City and Obio-Akpor Local Government Areas in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State. The instruments used for data collection were two sets of self-designed questionnaire titled "School Administrative Structure Questionnaire (SASQ) and Sustainable Education Management Questionnaire" (SEM). The completed copies of the questionnaire were analyzed for reliability using Cronbach Alpha method. The test yielded reliability coefficients of 0.80 and 0.84. A total of 368 copies of the questionnaire were administered to the principals and teachers at public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt City and Obio-Akpor Local Government Areas in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State. A total of 368 representing 100 % were retrieved and found valid for analysis. The data collected was analyzed using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient to answer the research questions 1-3 and test the hypotheses. The relationship value of 0.1-0.4 was counted as low correlation, 0.5 as moderate positive correlation while 0.6-1.0 as strong positive correlation and Pearson's Product Moment Correlation was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance using the statistical package for social science (SPSS) version 26. A null hypothesis was accepted if the p-value was greater than the 0.5 level of significance (alpha value) and rejected if the p-value was lesser than the 0.5 level of significance.

Data Analysis and Findings

School Decentralized Structure and Sustainable Education Management

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between school decentralised structure and sustainable education management in public senior secondary school in Port Harcourt Metropolis?

Table 1: Correlation Matrix of Pearson's Product Moment Correlation on the relationship between school decentralized administrative structure and sustainable educational management in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis.

<i>Correlations</i>			
		Decentralised Structure	Sustainable Education management
Decentralised Structure	Pearson Correlation	1	.772**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	368	368
Sustainable Education Management	Pearson Correlation	.772**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	368	368
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			
Source: SPSS Version 26 Data Output (2025)			

Table 1 showed the relationship between school decentralised administrative structure and sustainable education management in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis. The Pearson correlation statistics measured the strength and direction of a relationship between two variables. In this case, the correlation coefficient between school decentralised administrative structure and sustainable education management is $r = 0.772$, which indicate that there is a high and strong positive relationship between school decentralised administrative structure and sustainable education management. Therefore, the answer to research question one states that there is a strong positive relationship between school decentralised

administrative structure and sustainable education management in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis.

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between school matrix administrative structure and sustainable education management in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis?

Table 2: Correlation Matrix of Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation on the relationship between school matrix administrative structure and sustainable education management in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis.

<i>Correlations</i>			
		Matrix Structure	Sustainable Education Management
Matrix Structure	Pearson Correlation	1	.644**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	368	368
Sustainable Education Management	Pearson Correlation	.644**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	368	368

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS Version 26 Data Output (2025)

Table 2 showed the relationship between school matrix administrative structure and sustainable education management in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis. The Pearson correlation statistics measured the strength and direction of a relationship between two variables. Data revealed that the correlation coefficient between school matrix administrative structure and sustainable education management is $r = 0.644$, which indicate that there is a high positive relationship between school matrix administrative structure and sustainable education management. Therefore, the answer to research question three states that there is a low positive relationship between school matrix administrative structure and

sustainable education management in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis.

Research Question 3: What is the relationship between school participative administrative structure and sustainable education management in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis?

Table 3: Correlation Matrix of Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation on the relationship between school participative administrative structure and sustainable education management in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis.

<i>Correlations</i>			
		Participative Structure	Sustainable Education Management
Participative Structure	Pearson Correlation	1	.536**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	368	368
Sustainable Education Management	Pearson Correlation	.536**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	368	368

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS Version 26 Data Output (2025)

Table 3 showed the relationship between school participative administrative structure and sustainable education management in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis. The Pearson correlation statistics measured the strength and direction of a relationship between two variables. Data revealed that the correlation coefficient between school participative administrative structure and sustainable education management is $r = 0.536$, which indicate that there is a moderate positive relationship between school participative administrative structure and sustainable education management. Therefore, the answer to research question four states that there is a moderate positive relationship between school participative administrative

structure and sustainable education management in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis.

Test of Hypothesis

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between school decentralised administrative structure and sustainable education management in public senior secondary school in Port Harcourt Metropolis?

To test the hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between school decentralised administrative structure and sustainable education management, table 1 showed Pearson correlation summary. Since the p-value (0.000) is less than the 0.05 significant level, the null hypothesis is rejected. The result demonstrates that there is a significant relationship between school decentralised administrative structure and sustainable education management in public senior secondary school in Port Harcourt Metropolis.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between school matrix administrative structure and sustainable education management in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis?

To test the hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between school matrix administrative structure and sustainable education management, table 2 showed Pearson correlation summary. Since the p-value (0.000) is less than the 0.05 significant level, the null hypothesis is rejected. The result demonstrates that there is a significant relationship between school matrix administrative structure and sustainable education management in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship between school participative administrative structure and sustainable education management in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis?

To test the hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between school participative administrative structure and sustainable education management, table 3 showed Pearson correlation summary. Since the p-value (0.000) is less than the 0.05

significant level, the null hypothesis is rejected. The result demonstrates that there is a significant relationship between school participative administrative structure and sustainable education management in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis.

Discussion of the Findings

The result of the findings of the study for Research Question 1 on Table 1 revealed that there is high and positive relationship between adoption of school decentralized administrative structure and sustainable education management in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis. It was revealed that public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis ensure that decision making authority is distributed among stakeholders in their schools, teachers have autonomy to make decision about their instructional practices, department heads are empowered to make decisions about their departments, and the schools administration encourages input from students and parents. Similarly, the hypothesis one revealed that there is a significant relationship between school decentralised administrative structure and sustainable education management in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis. However, Kameshwara, Shields and Sandoval-Hernandez (2023), study on decentralisation in school management and student achievement found a negative association between decentralisation and students' performance. This suggests that decentralisation may have context-specific benefits. School administrators should therefore carefully consider the benefits and challenges of decentralized structure in their specific context.

The result of the findings of the study for Research Question 2 on Table 2 revealed that Respondents believed there is high and positive relationship between adoption of school matrix administrative structure and sustainable education management in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis. It was revealed that public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis structure utilize cross functional teams to achieve specific goals, projects are managed through collaboration among different departments, staff members work across different departments to achieve common objectives, and multiple stakeholders are involved in project planning and implementation in public senior secondary schools in Port

Harcourt Metropolis. This agrees with the findings of Nyathi and Bhebhe (2020), which showed that in matrix structures teachers were able to acquire and share knowledge and concluded that the use of matrix structure enabled teachers to form productive teams which enhance student performance.

The result of the findings of the study for Research Question 3 on Table 3 revealed that Respondents believed there is moderate and positive relationship between adoption of school participative administrative structure and sustainable education management in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis. It was revealed that public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis encourage teachers' active involvement in decision making processes, students have a voice in shaping school policies and practices, parents are encouraged to participate in school decision making and the school administration seek input from staff members on key issues in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis. This agrees with the findings of Jiayan, Rajanthran, Fuyu and Qiaochuan (2023), which revealed that the participative structure empowers policy makers and educational leaders to design and implement effective management strategies that support and empower teachers. This in turn can lead to enhanced teacher performance, improved education quality, increased job satisfaction, and motivation among educators, ultimately resulting in better student outcomes.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, the study concluded that school administrative structures significantly influence sustainable education management in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis. The findings revealed significant relationship between various dimensions of school administrative structure. Specifically, matrix, participative and decentralized structures showed positive relationships, with matrix structure having the strongest relationship. These findings highlighted the importance of considering school administrative structure in promoting sustainable education management.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusion, the following recommendations were made by the researchers:

1. School administrators of public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis should strike a balance between decentralisation and other administrative structures to maximise benefits.
2. School administrators of public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis should utilize matrix structure to enhance cross functionality among different departments.
3. School administrators of public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis should encourage participative decision-making processes to enhance sustainable education management.

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