Research Article

The Impact of Bureaucratic Structures on the Performance of School Principals in Public Secondary Schools

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Abstract: This study investigates the bureaucratic role of principals' leadership performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. Adopting a descriptive research design, utilizing a census sampling technique, the study encompassed all 296 principals from the 296 public senior secondary schools across the 23 Local Government Areas in Rivers State. Data was collected through a 30-item self-structured questionnaire, the "Bureaucratic Role of Principals' Leadership Performance Questionnaire (BRPLPQ)," employing a modified 4-point Likert Scale. Instrument validation was conducted by the researcher's supervisor and two experts in educational management, achieving a Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of 0.92. The analysis involved mean and standard deviation for five research questions and t-test statistics for five null hypotheses at a 0.05 significance level. Results indicated that principals executed their bureaucratic roles to a high extent in student personal administration, staff personnel administration, instructional supervision, and school finance management. Applying bureaucratic principles significantly enhanced principals' leadership performance and overall school effectiveness. The study concludes that principals effectively perform their bureaucratic roles in various administrative domains within public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. It underscores the importance of principals continually enhancing their administrative skills through conferences, workshops, and professional development programs. Additionally, it highlights that the government should incorporate bureaucratic principles in school administration to improve staff and student performance and achieve better educational outcomes. By adopting these recommendations, schools can ensure sustainable administrative efficiency and academic quality improvements, ultimately leading to a more robust educational system in Rivers State.

Keywords: Administrative Skills; Bureaucratic Principles; Educational Management; Leadership Performance; School Effectiveness.

1. Introduction

The attainment of organizational goals is a crucial objective for every leader, and it is widely acknowledged that achieving these goals heavily depends on the organizational structure and leadership effectiveness [1]–[3]. This is particularly evident in educational institutions, where coordinating human and material resources and considering various environmental factors is crucial. Within this context, the role of the school principal is paramount. Principals serve as the chief executive officers of schools, guiding the institution toward its educational objectives [4], [5].

Organizational structure establishes the formal arrangement of roles within an organization and determines the reporting relationships among staff, providing a framework for operations and influencing efficiency and effectiveness [6], [7]. According to Mintzberg [8] the structure significantly impacts performance by facilitating or hindering communication and decision-making. A well-defined structure clarifies school roles and responsibilities, ensuring smooth operations and educational outcomes.

Leadership is crucial in shaping an organization's direction and culture, especially at the executive level [9], [10]. Effective leadership involves influencing, motivating, and enabling others to contribute to the organization's success. Fullan [11] emphasizes the importance of transformational leadership in educational settings, as it fosters an environment of continuous improvement and

innovation. As educational leaders, principals are tasked with creating a positive school culture, setting clear goals, and realizing the school's vision and mission [12]–[14].

The role of school principals is multifaceted, encompassing administrative, managerial, and instructional leadership. As administrative leaders, they oversee the implementation of policies, manage resources, and ensure regulatory compliance, maintaining order and consistency within the school—a vital aspect of a bureaucratic organization [15]–[17]. In their managerial role, principals coordinate staff activities, manage budgets, and oversee facility maintenance, with efficient resource management being crucial for a conducive learning environment. Leithwood, Seashore Louis, Anderson, and Wahlstrom [18] suggest that resource allocation and utilization directly impact educational quality.

Instructionally, principals guide academic programs, are involved in curriculum development, supervise instruction, and facilitate teacher professional development. This aspect of their role is vital for improving teaching practices and student outcomes. Marzano, Waters, and McNulty [19] found a correlation between instructional solid leadership and higher student achievement.

Schools are often described as bureaucratic organizations due to their hierarchical structure, formal rules, and procedures. According to Weber's [20], these characteristics are intended to achieve efficiency, predictability, and control. This means established decision-making protocols, a formal hierarchy, and standardized procedures for academic and non-academic school activities. However, the bureaucratic nature can also lead to rigidity and resistance to change, which is challenging in the dynamic field of education. Tyack and Cuban [21] highlight the need for educational leaders to balance organizational stability with flexibility and responsiveness.

The poor quality of secondary school graduates has become a significant concern for stakeholders. This is evident in the poor academic performance of students [22], [23]. Many graduates lack the competence to engage in job-related tasks and lack skills for self-reliance. Although scholars have conducted studies on improving this poor academic performance, there is a general perception that the inadequate bureaucratic or administrative role performance of school principals may contribute to students' poor educational outcomes.

Several factors influence academic excellence and staff performance [24], [25]. Poor performance may be attributed to inadequate basic amenities such as electricity, suitable accommodation, school buses, science and laboratory equipment, libraries, and classrooms. Repairs not being conducted promptly due to bureaucratic procedures also pose a challenge. These material resources facilitate effective teaching and learning in schools [26], [27]. When provided by the principal, they must navigate bureaucratic bottlenecks, which can hinder their administrative functions.

The lack of and poor condition of these facilities tend to lower teachers' morale and reduce their level of commitment. Conversely, when facilities are in good condition, they positively influence teachers' attitudes toward their jobs. Nonetheless, it is also evident that poor academic performance can be linked to school principals' poor bureaucratic role performance. In some cases, principals tend to emphasize authority over involving staff in decision-making and task delegation, thus demonstrating a lack of democratic leadership style. Better opportunities for staff development and task delegation would improve the relationship between principals and staff.

School principals play a pivotal role in the effective functioning of educational institutions, particularly in executing bureaucratic duties such as staff personnel administration, school facility management, student personnel administration, instructional supervision, financial management, and acting as agents of change. Effectively executing these roles is critical for schools' overall success and improvement [28], [29].

Principals are responsible for hiring, training, and evaluating teachers and other staff members. Effective personnel administration can lead to higher staff morale and better student outcomes. Leithwood et al. [30] emphasize that leadership practices focused on staff development strongly correlate with student achievement. In addition, managing school facilities, which involves maintaining a safe and conducive learning environment, is another critical responsibility. Bossert et al. [31] highlight that well-maintained facilities contribute significantly to student learning and well-being. Challenges in this area often include budget constraints and aging infrastructure, especially in public senior secondary schools.

Managing student admissions, attendance, discipline, and overall welfare falls under student personnel administration. Hallinger and Heck [32] point out that effective student personnel administration requires principals to address student needs and foster a positive school climate proactively. Furthermore, principals are essential to instructional quality by supervising teaching practices and curriculum implementation. Marzano et al. [19] and Goldwyn [33] suggest that principals' instructional leadership is critical in improving classroom teaching and student learning outcomes.

Financial management is another crucial area, as principals manage school budgets, secure funding, and allocate resources effectively. Lashway [34] argues that

strong financial management skills are essential for principals to navigate the complexities of school funding and prioritize spending to enhance educational quality. Beyond these administrative roles, principals also act as agents of change, driving reforms and innovations within the school. Fullan [35] describes how effective principals lead change by building collaborative cultures and fostering a shared vision for school improvement.

Despite these crucial responsibilities, studies indicate that principals in public senior secondary schools often face significant challenges in fulfilling these roles effectively. Walker and Qian [36] discuss how bureaucratic constraints, limited resources, and resistance to change can impede principals' effective management of schools. Moreover, Oplatka [37] notes that the complexity of these roles requires principals to possess a diverse skill set, which can be challenging to acquire and maintain, particularly in resource-constrained environments.

This research is significant as it focuses on understanding why school principals cannot effectively perform their bureaucratic roles in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. Given that schools are bureaucratic organizations where the performance of the principal's role is influenced by various bodies such as the Ministry of Education, the school management board, the Parents Teachers Association (PTA), the board of governance, and the community in which the school is situated, it is essential to understand these dynamics. In the Nigerian school system, principals often face constraints as they represent the Ministry of Education, which assigns them already-recruited staff and ready-made policies to implement, often without adequate funding. This research is expected to provide deeper insights into the challenges faced by school principals in performing their bureaucratic roles and offer recommendations for improving school management in Nigeria, particularly in Rivers State.

2. Material and Methods

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a descriptive research design to systematically investigate the characteristics and attributes of principals within the educational framework of Rivers State. The population for this research comprised all 275 principals from the 275 public senior secondary schools distributed across the 23 Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Rivers State.

A descriptive research design is particularly effective in capturing a comprehensive snapshot of current affairs, facilitating an in-depth exploration of the principals' roles, challenges, and perspectives in public secondary education [38], [39]. The study aims to provide valuable

insights into the administrative and leadership practices that characterize this region's senior secondary school system by focusing on this population. This approach offers a clearer understanding of how these leaders navigate their responsibilities and the impact of their leadership on educational outcomes.

2.2 Respondents

The sample for this study included all 275 principals from the 296 public senior secondary schools in the 23 Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Rivers State, utilizing a comprehensive census sampling technique [40]. This method ensured that every principal was represented, offering an accurate depiction of the educational leadership landscape in the region.

Full representation of the population enables robust data analysis and enhances the generalizability of the findings [41]. It also provides a deeper understanding of the principals' collective experiences, challenges, and best practices, allowing for a richer examination of their roles in the educational system and identification of common issues school leaders face [42]

Including 100% of the principals strengthens the reliability of the study's outcomes by minimizing biases associated with sampling error, thus allowing for straightforward interpretations of their perspectives on educational and administrative concerns [43]. By capturing the voices of all principals, this research aims to yield insights relevant to Rivers State and applicable to broader discussions on academic leadership. Ultimately, the findings can inform policy decisions and enhance leadership practices within public education [44].

2.3 Instrument & Data Collection

The data collection instrument for this study was a self-structured questionnaire titled the "Bureaucratic Role of Principals' Leadership Performance Questionnaire (BRPLPQ)", consisting of 30 items. This instrument was designed to gather relevant data concerning principals' roles and leadership performance in public senior secondary schools.

The questionnaire was divided into two sections. Section A collected background information about the respondents, including demographic details and professional qualifications, essential for contextualizing the research findings [38]. Section B focused on generating information related to the various research questions and hypotheses outlined in the study. This section aimed to capture the principals' perceptions and experiences regarding their bureaucratic roles and leadership performance within the educational system [45]. The items in Section B addressed five primary issues identified as

critical areas of appraisal in this study. A modified 4-point Likert scale model facilitated clarity and consistency in responses. This scale allowed respondents to express the extent of their agreement or experience, with options ranging from Very High Extent (VHE) to Very Low Extent (VLE) [46].

This structured data collection approach enhanced the responses' reliability and enabled quantitative analysis of the gathered data [47]. Through the BRPLPQ, the study aimed to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the bureaucratic roles of principals and their impact on leadership performance, ultimately contributing to improving regional educational practices.

2.4 Data Analysis

The data collected from the respondents were systematically collated and analyzed to address the research objectives. Descriptive statistics, specifically mean and standard deviation, were employed to comprehensively understand the data trends in the five (5) research questions. Mean values offer insights into the central tendency of the responses, while standard deviations help assess the variability or dispersion of the data [48], [49]. This dual approach enables researchers to interpret the data effectively and draw meaningful conclusions about the sample population.

Furthermore, inferential statistics, particularly the t-test, were utilized to test five (5) null hypotheses at a significance level of 0.05. The t-test is a robust statistical tool that determines whether significant differences exist between the means of two groups, providing essential insights into the relationships within the data [50], [51]. By adhering to this significance level, the study aimed to evaluate the probability of observing the results under the null hypothesis, thereby ensuring the validity of the conclusions drawn from the analysis. This multi-faceted analytical approach reinforces the robustness of the findings and enhances the credibility and reliability of the research outcomes.

3. Results

3.1. Demographic of Respondents

3.1.1. Age Distribution

The age distribution of participants shows a diverse span, with the largest group aged 31-40, comprising 37.1% of the sample, indicating significant involvement of younger professionals. The 51-60 age group follows with 30.2%, reflecting a strong presence of experienced individuals. Those 60 and above account for 19.6%, suggesting

continued engagement beyond the traditional retirement age, while the 41-50 age group represents 13.10%.
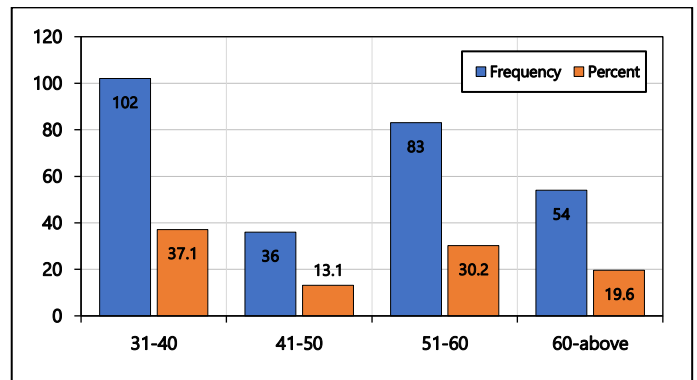

Figure 1. Distribution of Age

This broad age range brings various perspectives and experiences, enriching the study's findings. The implications suggest that educational leadership benefits from multiple age groups' diverse insights and experiences, potentially enhancing decision-making and strategic planning.

3.1.2. Geographical Location

The location-based data shows a significant majority of participants from rural areas, accounting for 81.8% (225 respondents) of the sample, compared to 18.2% (50 respondents) from urban areas. This disparity indicates a predominant rural representation that reflects the geographic distribution and specific contexts in which educational leadership operates.
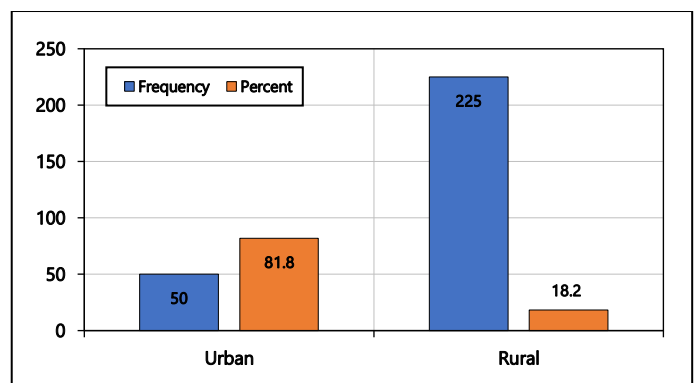

Figure 2. Geographical Location of Respondents

The rural dominance highlights the unique challenges and opportunities educational administrators encounter in these areas, potentially providing valuable insights into rural educational dynamics and enriching the study's findings. The implications suggest a need for tailored strategies to address the distinct needs of rural educational environments.

3.1.3. Gender

The distribution of positions by gender shows a balanced representation among principals, with females slightly leading at 53.1% (175 respondents) compared to males at 46.9% (100 respondents). This near-equal gender distribution highlights a progressive trend towards gender parity in educational leadership roles.
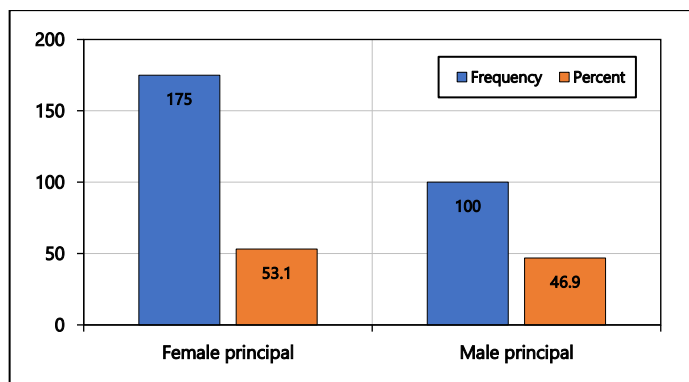

Figure 3. Gender of Respondents

The slight female majority suggests a shift towards more inclusive practices in educational administration, reflecting broader societal movements toward gender equality. The implications of this trend may include more diverse perspectives in decision-making and policy implementation, enhancing the effectiveness of educational leadership.

3.2. The Role of the Principal in Personnel Administration in Schools

Principals play a crucial role in student personnel administration, which is vital for the effective operation of public senior secondary schools. Their bureaucratic duties include policy formulation and implementation, ensuring regulatory compliance, fostering a conducive environment for growth, and efficient resource management. Understanding their engagement in these roles provides insights into school operations and identifies areas for improvement. This study explores how principals in Rivers State perform these duties, with input from both female and male principals.

Table 1. Extent Principals Perform Their Bureaucratic Role in Students' Personnel Administration in Public

No.	Statements	Females (175)		Males (100)		Mean	Remark
		Principals	SD	Principals	SD		
1	Principals organize procedures for the orientation of students.	2.90	0.92	2.73	0.98	2.81	High Extent
2	Principals make sure to provide guidance and counselling services for the students.	2.84	0.87	2.77	0.93	2.80	High Extent
3	Principals make sure that extracurricular programs are well organized.	2.77	0.93	2.90	0.92	2.83	High Extent
4	Principals institute policies and procedures concerning students' safety inside the school compound.	2.69	0.98	3.23	0.82	2.96	High Extent
5	Principals set up school attendance policies and procedures to help auditors know the number of students at a guess.	1.01	0.75	1.33	0.51	2.33	Low Extent
6	Principals institute policies and procedures for handling students' behavioral problems.	3.15	0.89	3.16	0.83	3.15	Very High Extent
	Grand Mean/Std Dev.	**2.87**	**0.91**	**2.95**	**0.89**	**2.91**	**High Extent**

Table 1 shows the involvement of principals in staff personnel administration in public schools, highlighting the differences between female and male principals. Regarding supporting teachers' professional development, female principals exhibit slightly higher levels of involvement than their male counterparts, with an overall mean of 2.63, indicating a high level of engagement in these practices. Additionally, the participation in the formulation of personnel policies is significant, with an overall mean of 2.56, underscoring the substantial contributions of principals in this area.

In the recruitment process of staff personnel, male principals show higher involvement than female principals; however, overall engagement remains high, with a mean of 2.72. Moreover, male principals are more active in creating a supportive environment for teacher growth, as indicated by an overall mean of 2.71. On the other hand, providing resources for instructional programs requires more attention, with a low overall mean of 2.02, suggesting inadequate engagement in this aspect.

Encouragement of teachers' professional development shows highly positive results, particularly among female principals, with an overall mean of 2.82, reflecting a very high level of encouragement. Principals play a crucial role in staff personnel administration, though there are areas needing improvement to enhance the effectiveness of school management. Focusing on the

provision of resources can significantly improve teaching effectiveness and student learning outcomes.

3.3. The Role of the Principal's Bureaucracy in Staff Administration in Schools

The effectiveness of school administration relies heavily on principals' execution of bureaucratic roles, particularly in staff personnel administration. In public senior secondary schools, principals oversee staff recruitment, development, and management, which is crucial for upholding educational standards and creating a positive learning environment. This research examines how effectively principals in Rivers State fulfill these bureaucratic duties, using insights from both female and male principals to understand their engagement and highlight areas for improving administrative practices.

Table 2. Extent Principals Perform Their Bureaucratic Role in Staff Personnel Administration in Public

No.	Statements	Females (175)		Males (100)		Mean	Remark
		Principals	SD	Principals	SD		
1	The principals engage teachers in practices that support professional development.	2.73	0.97	2.53	0.99	2.63	High Extent
2	The principals help in the formulation of staff personnel policies.	2.61	0.96	2.51	0.95	2.56	High Extent
3	Principals are involved in recruiting staff to educate students to meet the expectations of students, parents, and society.	2.60	0.98	2.84	0.94	2.72	High Extent
4	The principals create a supportive environment in which teachers can continue to grow.	2.53	0.97	2.90	0.94	2.71	High Extent
5	The principals make provision of resources for instruction programs.	2.11	0.85	2.45	0.55	2.02	Low Extent
6	The principals encourage teachers' professional development.	2.90	0.92	2.75	1.05	2.82	Very High Extent
	Grand Mean/Std Dev.	**2.57**	**0.96**	**2.70**	**0.97**	**2.60**	**High Extent**

Table 2 shows the extent to which principals perform their bureaucratic roles in staff personnel administration in public schools based on responses from female and male principals. Regarding involvement in practices supporting teachers' professional development, female principals show slightly higher engagement (mean of 2.73) than male principals (mean of 2.53), with an overall mean of 2.63, indicating a high level of involvement. Similarly, principals play a significant role in formulating personnel policies, with an overall mean of 2.56, highlighting their substantial contributions.

In the recruitment process, male principals exhibit higher involvement (mean of 2.84) than female principals (mean of 2.60); nevertheless, overall engagement remains high with a mean of 2.72. Additionally, male principals are more active in creating a supportive environment for teacher growth, as reflected by an overall mean of 2.71. However, providing resources for instructional programs is notably weak, with an overall mean of 2.02, indicating low involvement.

Encouragement of teachers' professional development yields highly positive results, particularly among female principals, with an overall mean of 2.82, reflecting a very high level of encouragement. Principals play a crucial role in staff personnel administration, though there are areas needing improvement to enhance the effectiveness of school management. Emphasizing the provision of resources for instructional programs can significantly improve teaching effectiveness and student learning outcomes.

3.4. The Impact of Bureaucratic Principles on Principal Leadership

Bureaucratic principles, including division of labor, rules adherence, hierarchy, and impersonal orientation, significantly influence principals' leadership in public senior secondary schools. This research examines how these principles affect principals' leadership roles in Rivers State, highlighting positive and negative impacts on school management.

Table 3 shows the extent to which bureaucratic principles influence the leadership role performance of principals in public schools based on responses from female and male principals. The table reveals that the division of labor is highly regarded for enhancing principals' efforts to initiate change and innovation, with an overall mean of 2.60. Female principals exhibit higher involvement (mean of 2.80) than male principals (mean of 2.41), but both groups agree on the importance of this principle for achieving high efficiency.

Table 3. Extent Bureaucratic Principles Influence Principals' Leadership Role Performance in Public

No.	Statements	Females (175)		Males (100)		Mean	Remark
		Principals	SD	Principals	SD		
1	Division of labor enhances Principals' efforts to initiate change and innovation; division of labor leads to high proficiency.	2.80	0.95	2.41	1.02	2.60	High Extent
2	Due to Ministry of Education laws governing school operations, adapting to procedural changes is difficult.	2.66	0.94	2.65	0.93	2.65	High Extent
3	Due to Ministry of Education laws directing school operations, adapting to procedural changes is challenging.	2.75	1.05	2.75	1.05	2.75	High Extent
4	Impersonal orientation causes principals to overlook individual differences, straining staff relations and stifling innovation.	2.33	1.08	2.67	1.09	2.61	High Extent
5	Promotion based on seniority and achievement can discourage principals from maximizing effort due to career orientation.	2.85	0.96	2.54	0.94	2.69	High Extent
6	Principals must keep records as required, serving as key information sources for the school and community.	2.70	0.96	2.69	0.94	2.69	High Extent
	Grand Mean/Std Dev.	**2.75**	**0.97**	**2.60**	**0.98**	**2.68**	**High Extent**

Rules and regulations that respond to changes are considered challenging yet crucial, with a mean of 2.65, indicating that principals need to follow laws established by the Ministry of Education to guide the activities and operations of the school system. The existing authority hierarchy ensures that principals receive and implement policies from the Ministry of Education without acting independently, even in emergencies, reflected by a high influence mean of 2.75.

However, the impersonal orientation of bureaucratic principles leads principals to overlook differences in the interests, abilities, and needs of students and staff, resulting in a lack of good relationships and stifling new ideas. This issue is particularly noted by male principals (mean of 2.67) compared to female principals (mean of 2.33), with an overall mean of 2.61. Additionally, promotion based on seniority and achievement does not always motivate principals to perform their best, as indicated by a mean of 2.69. Principals are also required by the Ministry of Education and school boards to maintain statutory and non-statutory records, with a mean of 2.69, showing that this is an essential aspect of their leadership role. The influence of bureaucratic principles on the leadership role performance of principals in public schools is high, with an overall mean of 2.68.

4. Discussions

4.1. Principal Leadership Performance and Bureaucratic Role in Student Personnel Administration

The results of the hypothesis testing indicated a significant difference in the mean scores of male and female principals regarding the extent to which they perform their bureaucratic roles in student personnel administration in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. This finding aligns with the assertion made by Iroegbu & Etudor-Eyo [52], which emphasizes that one of the fundamental tasks of a school principal is to ensure the holistic development and well-being of the students entrusted to their care. As the school's leader, the principal plays a crucial role in managing student admissions by ensuring that all requirements and procedures for a successful orientation exercise are available to newly admitted students. They are actively classifying and grouping students for instructional purposes, enforcing timely attendance policies, and maintaining accurate student attendance and performance records. Additionally, principals ensure the availability of boarding facilities for students and provide recreational amenities such as football fields, swimming pools, and similar facilities, creating a conducive environment for academic and extracurricular activities. Through these efforts, principals have their bureaucratic responsibilities and contend.

Schools are organized to achieve the Nigerian education system's goals, as detailed in the National Policy on Education. This structured system facilitates seamless teaching and learning under the supervision of principals and teachers, enabling goal achievement. Each member within the school has defined roles and responsibilities, fostering cooperation towards objectives. Operating hierarchically, the principal leads, followed by department heads, teachers, and students. Adherence to rules ensures smooth operations. Principals play a crucial role in providing psychological services, social work, and confidential guidance and counseling to meet students' personal needs.

According to Rosen [53], the functions of pupil personnel administration include providing guidance and services, instituting policies and procedures, maintaining

accurate records of students, ensuring their safety while in school, organizing extracurricular programs, and reporting to superiors. Furthermore, the principal is responsible for providing healthcare services, basic amenities, instructional supervision, and ensuring effective communication flows from top to bottom. The principal also ensures that students are well-informed about relevant information or instructions from the Ministry of Education and other organizations that may benefit them and acts as the spokesperson for students when necessary.

Blase et al. [54] emphasize the pivotal role of school principals in student administration, including managing financial transactions, public relations, and program evaluation. They are crucial in instructional and curriculum development and managing student and staff personnel. These responsibilities are essential for achieving educational goals and fostering student development. Blase et al. argue that students are the most critical component of educational resources, transforming through acquired knowledge, skills, and positive attitudes vital for national development. Effective student personnel administration involves daily planning, organizing, directing, controlling, and coordinating activities to enhance student welfare.

Supporting this view, Leithwood et al. [55] assert that school leadership significantly influences student learning, second only to classroom instruction. Fullan [56] further emphasizes that principals must create an environment supportive of effective teaching and learning, highlighting the importance of staff collective efficacy for student success. School leaders must be adept at addressing the multifaceted needs of students to ensure their holistic development and success.

The role of the principal in student personnel administration at schools encompasses various activities such as decision-making, forecasting, planning, and organizing students, as well as other resources such as workforce, capital equipment, and financial resources required in the secondary school system [57]–[59]. The principal ensures that student inventories are conducted, covering areas such as registration, provision of social workers, and guidance services to meet students' academic and social welfare needs. Additionally, the principal ensures that intelligent decisions are made regarding producing high-quality students and managing, guiding, and maintaining them to achieve preplanned goals.

4.2. Principals Leadership Performance and Bureaucratic Role in Staff Personnel Administration

The findings from hypothesis two reveal a significant difference in how male and female principals perform their bureaucratic roles in staff personnel administration in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. When teachers perceive their principals as supportive, honest, and knowledgeable, essential elements of credibility, they feel less isolated and more included in the school community. This perception fosters a participatory environment and enhances their effectiveness. Principals bear significant responsibility in schools, especially in promoting collaboration and teamwork to achieve school objectives.

Although principals typically do not participate directly in recruiting school staff, they play a crucial role in reporting their experiences and interactions with staff to the appropriate authorities, such as the school board or the Ministry of Education. Principals must also notify these bodies when there is a staffing shortage. Despite the expectation that principals execute their roles effectively, their actions are often constrained by existing laws, procedures, rules, and regulations. These constraints can limit their autonomy, even in situations requiring immediate attention. To succeed in their roles, principals must work cooperatively with their staff to effectively execute their responsibilities in secondary schools across Rivers State, Nigeria.

The significance of staff personnel in school administration cannot be overstated. They are instrumental in the success and growth of any educational institution. Human resources are vital, serving as the driving force behind other resources in an organization. Without them, other resources become meaningless. Staff members bring diverse ways of thinking, reasoning, and behaving, shaped by their backgrounds, values, and aspirations. The ability of a principal to harness these different perspectives and energies is crucial in driving positive outcomes. Practical communication skills and an inclusive approach to decision-making are essential for achieving high productivity. The value of staff personnel is unmatched, as their contributions through knowledge, ideas, energy, and cooperation are instrumental in accomplishing organizational goals. Therefore, principals should focus on protecting, developing, motivating, and utilizing staff to enhance the organization and achieve its objectives.

As chief executives, principals are responsible for their personnel's welfare, professional development, and morale. Education leaders inspire the entire school system by effectively influencing the behavior, thoughts, and feelings of those working within it. They ensure alignment with their vision by strategically aligning all system elements through words and actions [60], [61]. productivity of an educational institution depends not only on research, teaching, and learning but also on the quality of life of every individual working within the organization.

Both academic and non-academic staff contribute to and support student learning. Consequently, principals are responsible for investing in developing both categories of staff and striving to maximize the potential of everyone involved in the educational environment [62].

4.3. Bureaucratic Principles and Principals' Leadership Role Performance

Hypothesis five revealed a significant difference in the mean scores of male and female principals regarding the impact of bureaucratic principles on their leadership performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. Schools must be deeply acquainted with the local community's values, expectations, needs, and aspirations to develop effective school-community relationships. Schools and their personnel are integral to the community, so harmony between them is crucial for achieving educational goals. Schools cannot exist separately from their communities, just as communities rely on schools to nurture and transmit culture and ethical values to students. According to Gradstein et al. [63] communities are more inclined to invest in schools when they understand the potential long-term and short-term benefits.

Principals play a central role in fostering a positive relationship between the school and the community. They must work harmoniously with community members to achieve school objectives. Principals should engage with the community, seek their opinions on decision-making, and encourage participation in school matters. Welcoming the contributions of parents and community leaders can significantly benefit the school's progress. A cordial and cooperative relationship allows principals to effectively address complaints from parents and collaborate on plans that enhance the community.

When school-community relations are strained, it may lead to hostility, resulting in issues like theft or vandalism. Thus, principals must prioritize maintaining good public relations with parents, the local community, officials, and other visitors. Promoting school-community relations can also involve the school's participation in community projects and vice versa. Organized visits to local places of interest facilitated by community resource persons can help achieve these goals. Regular interactions with other schools, industries, firms, and educational agencies can also open avenues for support where needed. Principals should provide necessary information about their school to all interested parties and visitors.

To sustain a healthy relationship between the school and the community. Trilk et al. [64] suggested that schools should be utilized as activity centers for youths and adults, while communities should serve as active centers for school activities. Communities can enlist resource persons to assist schools in program development. Fiore [65] identified official communication channels that enhance school-community relationships, such as conferences, Parent-Teacher Associations, and mass media. These avenues enable effective communication between schools and their communities.

5. Conclusion

From the comprehensive findings of this study, it is evident that principals and staff in public secondary schools in Rivers State must continuously enhance their knowledge and skills through conferences and professional development programs. These opportunities are vital for developing their bureaucratic and administrative competencies, which are crucial for effective student administration. Management should also implement regular due diligence procedures, such as staff audits, to maintain effective staff control and accountability. This ensures that school staff remains competent, motivated, and aligned with the school's goals.

Furthermore, principals and staff should adopt a systematic approach to ensure adequate instructional supervision, as meticulous oversight is vital to maintaining high educational standards. Continuous training in school finance management is essential for sustainable operations, ensuring leaders are well-equipped to manage resources efficiently. Incorporating bureaucratic principles into administration practices can enhance staff performance by providing clear structures and procedures and promoting fairness, accountability, and effectiveness. In conclusion, the study highlights the importance of ongoing professional development, regular staff audits, rigorous instructional supervision, and practical financial management in achieving high educational standards in Rivers State's public secondary schools. These practices foster an environment of excellence, accountability, and continuous improvement, ultimately leading to better student academic outcomes.

Acknowledgments

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