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APPLICATION OF MANAGEMENT BY OBJECTIVES (MBO) PRACTICES AND EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN RIVERS STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the application of Management by Objectives (MBO) practices as a determinant of educational leadership performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. The research adopted a descriptive survey design, deemed appropriate for exploring and describing the current practices and perceptions of MBO among school principals. The population comprised 302 principals from all public senior secondary schools in the state, and a census sampling technique was employed, ensuring full participation. Data were collected using a self-developed questionnaire, Application of Management by Objectives for Effective Educational Leadership Performance Questionnaire (AMBOEELPQ), validated by experts and tested for reliability, yielding a Cronbach alpha of .851 and .879, indicating high reliability. The questionnaire captured demographic data and responses to 10 items aligned with the research questions, rated on a four-point Likert scale. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (Independent t-test) at the 0.05 significance level with SPSS Version 28. Findings revealed that principals' application of MBO practices, including collaborative goal-setting, performance monitoring, and participative decision-making, had a significant impact on educational leadership performance. The study concluded that systematic implementation of MBO practices could strengthen leadership effectiveness and overall school performance. It was recommended that school authorities and policymakers encourage the adoption of MBO principles in public senior secondary schools to improve administrative efficiency, teacher productivity and student performance in Rivers State.

Keywords: Application, Management by Objectives, Practices, Educational Leadership Performance, Public, Senior Secondary Schools, Rivers State, Nigeria.

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INTRODUCTION

The effective performance of educational leaders in public senior secondary schools is important towards achieving quality educational outcomes, particularly in Rivers State, Nigeria, where institutional leadership challenges often hinder school development. Educational leadership performance is the capacity of school leaders to coordinate human and material resources, implement policy, and ensure that institutional goals are realized effectively and sustainably (Ololube, 2017). Within this framework, contemporary management approaches such as Management by Objectives (MBO) have been highlighted as key tools for enhancing leadership effectiveness and administrative performance in educational settings (Jaiyeoba & Salami, 2021). MBO was originally conceptualized by Peter Drucker. It is a participatory management technique in which organizational goals are collaboratively set, communicated and pursued by both leaders and subordinates to align individual effort with institutional objectives (Ololube, 2024).

MBO emphasizes clear objective setting, joint planning between managers and staff decentralization in decision-making processes, and better regular performance evaluation. Educationally, it means involving teachers, administrators and stakeholders in defining goals for student achievement, staff development and community engagement, which promotes shared ownership of school objectives. The essence of MBO is that when employees are actively involved in goal formulation and execution, they are more committed to achieving those goals, thereby enhancing organizational effectiveness (Ololube, 2024). In school environments, this translates into systematic planning and review processes that make leadership more accountable, transparent and performance-oriented (Ololube, 2018).

Empirical studies within Nigeria show that MBO practices have significant implications for school leadership. For example, research conducted in public secondary schools in Ibadan North Local Government Area found that elements of MBO such as participative management, delegation of authority and review of objectives had a significant impact on administrative effectiveness (Jaiyeoba & Salami, 2021). These findings suggested that the adoption of MBO principles improves how school leaders plan, monitor and evaluate activities within the framework of school effectiveness, which has the potentials of stronger leadership performance. Similarly, studies on MBO application among principals in Ebonyi and Anambra States reveal that principals use MBO practices in school administration and personnel management, which in turn supports effective goal achievement though variations exist due to contextual factors such as urban-rural differences and resource availability (Okoye & Akudo, 2021).

In the specific terms, public senior secondary schools are confronted with complex leadership challenges like limited resources, policy ambiguities and accountability pressures. These challenges stress the need for management practices that strengthen leadership performance and responsiveness to internal and external demands (Ololube, 2017). The application of MBO serves as an effective performance management strategy by aligning leadership activities with clear, measurable objectives tailored to the unique environment of Rivers State schools, and promoting collaborative goal setting and systematic performance measurement helps to build school effectiveness. MBO practices help school leaders create culture of continuous improvement in instructional and administrative functions.

Furthermore, the integration of MBO into educational leadership aligns with broader performance management frameworks that stress the importance of strategic planning, stakeholder participation and review mechanisms in enhancing educational effectiveness

(Ololube et al., 2017). Studies in other sectors demonstrate that management approaches emphasizing goal alignment and performance monitoring contribute to higher staff motivation and improved institutional performance (Shrestha, 2022). As a result, according to Ololube (2017), applying MBO practices in senior secondary schools could lead to more effective leadership performance, improved teacher productivity and better student performances.

Statement of the Problem

Effective leadership in public senior secondary schools is critical for achieving educational goals, enhancing student performance, and ensuring institutional development. However, many schools in Rivers State face persistent challenges related to poor administrative planning, weak monitoring of staff performance, and lack of accountability in decision-making processes. Despite the theoretical benefits of management by objectives (MBO) in the promotion of collaborative goal-setting, innovative ideas, clear performance targets, and systematic evaluation, its adoption among school principals appears inconsistent and underexplored. Consequently, most schools struggle with misaligned objectives, low staff motivation and ineffective implementation of educational policies.

These problems are compounded by the absence of empirical evidence on how MBO practices influence educational leadership performance in Rivers State. Without a clear understanding of the relationship between MBO application and leadership effectiveness, school leaders continue to rely on traditional management methods that are often inadequate in addressing contemporary educational challenges. Therefore, investigating the application of MBO practices as a determinant of educational leadership performance is essential in understanding and for improving school administration, teacher productivity and student learning achievements.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

This study examined the application of management by objectives (MBO) practices and educational leadership performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. Specifically, the objectives were to:

- Examine the extent MBO goal setting improve effective educational leadership performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State
- Determine the extent MBO innovation ideas improve educational leadership performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide this study:

- To what extent does MBO goal setting improve educational leadership performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State
- To what extent does MBO innovation ideas improve educational leadership performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and statistically tested at a .05 level of significance:

- There is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female principals on their application of MBO goal setting improve educational leadership performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State
- There is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female principals on their application of MBO innovation ideas improve educational leadership performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Edwin Locke's Goal-Setting Theory (1960)

Goal-setting theory, developed by Edwin A. Locke and Gary P. Latham in the late 1960s and early 1970s, has become one of the most influential theories in organisational psychology and management (Locke & Latham, 2002; Vancouver et al., 2022). This theory posits that setting specific and challenging goals leads to higher levels of performance and motivation compared to vague or easy goals. The origins of goal-setting theory can be traced back to the work of psychologist Kurt Lewin in the 1930s. Lewin's field theory suggested that behaviour is a function of both internal and external forces. This laid the groundwork for Locke's later work on goal-setting. In the 1950s, researchers such as David McClelland and Victor Vroom began to explore the role of goals in influencing individual behaviour and performance. However, it was Locke's research in the 1960s that firmly established goal-setting theory as a distinct area of research (Locke & Latham, 2002).

In the 1960s, Locke conducted a series of experiments that demonstrated the power of goal-setting. In one experiment, he found that students who were given specific, difficult goals achieved higher grades than students who were given vague or easy goals (Locke & Latham, 2002; Locke & Latham, 2019). This and other experiments led to the development of three core principles of goal-setting theory: clarity, challenge, and commitment. These principles suggest that goals should be clear, specific, and measurable. They should also be challenging, but not impossible to achieve. Finally, individuals should be committed to the goal and believe that they can achieve it. These three principles form the basis of the goal-setting. These three principles form the basis of the goal-setting process, which has been shown to influence individual motivation, effort, and performance. This process is effective in a wide range of settings, including education, business, and sports.

Locke's goal-setting theory emphasises the principle of specificity, which underscores the importance of setting clear and well-defined goals. Specific goals provide individuals with a clear target to aim for, outlining precisely what needs to be achieved and how success will be measured. For example, rather than setting a vague goal such as improving performance a specific goal might be to increase sales by 20% by the end of the quarter (Locke & Latham, 2006). This clarity helps individuals focus their efforts, allocate resources effectively, and monitor their progress towards goal attainment. Another key principle of Locke's theory is the concept of challenge. According to this principle, goals should be challenging yet attainable. Challenging goals push individuals to stretch their abilities and strive for excellence, motivating

them to exert effort and pursue ambitious targets. However, goals that are too difficult can lead to frustration and demotivation, while goals that are too easy may fail to inspire individuals to reach their full potential. Finding the right balance between challenge and achievability is crucial for maximising motivation and performance.

Feedback is another essential principle of Locke's goal-setting theory (Locke, 2019). Feedback provides individuals with information about their progress towards their goals, helping them understand how well they are performing and what adjustments may be needed. Timely and specific feedback enables individuals to identify areas for improvement, refine their strategies, and stay on track towards goal attainment. Whether feedback comes from supervisors, peers, or self-assessment mechanisms, it plays a vital role in guiding individuals' efforts and fostering continuous improvement. Commitment is also a central principle of Locke's theory. When individuals are actively involved in setting their own goals, they are more likely to be committed to their attainment. Involving individuals in the goal-setting process gives them a sense of ownership and autonomy, increasing their motivation to achieve the desired outcomes. This commitment translates into greater effort, persistence, and resilience in the face of challenges, driving performance and goal attainment.

Clarity is a foundational principle of Locke's theory, emphasizing the importance of clear and transparent communication of goals (Locke, 2019). Clear goals ensure that all stakeholders understand what is expected of them and how their efforts contribute to broader objectives. Ambiguity or confusion regarding goals can lead to misunderstandings, frustration, and disengagement, undermining motivation and performance. Through the provision of clear direction and expectations, organizations can align efforts, mobilize resources, and drive progress towards shared goals. Overall, these principles of specificity, challenge, feedback, commitment, and clarity form the backbone of Locke's goal-setting theory. Adhering to these principles, individuals and organizations can harness the power of goal-setting to motivate behaviour, enhance performance, and achieve desired outcomes. Whether applied in educational settings, business environments, or personal development contexts, Locke's goal-setting theory offers valuable insights into how goals can be effectively set, managed, and pursued to maximize success.

Furthermore, Locke's goal-setting theory operates through several underlying mechanisms that elucidate how goal-setting affects motivation and performance (Latham & Locke, 2007). These mechanisms provide insights into the psychological processes that mediate the relationship between goals and behaviour. Some key other mechanisms include; firstly, goals offer individuals a clear sense of direction and purpose, guiding their actions and focus towards specific outcomes. When individuals have well-defined goals, they are better equipped to direct their attention and efforts effectively. This clarity of purpose minimizes distractions and enables individuals to prioritize tasks that contribute directly to goal attainment. Secondly, challenging goals serve as potent sources of energy, igniting individuals' motivation and drive. Pursuing ambitious goals activates psychological processes that heighten arousal and enthusiasm, propelling individuals to invest greater effort and commitment. This heightened energy level fuels sustained motivation, enabling individuals to persist in their endeavours despite obstacles or setbacks.

Thirdly, goals foster persistence by instilling a sense of determination and resilience. When individuals encounter difficulties or setbacks along the path to goal achievement, their commitment to the goal acts as a powerful motivator to persevere. Rather than succumbing to discouragement, individuals are spurred to adapt their strategies and overcome challenges in

pursuit of their objectives (Latham & Locke, 2015). Additionally, goals influence individuals' task strategies and behaviours, shaping their approach to goal attainment. Individuals may employ various strategies, such as prioritizing tasks, allocating resources efficiently, and problem-solving creatively, to align their actions with goal-related demands. This strategic alignment enhances the efficacy and efficiency of individuals' efforts, facilitating progress towards goal attainment. In other words, Locke's goal-setting theory operates through these underlying mechanisms, which collectively elucidate how goals impact motivation, behaviour, and performance. Understanding these mechanisms, individuals and organizations will be able to leverage goal-setting effectively to drive achievement and success in diverse contexts.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Management by Objectives (MBO)

Management by Objectives (MBO) is a management approach that originated in the business world but has been increasingly applied in the field of education to improve leadership effectiveness, enhance organizational performance, and drive continuous improvement. In the context of education, MBO entails setting clear and measurable objectives, aligning them with the broader goals and mission of educational institutions, and empowering stakeholders to work collaboratively towards their achievement. This section explores various definitions of MBO from Nigerian and other scholars in the field of education.

Adeyemi (2022) defined MBO in education as a systematic and participative approach to educational management that involves setting specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) objectives for educational institutions, departments, and individuals, aligning them with the school's vision, mission, and strategic priorities, and fostering a culture of accountability, transparency, and continuous improvement among all stakeholders. Adeyemi added that the MBO approach in education also emphasized the importance of clear communication, effective collaboration, and continuous learning. It also involves using data-driven decision-making to improve teaching and learning outcomes. Additionally, the MBO approach is flexible and adaptable, allowing for adjustments and changes to be made based on feedback and progress. In short, MBO is a dynamic and holistic approach to educational management that focuses on results and continuous improvement.

Ukwueze (2020) saw MBO in education as a collaborative process of goal-setting, performance measurement, and feedback, wherein educational leaders work with teachers, students, parents, and other stakeholders to define clear objectives, monitor progress towards their achievement, and adjust strategies as needed to ensure continuous improvement in teaching and learning outcomes. He further added that MBO in education also requires establishing a clear set of values and standards to guide the goal-setting process, as well as implementing appropriate rewards and incentives to motivate and encourage teachers, students, and other stakeholders. Additionally, MBO requires the use of data and evidence-based decision-making to ensure that goals are aligned with the school's vision and mission.

Ogunmodede (2021) described MBO as an approach to educational leadership that emphasizes the importance of setting specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound goals for educational institutions, departments, and individuals, cascading them down from the school level to the classroom level, and providing support, resources, and feedback to facilitate their attainment. Ogunmodede (2021) also noted that MBO requires the use of appropriate

organizational structures and systems to support goal-setting, monitoring, and feedback. In addition, he suggested that the MBO approach must be tailored to the unique needs of each educational institution, department, and individual. He further emphasized that the success of MBO in education relies on the commitment and dedication of all stakeholders, including educational leaders, teachers, students, and parents.

Drucker in Lepak (2022) often regarded as the father of MBO, defined it as a process whereby objectives are agreed upon between managers and employees, cascaded down through the organization, and used as a basis for planning, organizing, directing, and controlling organizational activities to ensure alignment with overall goals and objectives. He emphasised that this approach should be implemented systematically and consistently, with regular review and feedback to ensure that goals are being met and that progress is being made. He also stressed the importance of providing employees with the necessary resources and support to achieve their objectives.

Kotter in Niehoff and Borman (2010), opined that MBO is a management system that involves setting specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound objectives, communicating them clearly to all employees, and providing regular feedback and performance evaluations to ensure that individuals and teams are aligned with organizational priorities and are contributing effectively towards their achievement. They also stressed the importance of setting objectives at the right level of specificity, ensuring that they are aligned with the overall goals of the organization. He also emphasized the need for open and honest communication to ensure that all stakeholders are aware of the objectives and understand their role in achieving them. Lastly, he noted the importance of creating a positive and supportive work environment to foster motivation and engagement among employees.

Robbins (2001) defined MBO as a comprehensive management approach that involves setting clear objectives, breaking them down into specific tasks and activities, allocating resources accordingly, monitoring progress towards their achievement, and rewarding performance based on results. He also elaborated on the benefits of MBO, which include increased efficiency, improved communication, and better utilization of resources. He noted that the success of MBO is often dependent on the active involvement and commitment of all stakeholders, including employees, managers, and the organization as a whole. Furthermore, he emphasized the need for flexibility and adaptation in the implementation of MBO to ensure its effectiveness. According to the Educational Management Association of Nigeria (EDUMAN) (2022), MBO is defined as a strategic management approach that emphasizes the establishment of clear, specific, and measurable objectives for educational institutions, departments, and individuals, aligning them with the broader goals and priorities of the education system, and empowering stakeholders to take ownership of their roles and responsibilities in achieving these objectives.

According to Educational Management Association of Nigeria [EDUMAN] (2022), one of the key benefits of MBO is its ability to foster a culture of continuous improvement in educational settings. By setting clear objectives and providing regular feedback and evaluation, MBO creates a sense of accountability and encourages individuals and teams to strive for excellence in their work. Additionally, the focus on measurable goals allows for the tracking of progress and the identification of areas that need improvement. Afolabi (2022) defined MBO in education as a dynamic and participatory process of goal-setting, performance measurement, and feedback, wherein educational leaders collaborate with teachers, students, parents, and other stakeholders to define clear objectives, track progress towards their attainment, and make

informed decisions to enhance teaching and learning outcomes. Afolabi (2022) further saw Management by Objectives (MBO) in education as a dynamic and collaborative process aimed at fostering goal-oriented practices within educational institutions. Within this framework, MBO is characterized by its adaptive nature, acknowledging the ever-changing landscape of education and the need for flexible approaches to management. By emphasizing the participatory aspect of MBO, Afolabi (2022) noted that the importance of involving various stakeholders, including educational leaders, teachers, students, parents, and the broader school community, in the goal-setting process.

Central to MBO is the establishment of clear and specific objectives aligned with the overarching mission, vision, and strategic priorities of the educational institution. These objectives serve as guiding principles, providing a roadmap for action and decision-making. Moreover, Afolabi (2022) added that the significance of performance measurement within the MBO process. Through systematic data collection and analysis, stakeholders can assess progress towards goal attainment, identify areas of success, and pinpoint areas requiring improvement. Feedback plays a pivotal role in the MBO framework, serving as a mechanism for communication and learning. Afolabi (2022) emphasized the importance of providing timely and constructive feedback to stakeholders, enabling them to reflect on their performance, address challenges, and make informed decisions to enhance teaching and learning outcomes. Collaboration emerges as a fundamental component of MBO, fostering a culture of shared responsibility and collective ownership among stakeholders. Educational leaders and stakeholders can leverage their collective expertise and resources to drive positive change and innovation within the educational institution by working together towards common goals. In essence, Afolabi (2022) added that the holistic and integrated nature of MBO in education, emphasizing its adaptability, participatory approach, and goal-oriented practices. Educational institutions can cultivate a culture of accountability, transparency and continuous improvement by embracing these principles, and ultimately enhancing teaching and learning outcomes for all stakeholders involved.

Okonjo-Iweala (2023) described MBO as a results-oriented management approach that emphasizes the importance of setting ambitious yet realistic goals for educational institutions, measuring progress towards their attainment, and holding stakeholders accountable for achieving desired outcomes, thereby driving excellence and accountability in the education sector. Okonjo-Iweala (2023), depiction of Management by Objectives (MBO) in education highlights its results-oriented approach, which prioritizes the achievement of specific and measurable outcomes within educational institutions. This framework revolves around several key principles; firstly, MBO is portrayed as a management philosophy that places a strong emphasis on outcomes rather than mere activities or processes. By focusing on results, educational leaders and stakeholders can direct their efforts and resources towards achieving meaningful and impactful goals that contribute to the overall success of the institution.

Secondly, MBO involves setting goals that are both ambitious and realistic. These goals are designed to inspire stakeholders to strive for excellence while remaining rooted in the context and capabilities of the educational institution. Ambitious goals challenge individuals and teams to push their boundaries and innovate, while realistic goals ensure that objectives are attainable and feasible within the given constraints. Thirdly, a crucial aspect of MBO is the systematic measurement of progress towards goal attainment. This involves monitoring and evaluating performance indicators and milestones to assess how effectively objectives are being pursued. Quantifying progress, educational leaders can identify areas of success and areas in need of

improvement, allowing for timely adjustments and interventions to stay on track towards goal achievement.

Furthermore, Okonjo-Iweala (2023) added that the essence of accountability in the MBO framework. Stakeholders are held responsible for their contributions towards goal attainment, and clear expectations and consequences are established to ensure accountability. This accountability mechanism fosters a culture of ownership and responsibility among stakeholders, motivating them to actively engage in efforts to achieve desired outcomes. Overall, Okonjo-Iweala's description of MBO in education emphasizes its role in driving excellence and accountability within educational institutions by setting ambitious yet realistic goals, measuring progress towards their attainment, and holding stakeholders accountable for their contributions to achieving desired outcomes.

METHODS

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. This design was considered appropriate because it enabled the researcher to describe and understand current practices and perceptions of Management by Objectives (MBO) in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The population comprised 302 principals from all the public senior secondary schools in the state. Given the manageable size of the population, a census sampling technique was adopted, allowing all 302 principals to participate. This approach ensured comprehensive coverage, minimized bias, and provided a holistic understanding of MBO practices and perceptions across the state.

Prior to data collection, necessary permissions were obtained from relevant authorities. The instrument used was a self-developed questionnaire, titled Application of Management by Objectives for Effective Educational Leadership Performance Questionnaire (AMBOEELPQ). The questionnaire consisted of two sections: section 'A' collected demographic data such as age and gender, while section 'B' contained 10 items divided into 2 sections corresponding to the research questions, rated on a four-point Likert scale (Very High Extent = 4, High Extent = 3, Low Extent = 2, Very Low Extent = 1).

The instrument was validated by three experts of the Department of Educational Management, Faculty of Education, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. Their feedback was incorporated into the final draft to enhance its relevance. The reliability of the instrument was established using the test-retest method with 30 respondents outside the sample. Correlation of the results using Cronbach's alpha yielded reliability coefficients of .851 and .879, indicating high reliability.

Data collection was conducted by the researcher and three trained assistants. Out of the 302 questionnaires distributed, 294(97.4%) were returned, with 291 (96.4%) correctly filled and used for analysis (185 male and 106 female principals). Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (Independent t-test) set at .05 level of significance, with the aid of SPSS Version 28.

RESULTS

Answers to Research Questions

Research Questions One: To what extent does MBO goal setting improve educational leadership performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Mean score and standard deviation of goal setting for effective Educational Leadership Performance

	Items	Male Principal (185)		Female Principal (106)		$\frac{X_1+X_2}{2}$	Decision
		X ₁	SD1	X ₂	SD2		
1	In your role as a teacher, do you feel that the goals for educational leadership performance are clear and measurable?	3.3459	.77270	1.9245	.68589	2.6352	High Extent
2	In your experience, does the school regularly monitor and review progress towards goals for educational leadership performance?	3.4649	.61689	1.9245	1.00189	2.6947	High Extent
3	Do you feel that the school is flexible in adjusting goals for educational leadership performance as circumstances change?	3.3243	.65334	1.7453	.88438	2.5348	High Extent
4	Do you feel that the school effectively communicates goals for educational leadership performance to all stakeholders?	3.3135	.63338	1.9623	.93528	2.6379	High Extent
5	In your role as a teacher, do you feel that the goals for educational leadership performance are clear and measurable?	3.4757	.59955	1.8113	.66351	2.6435	High Extent
Grand mean						2.63	High Extent

Table 1 representw the accumulated sum from the respondents indicating the mean score and standard deviation from the first research question which states “To what extent is Management by Objectives [MBO] applied in terms of goal setting for effective educational leadership performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. Rivers State?” The result from the table illustrates that there is a high level of affirmation (where $x > 2.50$) as regards to the extent MBO applied in terms of goal setting enhances Effective Educational Leadership Performance in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State. The results from the Mean set affirm was also supported by the low disparity in response ($SD < 2.00$). The analysis also revealed a grand mean of 2.63. The implication of these responses is that the respondents agreed to a high extent that MBO applied in terms of goal setting for effective educational leadership performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Research Questions Two: To what extent does MBO innovation ideas improve educational leadership performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Mean score and standard deviation of Innovation for effective educational leadership performance

	Items	Male Principal (185)		Female Principal (106)		$\frac{X_1+X_2}{2}$	Decision
		X_1	SD1	X_2	SD2		
6	In your role as a teacher, do you feel encouraged and supported to be innovative in your approach to educational leadership?	3.3676	.60346	1.9340	.63649	2.65	High Extent
7	Have you personally been recognized or rewarded for being innovative in your approach to educational leadership?	3.2865	.80019	1.4528	.60367	2.36	High Extent
8	Do you feel that there is sufficient time, money, and other resources available to support innovation in educational leadership?	3.2541	.66373	1.9434	.41011	2.59	High Extent
9	In your experience, is there an understanding and acceptance of the need for risk-taking to achieve innovation in educational leadership?	3.2811	.79872	2.0377	.80385	2.65	High Extent
10	Have you personally been recognised or rewarded for being innovative in your approach to educational leadership?	3.4541	.69883	1.3396	.58370	2.39	High Extent
Grand mean						2.52	High Extent

Table 2 represents the accumulated sum from the respondents indicating the mean score and standard deviation from the second research question which states “To what extent does innovation improve educational leadership performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?” The result from the table illustrated that there is a high level of affirmation with regards to the extent MBO applied in terms of innovation improves educational leadership performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The results from the Mean set affirm was also supported by the low disparity in response ($SD < 2.00$). The analysis also revealed a grand mean of 2.52. The implication of these responses is that the respondents agreed to a high extent that MBO applied in terms of Innovation enhance Effective Educational Leadership Performance in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female principals on their application of MBO goal setting improve educational leadership performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State

Table 3: Summary of independent t-test analysis on the significance difference between the mean rating of male and female principals on the application of goal setting for effective educational leadership performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State

Respondents	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	Df	t	Sig.	Decision
Male Principal	185	3.38	.38	289	27.35	.000	Significant
Female Principal	106	1.87	.55				

An independent sample t-test was conducted to compare the mean difference between the mean rating of male and female principals on the application of goal setting for effective educational leadership performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The result in Table 3 shows: $t = 27.35$, $df = 289$, $p\text{-value} = .000 < .05$. The result implies that there is a statistically significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on the application of goal setting for effective educational leadership performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

The p-value (.000) is less than the significance level (.05), indicating that the null hypothesis of no significant difference can be rejected. Therefore, it can be concluded that male and female principals have different perceptions or practices regarding the application of MBO in goal setting for effective educational leadership performance.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female principals on their application of MBO innovation ideas improve educational leadership performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State

Table 4: Summary of independent t-test analysis on the significance difference between the mean rating of male and female principals on the application of innovation for effective educational leadership performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State

Respondents	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	Df	t	Sig.	Decision
Male Principal	185	3.32	.44	289	31.19	.000	Significant
Female Principal	106	1.74	.36				

An independent sample t-test was conducted to compare the mean difference between the mean rating of male and female principals on the application of innovation for effective educational leadership performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The result in Table 4 shows: $t = 31.19$, $df = 289$, $p\text{-value} = .000 < .05$. The result implies that there is a statistically significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on the application of innovation for effective educational leadership performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The p-value (.000) is less than the significance level (.05), indicating that the null hypothesis of no significant difference can be rejected. Therefore, it can be concluded that male and female principals have different perceptions or practices regarding the application of MBO in innovation for effective educational leadership performance.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Goal Setting and Educational Leadership Performance

The first findings of this study revealed that goal setting enhances Effective Educational Leadership Performance in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State. Similarly, the findings also shows that there is significant difference between the mean rating of male and female principals on the application of goal setting for the effective educational leadership performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. This finding validates the study by Smith et al. (2018) on goal setting in education: A meta-analysis of effect sizes. They examined the effect sizes of goal-setting interventions on a variety of academic outcomes, including achievement, engagement, and effort. In their meta-analysis, they included studies that used experimental and quasi-experimental designs. The results of the moderator analyses were mixed but generally supported the effectiveness of goal-setting interventions in educational settings. The findings of the meta-analysis suggest that goal-setting interventions can be effective in improving educational outcomes, particularly when they are specific, challenging, and accompanied by feedback and progress monitoring. The authors conclude that goal setting is a promising strategy for improving student achievement, and recommend that future research focus on the implementation of goal setting interventions in educational settings.

This finding also supports the findings of Johnson et al. (2019) study on the relationship between goal setting and school improvement over time. Their research methodology involved selecting a sample of public schools representing various socio-economic backgrounds. Data were collected through surveys administered to school administrators, teachers, and other stakeholders involved in the goal-setting process. Findings from the study revealed a positive relationship between goal setting and school improvement, with schools exhibiting strong goal-setting practices showing higher levels of academic performance, teacher morale, and parent satisfaction over time. Specific factors such as goal alignment with the broader mission and vision of the institution, as well as effective feedback provision, were identified as critical contributors to school improvement. The study also highlighted the importance of moderators such as goal specificity, difficulty, and leadership support in influencing the effectiveness of goal-setting practices.

Innovation and Educational Leadership Performance

The second findings of this study revealed that innovation enhances effective educational leadership performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. Similarly, the findings also shows that there is significant difference between the mean rating of male and female principals on the application of innovation for the effective educational leadership performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. This finding agrees with the study by Lee and Choi's (2020) study on the impact of innovation leadership on school performance, with a specific focus on how innovative school culture mediates this relationship. Through surveys and interviews with various stakeholders in South Korean high schools, including administrators, teachers, and students, the researchers aimed to assess the extent to which innovation leadership behaviors influenced school outcomes. They found that schools with leaders who exhibited innovation leadership traits, such as encouraging creativity, supporting risk-taking, and fostering collaboration, tended to have higher levels of academic

achievement, student engagement, and teacher satisfaction. Moreover, the study identified innovative school culture as a key mediator that explained the relationship between innovation leadership and school performance. This suggests that fostering a culture of innovation within schools is essential for translating innovation leadership into tangible outcomes.

This finding also validated the findings of Oplatka and Even (2017) study that explored the relationship between transformational leadership, innovation and school effectiveness. By collecting data from school principals and teachers over multiple time points, the researchers aimed to understand how transformational leadership behaviors influenced organizational innovation and school performance over time. Their findings revealed a significant positive association between transformational leadership and organizational innovation. Schools with principals who exhibited transformational leadership behaviors, such as articulating a compelling vision, empowering teachers, and promoting teamwork, demonstrated higher levels of innovation in teaching practices, curriculum design, and school management. Additionally, the study found that innovative schools were more likely to achieve positive outcomes in terms of student learning, teacher retention, and community engagement.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study revealed the critical role of MBO practices in enhancing educational leaders performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. Principals who actively implement MBO principles, including collaborative goal-setting and innovative ideas demonstrate higher levels of administrative efficiency, accountability and instructional effectiveness. The use of MBO facilitates alignment between school objectives and individual staff efforts, by also promoting a culture of shared responsibility and commitment to achieving institutional goals.

The study also revealed that principals' perceptions and applications of MBO significantly influence leadership outcomes, highlighting the importance of systematic planning, effective communication, and performance evaluation in school administration. Through the adoption of a census approach and analyzing comprehensive data from 302 principals in the state, the study provides robust evidence that MBO is a practical and effective management strategy for improving educational leadership performance. Therefore, these findings are likely to improve administrative efficiency, enhance teacher productivity and ultimately contribute to improved student learning outcomes in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State and beyond.

Recommendations

From the findings of the study and conclusion drawn, the following recommendation are made:

- Government should organize targeted professional development and training programs for principals, focusing on goal-setting techniques and strategies. These programs should be designed to enhance the skills of both male and female principals, emphasizing the importance of setting clear, achievable, and measurable goals. This will ensure that all principals, regardless of gender, are equipped with the necessary tools to effectively implement MBO in their schools.

- Government should implement targeted professional development programs that enhance innovative leadership skills for both male and female principals.

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