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STRATEGIC PLANNING PRACTICES AND ADMINISTRATIVE EFFECTIVENESS AMONG PRINCIPALS OF PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN EGOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, EDO STATE

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Abstract
This study examined the relationship between strategic planning practices and administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State, Nigeria. Specifically, it determined the extent of strategic planning practices, assessed principals' administrative effectiveness, and examined whether the relationship differed by principals' age, administrative experience and school location. The study adopted a correlational survey design and used census sampling to include all 12 principals in the 12 public secondary schools in the study area. Data were collected using the researcher-developed Strategic Planning Practices and Administrative Effectiveness Questionnaire (SPPAEQ). The instrument demonstrated satisfactory reliability, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients of .84 for strategic planning practices and .88 for administrative effectiveness. Data were analysed using mean, standard deviation, Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Fisher's Z-transformation at the .05 significance level. Findings showed that strategic planning practices were utilised to a high extent (M = 3.25, SD = 0.44), while administrative effectiveness was also high (M = 3.46, SD = 0.40). A strong, positive and significant relationship existed between strategic planning practices and administrative effectiveness (r = .861, p < .05). However, the relationship did not differ significantly based on age, administrative experience or school location. The study concluded that strategic planning is significantly associated with effective school administration. It was recommended that principals should sustain the high level of strategic planning practices, particularly strategic implementation and that principals should sustain their high level of administrative effectiveness, particularly in decision-making and communication;
Keywords: Strategic planning, Administrative effectiveness, Principals, Secondary schools and School administration

Introduction

Education remains an important instrument for national development and social transformation. Attaining educational goals depends largely on how effectively schools are administered and how well human, financial, and material resources are coordinated (Federal Republic of Nigeria [FRN], 2013; UNESCO, 2021). In public secondary schools, principals manage a broad range of administrative functions, including instructional supervision, staff management, resource management, communication, decision-making, school-community relations, and implementation of educational policies (FRN, 2013; OECD, 2019). The growing complexity of the school environment has made effective administration more demanding. Public secondary schools operate under conditions marked by resource constraints, infrastructural deficiencies, shifting educational policies, rising enrolment and heightened expectations from parents and communities. These conditions require school administrators to move beyond routine administrative activities and adopt systematic planning and management approaches (UNESCO, 2021; World Bank, 2018).

Strategic planning provides such an approach. It involves systematically determining institutional direction, formulating goals and objectives, assessing the environment, engaging stakeholders, planning resources, implementing plans, and monitoring and evaluating progress (Bryson, 2018). Within the school system, strategic planning provides a framework for aligning school activities and available resources with institutional priorities. It

can also support informed decision-making, accountability, coordination and continuous improvement (Davies & Davies, 2006; Bryson, 2018). The present study conceptualises strategic planning practices as comprising vision and mission development, environmental scanning, goal setting, stakeholder participation, resource planning, strategic implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. Administrative effectiveness, on the other hand, encompasses principals' effectiveness in decision-making, communication, instructional supervision, resource management, staff coordination, record management, school-community relationships and conflict management. These dimensions are consistent with the scope of the study.

The paper was anchored in the General Systems Theory propounded by Ludwig von Bertalanffy (1968). It views an organisation as a system of interrelated and interdependent components that interact to achieve predetermined objectives. Schools operate as open systems in which human, financial, physical and instructional resources are coordinated through administrative processes. From this perspective, strategic planning provides a mechanism for integrating the various components of the school system, while administrative effectiveness reflects the extent to which these components are coordinated towards institutional goals. Ibrahim, Kyando and Kiwonde (2023) examined strategic planning implementation practices and school performance in public secondary schools in Tanzania using a concurrent triangulation mixed- methods design with 354 respondents. Their findings revealed significant positive relationships between strategic planning implementation practices and school organisational performance ($R^2 = .08$, $p < .05$), teacher performance ($R^2 = .02$, $p < .05$) and students' academic performance ($R^2 = .24$, $p < .05$), leading them to conclude that effective implementation of strategic plans is an important antecedent of school performance. Verano, Agrazamendez, Sarazain, and Bauyot (2024) investigated strategic planning and management practices to enhance quality education in basic education institutions in Davao City, Philippines, using a quantitative survey of 200 public school teachers. They found that strategic planning was high, with the stakeholder perspective emerging as the most strongly manifested indicator, and that management practices were also rated highly, with designing a vision as the most prominent practice. Sheyin (2024) examined the role of perceived strategic planning in enhancing school effectiveness in public secondary schools in Ogun State, Nigeria, using a descriptive survey of 360 teachers drawn from a population of 20, 000.

The study found that strategic planning was significantly associated with school effectiveness, particularly in areas relating to teacher performance, teaching quality and school operational efficiency. Habeeb and Eyupoglu (2024) investigated strategic planning, transformational leadership, and organisational performance in Nigerian higher education, using data from 388 staff members across 48 state universities. Their findings demonstrated that strategic planning positively influenced both transformational leadership and organisational performance, and that transformational leadership positively mediated the relationship between strategic planning and organisational performance. Despite the recognised importance of strategic planning, there appears to be limited empirical evidence specifically addressing its relationship with administrative effectiveness among public secondary school principals in the Egor Local Government Area of Edo State. This study therefore examined whether the relationship between strategic planning practices and administrative effectiveness varied by principals' age, administrative experience, and school location, and sought to provide empirical evidence from the study area.

Purpose of the Study

This study examined the relationship between strategic planning practices and administrative effectiveness among principals of public secondary schools in Egor Local Government Area, Edo State. Specifically, it sought to:

1. determine the extent of strategic planning practices in public secondary schools;
2. determine the level of principals' administrative effectiveness;
3. determine the relationship between strategic planning practices and administrative effectiveness; and
4. determine whether the relationship differs based on principals' age, administrative experience and school location.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent are strategic planning practices utilised in public secondary schools in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State?
2. What is the level of principals' administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State?
3. What is the relationship between strategic planning practices and administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in the Egor Local Government Area of Edo State?
4. Does the relationship between strategic planning practices and administrative effectiveness differ based on principals' age, administrative experience and school location?

Hypotheses

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

H_o1: There is no significant relationship between strategic planning practices and administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State.

H_o2: There is no significant difference in the relationship between strategic planning practices and administrative effectiveness based on principals' age.

H_o3: There is no significant difference in the relationship between strategic planning practices and administrative effectiveness based on principals' administrative experience.

H_o4: There is no significant difference in the relationship between strategic planning practices and administrative effectiveness based on school location.

Methodology

The study adopted a correlational survey research design. The population comprised all 12 principals of the 12 public secondary schools in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State. Because the population was small and manageable, the study adopted census sampling, and all 12 principals constituted the sample. Data were collected using the researcher-developed Strategic Planning Practices and Administrative Effectiveness Questionnaire (SPPAEQ). The questionnaire comprised three sections. Section A collected demographic information, while Sections B and C assessed strategic planning practices and administrative effectiveness, respectively. Strategic planning practices were measured across seven dimensions: vision and mission development, environmental scanning, goal setting, stakeholder participation, resource planning, strategic implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. The study assessed administrative effectiveness in decision-making, communication, instructional supervision, resource management, staff coordination, record management, school-community relationships, and conflict management. Responses were rated on a four-point scale from Strongly Agree (4) to Strongly Disagree (1), with a criterion mean of 2.50. Three experts from the Faculty of Education, University of Benin, conducted face and content validation. A pilot study involving 20 principals from public secondary schools in Oredo Local Government Area was conducted to establish reliability. Cronbach's alpha coefficients were .84 for strategic planning practices and .88 for administrative effectiveness, indicating satisfactory internal consistency. Data were coded and analysed using SPSS Version 27.0. Means and standard deviations were used to answer the first two research questions. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was used to assess the relationship between strategic planning practices and administrative effectiveness, while Fisher's Z-transformation was used to compare correlations across principals' age, administrative experience and school location. All hypotheses were tested at the .05 level of significance.

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Results

Research Question 1: To what extent are strategic planning practices utilised in public secondary schools in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State?

Table 1: **Extent of Strategic Planning Practices** *(N = 12)*

Strategic Planning Dimension	M	SD	Decision
Vision and Mission Development	3.28	0.41	High
Environmental Scanning	3.23	0.44	High
Goal Setting	3.25	0.43	High
Stakeholder Participation	3.28	0.47	High
Resource Planning	3.20	0.45	High
Strategic Implementation	3.30	0.42	High
Monitoring and Evaluation	3.27	0.44	High
Grand Mean	**3.25**	**0.44**	**High**

Criterion mean = 2.50.

The results indicate that strategic planning practices were utilised to a high extent, with a grand mean of 3.25 (SD = 0.44). Strategic implementation recorded the highest mean (M = 3.30, SD = 0.42), while resource planning recorded the lowest mean (M = 3.20, SD = 0.45). All dimensions exceeded the criterion mean of 2.50.

Research Question 2: What is the level of principals' administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State?

Table 2: Level of Administrative Effectiveness *(N = 12)*

Administrative Effectiveness Dimension	M	SD	Decision
Decision-Making	3.52	0.38	High
Communication	3.52	0.37	High
Instructional Supervision	3.38	0.43	High
Resource Management	3.40	0.41	High
Staff Coordination	3.47	0.39	High
Record Management	3.50	0.38	High
School-Community Relationship	3.40	0.42	High
Conflict Management	3.47	0.40	High
Grand Mean	**3.46**	**0.40**	**High**

Criterion mean = 2.50

The results indicate that principals demonstrated a high level of administrative effectiveness, with a grand mean of 3.46 (SD = 0.40). Decision-making and communication recorded the highest means (M = 3.52 each), whereas instructional supervision recorded the lowest mean (M = 3.38). Nevertheless, all dimensions were rated above the criterion mean.

Research Question 3: What is the relationship between strategic planning practices and administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State?

Table 3: Relationship between strategic planning practices and administrative effectiveness

Variables	N	r	p	Decision
Strategic Planning Practices and Administrative Effectiveness	12	.861	< .001	Significant

The analysis revealed a strong positive relationship between strategic planning practices and administrative effectiveness, $r = .861$, $p < .05$. Consequently, the null hypothesis ($H_0 1$) was rejected. The result indicates that higher levels of strategic planning practices were associated with higher levels of administrative effectiveness.

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Research Question 4: Does the relationship between strategic planning practices and administrative effectiveness differ based on principals' age, administrative experience and school location?

Table 4: Fisher's Z-test of difference in relationship based on principals' age

Age Group	N	r	Fisher's Z	Z-calculated	Z-critical	p	Decision
45 years and below	6	.789	1.068	-0.551	±1.96	.582	Not Significant
Above 45 years	6	.908	1.518				

Although the correlation was higher among principals above 45 years (r = .908) than among those aged 45 years and below (r = .789), the difference was not statistically significant, Z = -0.551, p = .582. The null hypothesis (H_o2) was therefore retained.

Table 5: Fisher's Z-test of difference in relationship based on administrative experience

Experience	N	r	Fisher's Z	Z-calculated	Z-critical	p	Decision
10 years and below	5	.955	1.890	0.667	±1.96	.505	Not Significant
Above 10 years	7	.865	1.313				

The relationship was stronger among principals with 10 years of experience or less (r = .955) than among those with more than 10 years of experience (r = .865). However, the difference was not statistically significant, Z = 0.667, p = .505. The null hypothesis (H_o3) was therefore retained.

Table 6: Fisher's Z-test of difference in relationship based on school location

School Location	N	r	Fisher's Z	Z-calculated	Z-critical	p	Decision
Urban	7	.946	1.793	0.679	±1.96	.497	Not Significant
Rural	5	.835	1.205				

The relationship between strategic planning practices and administrative effectiveness was stronger in urban schools (r = .946) than in rural schools (r = .835). However, the difference was not statistically significant, Z = 0.679, p = .497. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_o4) was retained.

Discussion of the Findings

The study found that strategic planning practices were used extensively in public secondary schools in the Egor Local Government Area of Edo State. This indicates that principals engage substantially in activities such as establishing school direction, setting institutional goals, involving stakeholders, planning and allocating resources, implementing strategic initiatives, and monitoring and evaluating progress. The high level of utilisation suggests that strategic planning has become an important part of administrative practice in the schools studied. This finding is consistent with Ibrahim *et al*. (2023), who found that effective implementation of strategic planning practices was significantly associated with school organisational performance, teacher performance and students' academic performance. The finding also aligns with Verano *et al*. (2024), who reported high levels of strategic planning and management practices among public basic education institutions and linked these practices to improved educational quality. Similarly, Sheyin (2024) established that strategic planning significantly contributed to school effectiveness in public secondary schools in Ogun State.

The study also established that principals demonstrated a high level of administrative effectiveness. The finding suggests that principals are generally capable of making administrative decisions, communicating with staff and other stakeholders, supervising school activities, coordinating personnel, managing resources, maintaining records and addressing school-related challenges. This finding aligns with Verano et al. (2024), who reported that strategic planning and management practices were associated with improved educational quality. It also agrees with Sheyin (2024), whose study established a significant contribution of strategic planning to school effectiveness, and with Habeeb and Eyupoglu (2024), who found that strategic planning positively influenced

organisational performance in Nigerian state universities. Ibrahim *et al*. (2023) similarly reported significant relationships between strategic planning implementation and school organisational and teacher performance.

The study found a positive and significant relationship between strategic planning practices and administrative effectiveness. This indicates that higher levels of strategic planning practices were associated with higher levels of administrative effectiveness among the principals studied. The finding aligns with Ibrahim *et al*. (2023), who reported significant positive relationships between strategic planning implementation practices and school organisational, teacher and student performance outcomes. It is also consistent with Verano *et al*. (2024), who linked high levels of strategic planning and management practices to enhanced educational quality, and with Sheyin (2024), who found that strategic planning was significantly associated with school effectiveness. Habeeb and Eyupoglu (2024) similarly demonstrated that strategic planning positively influenced organisational performance in Nigerian higher education institutions.

The study found that principals' age did not significantly affect the relationship between strategic planning practices and administrative effectiveness. This suggests that chronological age, by itself, may not determine how effectively strategic planning practices translate into administrative effectiveness. This finding differs from Owan et al. (2024), who reported that principals' age significantly influenced administrative effectiveness. The difference may be attributable to variations in study location, sample characteristics, research design, or the measures used to assess administrative effectiveness. Similarly, the study found that administrative experience did not significantly moderate the relationship between strategic planning practices and administrative effectiveness. Experienced principals may possess valuable institutional knowledge, but less-experienced principals may compensate through professional development, contemporary management knowledge, exposure to leadership training and effective institutional support. This finding contrasts with Adu and Amoako (2023), and Muthoni et al. (2024), who reported stronger strategic planning competencies among more experienced school administrators. The discrepancy may reflect differences in educational contexts and in how strategic planning competence and administrative effectiveness were operationalised. School location also did not significantly differentiate the relationship between strategic planning practices and administrative effectiveness. Principals in schools in different locations may achieve comparable levels of administrative effectiveness when they have the necessary competencies, support, and commitment to strategic planning. This finding is consistent with Oyeleye (2023), who examined the effects of school location on principal administrative performance in secondary schools in Ondo State, Nigeria.

Conclusion

The study concludes that strategic planning practices are significantly associated with administrative effectiveness among principals of public secondary schools in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State. Strategic planning practices were utilised to a high extent, with strategic implementation emerging as the strongest dimension and resource planning as the weakest. Principals also demonstrated a high level of administrative effectiveness, with decision-making and communication as their strongest areas and instructional supervision as their weakest. The strong positive relationship between strategic planning practices and administrative effectiveness suggests that principals who engage more deliberately in strategic planning tend to administer their schools more effectively. However, this relationship did not differ significantly by principals' age, administrative experience, or school location, indicating that strategic planning can be a valuable administrative tool regardless of these demographic and contextual factors. The study therefore recommends sustaining and strengthening strategic planning as a core element of school administration in the study area.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Principals should sustain the high level of strategic planning practices, particularly strategic implementation, which recorded the highest mean among the strategic planning dimensions.

2. Greater attention should be given to resource planning, since it recorded the lowest mean among the strategic planning dimensions, although it was still rated high.
3. Principals should sustain their high level of administrative effectiveness, particularly in decision-making and communication, which recorded the highest mean scores.
4. Principals should strengthen instructional supervision, which recorded the lowest mean among the administrative effectiveness dimensions, in order to further improve overall administrative effectiveness.
5. Strategic planning practices should be consistently applied across schools irrespective of principals' age, administrative experience or school location, since none of these factors significantly altered the relationship between strategic planning and administrative effectiveness. The Ministry and Board should therefore provide continuous professional development, leadership training and administrative support to all principals regardless of these demographic and contextual characteristics.

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