Ibrahim, M. & Shittu, R. B. (2025)

PREDICTORS OF LEADERSHIP CAPACITIES ON ADMINISTRATIVE EFFECTIVENESS AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN KEBBI STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract
Effective school leadership is recognised globally as a driver of school improvement and administrative efficiency. In Kebbi State, Nigeria, secondary schools continue to face significant leadership and governance challenges, often resulting in low educational outcomes. This study was conducted to examine the relationship between leadership capacities—such as strategic vision, team building, conflict management, decision-making, staff supervision, and motivation and the administrative effectiveness of secondary school principals in Kebbi State. A correlational survey design was employed, involving 176 secondary school principals selected through stratified random sampling. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and analysed using descriptive statistics, zero-order Pearson correlation, and standard multiple regression techniques. Each leadership dimension was treated as an independent variable, while administrative effectiveness was the dependent variable. The results showed that all leadership dimensions had significant positive zero-order correlations with administrative effectiveness: strategic vision ($r = .38$, $p < .001$), team building ($r = .34$, $p < .001$), conflict management ($r = .35$, $p < .001$), decision making ($r = .30$, $p < .001$), staff supervision ($r = .26$, $p = .001$), and motivation ($r = .32$, $p < .001$). The multiple regression model was statistically significant, $F (6, 169) = 7.07$, $p < .001$, and accounted for 20.1% of the variance in administrative effectiveness ($R^2 = .20$). Among the predictors, only strategic vision ($\beta = .25$, $p = .010$) and conflict management ($\beta = .22$, $p = .016$) significantly predicted administrative effectiveness. The study concludes that strategic planning and effective conflict resolution are the most influential leadership capacities for achieving administrative success in the study context. It is recommended that principal selection and development programs emphasise these critical areas.

Keywords: Leadership Capacities, Administrative Effectiveness

Introduction
Education is globally recognised as a pivotal instrument for individual empowerment and national development. At the heart of any effective education system lies the quality of school administration, which determines the extent to which schools can deliver intended learning outcomes, maintain professional staff culture, manage limited resources, and uphold institutional accountability. In particular, administrative effectiveness is a cornerstone of successful school operations, shaping everything from teacher morale to student achievement and community trust in public education (Hoy & Miskel, 2013; UNESCO, 2022).

Administrative effectiveness in secondary schools refers to the principal's capacity to coordinate the complex elements of school management, including planning, organising, staffing, directing, budgeting,

and controlling, towards the achievement of educational objectives. It encompasses performance in instructional leadership, maintaining a favourable school climate, personnel management, financial oversight, and effective stakeholder communication (Obadara, 2020; Leithwood et al., 2020). According to Bush (2018), an effective administration is proactive, data-informed, and transformational in nature, fostering a responsive school culture that is resilient to systemic challenges.

Administrative effectiveness has been empirically linked to several key outcomes, including improved teacher retention, better student performance, and more efficient school operations (Nguyen et al., 2019). In Nigeria's public secondary schools, however, administrative performance has come under scrutiny. Reports by the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC, 2022) and UNICEF (2019) highlight issues such as inconsistent policy enforcement, inadequate instructional supervision, weak disciplinary structures, and uncoordinated stakeholder engagement, all of which are symptoms of administrative ineffectiveness that compromise educational quality.

This challenge is more acute in northern states like Kebbi, where systemic underinvestment, limited infrastructure, and staffing shortages have placed a greater burden on principals to function beyond their administrative limits. Despite policy provisions for School-Based Management Committees (SBMCs) and principal leadership development initiatives, there is limited evidence of widespread administrative transformation in the region. This highlights the pressing need to investigate the factors that drive administrative effectiveness within this local context, particularly the roles played by leadership capacity and stakeholder engagement.

One of the significant factors influencing administrative effectiveness is the leadership capacity of school principals. Leadership capacity is defined as the ability of an individual to inspire, mobilise, and guide others towards the achievement of shared institutional goals. In educational settings, this includes setting a vision, promoting instructional excellence, allocating resources strategically, and fostering inclusive and ethical school cultures (Leithwood & Louis, 2012; Harris, 2004).

Globally, research supports the idea that leadership is second only to classroom instruction in influencing student outcomes (Day & Sammons, 2016; Robinson et al., 2008). In practice, leadership capacity is reflected in a principal's ability to conduct data-informed evaluations, delegate responsibilities effectively, mediate conflicts, and drive innovation. In the context of Nigeria, however, many school leaders operate without structured training or leadership certification (Ololube, 2017). This is particularly evident in Kebbi State, where principal appointments are often based on tenure rather than demonstrable leadership acumen (Mujitapha et al., 2024). Weak leadership undermines strategic planning, reduces teacher accountability, and often results in reactive, rather than anticipatory, management practices. In contrast, principals who possess high leadership capacity are better positioned to lead school improvement efforts, engage teachers and parents constructively, and respond to internal and external pressures with agility (Bush & Glover, 2014). Thus, leadership capacity functions not only as a technical skill set but also as a dynamic driver of administrative performance.

This study fills the gap by empirically examining how both leadership styles predict the administrative effectiveness of public secondary school principals in Kebbi

State. It seeks to provide context-sensitive insights that will inform leadership development programs, participatory school governance reforms, and performance-enhancing policy frameworks tailored to the realities of northern Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem
The quality of administration in secondary schools plays a crucial role in achieving educational goals, ensuring the functionality of teaching and learning processes, and sustaining institutional accountability. However, despite policy initiatives aimed at improving school governance in Nigeria, administrative effectiveness remains a persistent challenge, particularly in public secondary schools located in less developed states, such as Kebbi. Reports from the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC, 2022) and the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC, 2021) consistently highlight widespread issues, including poor supervision, inconsistent instructional planning, low teacher motivation, and underutilization of community support structures.

A critical examination reveals that many of these inefficiencies stem from inadequate leadership capacity among school principals. Education leadership is no longer limited to routine management functions; it now requires a strategic mindset, interpersonal competence, and the ability to drive change in complex, resource-constrained environments (Leithwood et al., 2020). Yet, in Kebbi State, many principals are promoted based on seniority or political patronage rather than demonstrated leadership competence or training (Mujitapha et al., 2024). As a result, numerous school heads lack the critical capacity to plan strategically, lead instructional improvement, manage conflict, and build collaborative cultures within their schools. This leadership deficit contributes directly to administrative stagnation and undermines school performance.

Most available studies tend to focus either on leadership styles as an isolated variable, without investigating the predictive effects on administrative effectiveness (Okeke & Anyanwu, 2022; Livala et al., 2023). Even fewer studies are localised in scope, leaving states like Kebbi underrepresented in education leadership discourse and evidence-based policy development.

Moreover, there is a lack of context-specific research that examines how socio-cultural, political, and economic realities in Kebbi shape leadership behaviours in school administration. Without such localised understanding, national strategies and leadership development initiatives may continue to miss their mark, further entrenching systemic inefficiencies.

Therefore, this study seeks to address a critical knowledge and policy gap by examining the predictive effects of leadership capacity on administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Kebbi State. The findings are expected to contribute valuable insights to the fields of educational leadership, participatory governance, and school effectiveness, while also informing locally relevant interventions for capacity building and inclusive administration.

Purpose of the Study
The main objective of this study is to examine the predictive effect of leadership capacities on the administrative effectiveness of secondary school principals in Kebbi State. While the specific objectives are to:
1 Investigate the relationship between leadership capacity and administrative effectiveness in

public secondary schools across Kebbi State.

2 examine the predictive role of leadership capacity on administrative effectiveness in these schools.

Research Questions

The Following research questions guided the study:

1. what is the relationship between leadership capacity and administrative effectiveness among secondary school principals in Kebbi State?
2. What combined influence do leadership capacities have on administrative effectiveness?

Research Hypotheses

The Following research hypothess guided the study:

Ho_1: There is no significant relationship between leadership capacity and administrative effectiveness among secondary school principals in Kebbi State.

Ho_2: Leadership capacities do not jointly have a significant influence on the administrative effectiveness of secondary school principals in Kebbi State.

Methodology

This study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design, a non-experimental approach suitable for examining the relationships between variables at a single point in time. A cross-sectional survey facilitates the simultaneous collection of data from a large population, allowing researchers to identify patterns, compare subgroups, and test hypotheses without manipulating the study environment. In educational settings, the cross-sectional design is handy for generating data that reflect the current status of institutional practices, perceptions, and outcomes (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2015). By capturing data from all four emirate councils in Kebbi State within a fixed time frame (June to August 2025), the design enabled the researcher to measure and analyse the existing state of leadership dynamics and stakeholder engagement as they relate to school administration. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), cross-sectional designs are advantageous in studies where generalisation across a diverse population is intended, especially when logistical, financial, or time constraints preclude longitudinal tracking. Therefore, this design aligns with the study's goal of providing a snapshot of administrative effectiveness across public secondary schools, offering insights that are both timely and policy-relevant.

The study population comprised all principals of public secondary schools in Kebbi State, which are distributed across four administrative regions or emirate councils: Gwandu, Argungu, Yauri, and Zuru. As of 2024, records from the Kebbi State Ministry of Education reported approximately 310 public secondary schools, each led by a principal. These individuals are responsible for implementing government educational policies, engaging with school stakeholders, managing staff and students, and ensuring academic excellence. Public school principals were the focus of this study because they operate within the formal structures of state education governance and are most directly accountable for school leadership and administrative effectiveness.

A sample of 176 principals was selected from the total population of 310, using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size determination table. A multi-stage stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure representativeness. In the first stage, public secondary schools were stratified by the Emirate Council to reflect Kebbi State's geographic and

administrative diversity. In the second stage, simple random sampling was conducted within each stratum to select principals. This combination ensured that each school had an equal chance of selection while preserving proportional representation across all four emirate councils. The method helped to eliminate selection bias and allowed for more nuanced interpretation of results based on regional contexts.

The questionnaire was designed to elicit detailed responses related to the study's three key variables. It was developed based on theoretical models from Leithwood and Louis (2012), Epstein (2001), and Bush (2018), and was customised to reflect the specific administrative context of Kebbi State.

Section A: Demographic Information

This section gathered data on respondents' personal and professional background, including: Gender, Age Range, Academic Qualifications, Years of Administrative Experience, Type of School (Urban or Rural), Emirate Council (Gwandu, Argungu, Yauri, Zuru), Student Population Size.

Section B: Leadership Capacity

This section consisted of 15 items measuring dimensions such as strategic vision, team building, conflict management, decision-making, staff supervision, and motivation. Responses were rated on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (5).

Section C: Administrative Effectiveness

This section contained 15 items assessing the principal's effectiveness in curriculum supervision, discipline enforcement, resource utilisation, record-keeping, policy compliance, and teacher evaluation. These items operationalised the construct of administrative effectiveness as defined by Etzioni's Goal Attainment Theory (1964) and the works of Hoy and Miskel (2013). To establish content validity, the instrument was reviewed by three experts in educational leadership, research methods, and psychometrics. A pilot test was conducted with 20 principals outside the study sample to check for reliability. Using Cronbach's Alpha, internal consistency values above 0.70 were recorded for all subscales, affirming the reliability of the instrument.

The data collection process began with securing ethical clearance and an introductory letter from the researcher's institution, which was submitted to the Kebbi State Ministry of Education for authorisation. Upon approval, local education officials were contacted to facilitate access to schools and principals.

The researcher and assistants visited schools to explain the study's purpose and obtain informed consent from the participants. Where travel or scheduling constraints were present, digital versions of the questionnaire were shared. Fieldwork was conducted over four weeks, ensuring comprehensive coverage of all emirate councils. Completed questionnaires were reviewed for completeness, and ambiguous responses were clarified when ethically permissible.

Data from the LSIAEQ were analysed using SPSS (Version 26.0), employing both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to summarise demographic and response data, enabling the identification of general trends and distribution analysis.

Results

The result is presented according to the research objectives:

Table 1: Respondents' Socio-demographics (N = 176)

Category	Level	N(%)
Gender	Male	85(48.3)
	Female	91(51.7)
Age Range	30-39 years	25(14.2)
	40-49 years	91(51.7)
	50 and above	60(34.1)
Academic qualification	NCE	37(21.0)
	B.Ed	92(52.3)
	M.Ed	39(22.2)
	PhD	8(4.5)
Years of administrative experience	1-5	15(8.5)
	6-10	86(48.9)
	11-15	55(31.3)
	16 and above	20(11.4)
School location	Urban	109(61.9)
	Rural	67(38.1)
Emirate council	Gwandu	57(32.4)
	Argungu	26(14.8)
	Yauri	33(18.8)
	Zuru	60(34.1)
Student population	Less than 300	48(27.3)
	300 - 600	91(51.7)
	Above 600	37(21.0)

Table 1 shows that 85 (48.3%) of the respondents were Male, while 91 (51.7%) were Female. Based on age, 25(14.2%) were 30-39 years of age, 91(51.7%) were 40-49 years of age while 60(34.1%) were 50 years and above. Based on academic qualification, 37(21.0%) had NCE, 92(52.3%) acquired B. Ed, 39(22.2%) possess M. Ed while 8(4.5%) bagged a doctoral degree. 15(8.5%) had 1-5 years of administrative experience, 86(48.9%) had 6-10 years of experience, 55(31.3%) had 11-15 years of experience while 20(11.4%) had 16 years and above administrative experience. Based on school location, 109 (61.9%) were in an urban area, while 67 (38.1%) were in a rural area. Based on emirate council, 57(32.4%) were in Gwandu, 26(14.8%) were in Argungu, 33(18.8%) were in Yauri while 60(34.1%) were in Zuru. Based on the student population, 48(27.3%) had less than 300 students, 91(51.7%) had 300 – 600 students while 37(21.0%) had above 600 students.

Hypothesis one: There is no significant relationship between leadership capacity and administrative effectiveness among secondary school principals in Kebbi State.

Table 2: Zero-Order Correlations Between Leadership Capacities and Administrative Effectiveness

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Strategic Vision	8.63	2.76	—						
2. Team Building	9.10	2.51	.56**	—					
3. Conflict Management	6.69	1.80	.43**	.44**	—				
4. Decision Making	10.11	2.08	.54**	.51**	.60**	—			
5. Staff Supervision	6.39	1.89	.56**	.65**	.46**	.42**	—		
6. Motivation	6.53	1.52	.53**	.64**	.47**	.69**	.42**	—	
7. Administrative Effectiveness	49.46	9.31	.38**	.34**	.35**	.30**	.26**	.32**	—

Zero-order Pearson correlation analysis showing the relationship between dimensions of leadership capacity and administrative effectiveness. It was revealed that strategic vision ($r = .38$, $p < .001$), team building ($r = .34$, $p < .001$), conflict management ($r = .35$, $p < .001$), decision making ($r = .30$, $p < .001$), staff supervision ($r = .26$, $p = .001$), and motivation ($r = .32$, $p < .001$) each showed moderate positive associations with administrative effectiveness. These results indicate that as leadership capacity increases in each area, so does the perceived level of administrative effectiveness.

Hypothesis two: Leadership capacities do not jointly have a significant influence on the administrative effectiveness of secondary school principals in Kebbi State.

Table 3: Summary of multiple regression analysis showing the predictive effect of leadership capacities on administrative effectiveness.

Predictor	B	SE	β	t	Sig.
(Constant)	32.203	3.406	—	9.454	.000
Strategic Vision	0.826	0.316	.245	2.610	.010
Team Building	0.502	0.404	.135	1.242	.216
Conflict Management	1.133	0.465	.219	2.436	.016
Decision Making	-0.205	0.484	-.046	-0.424	.672
Staff Supervision	-0.361	0.485	-.073	-0.745	.458
Motivation	0.362	0.671	.059	0.539	.590

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the extent to which leadership capacities predict administrative effectiveness. The model was significant,

F(6, 169) = 7.07, p < .001, and explained 20.1% of the variance in administrative effectiveness, R^2 = .20. Among the six leadership predictors, strategic vision (β = .25, p = .010) and conflict management (β = .22, p = .016) emerged as significant contributors. Other variables, including team building, decision making, staff supervision, and motivation, were not statistically significant predictors.

Discussion

This study examined the interplay between leadership capacities and administrative effectiveness among secondary school principals in Kebbi State, Nigeria. The results of this study inform the field both empirically and conceptually, particularly in educational systems, highlighting the prevailing systemic challenges and how various and specific leadership approaches tend to align with or correspond to performance at the school-level administration.

All the dimensions of leadership capacities measured in the study, strategic vision, team building, conflict management, decision-making, staff supervision, and motivation, have a positive relationship with administrative effectiveness. This positive relationship confirms Leithwood, Harris, and Hopkins' (2020) assertion that effective leadership has a considerable influence on how a school operates and the educational outcomes at the end of a learning cycle. This study provides evidence to support the theory of goal setting, with an emphasis on the relational dimension of leadership. Even in challenging environments, leadership dimensions meaningfully contribute to the administrative outcomes of the principal.

The relationship between leadership capacity and effectiveness, as well as the role that leadership competencies play, supports the claims made by Bush and Glover (2014) that these competencies are

a prerequisite for all functional institutional advancement. In the same vein, Fullan (2005) argues that building leadership capacities is essential for improving a school, particularly in poor communities where the socio-political and infrastructural contexts are complex, as is the case in Kebbi State.

Also noteworthy is that principals who articulated long-range goals and effectively engaged in conflict management were noted to be administratively effective. As mentioned earlier, strategically visionary and conflict management leadership were the only indicators of leadership effectiveness. This suggests that, within the scope of leadership effectiveness in Nigeria, visionary leadership and conflict management are the only significant predictors of administrative effectiveness. These findings also align with Ng, Nguyen, Wong, and Choy (2015) in the context of strategically managing educational resources as leadership, with the most significant impact on educational resources being the strategic planning to transition from focusing on educational resources to addressing relational problem-solving to address resource-controlled systemic educational uncertainties. Pam's leadership in Nigeria also supports this, as resource-constrained educational leadership with strategic relational education problem-solving aligns with effective school management in resource-constrained Northern Nigeria (Absullahi & Bichi, 2020). This suggests that it addresses community disengagement, staff demotivation, resource scarcity, and conflict management. This also aligns with strategic leadership in the educational context of Eastern Nigeria, as noted by Oluwuo and Enefaa (2016). These findings suggest that educational leadership in Nigeria, to a significant extent, is dysfunctional, focusing on managing educational resources rather than strategic

leadership to enable accountability in instructional supervision and educational outcomes.

The fact that certain leadership functions, such as team building, decision-making, supervision, and motivation, were not significant predictors in this instance diverges from what we have observed in other, more structured or urban school systems. For example, in Day and Sammons' (2016) research, the importance of collaborative and cooperative decision making, staff motivation, and mentorship supervision in conceptualising school climate and outcomes is powerfully articulated. However, the evidence supporting these roles comes from developed contexts. I would argue that the evidence suggests that in developed and stable systems, leaders assume that the core of their leadership functions will be 'distributed' and participatory mechanisms, which are less operational in systems described by hierarchical cultures or politically appointed principals, as shown in Yusuf (2019), Kebbi State.

The example in the previous paragraph illustrates the importance of context in explaining which leadership functions are most useful. For instance, when school leadership is driven from the top, principals are likely to be most hindered in exercising functions such as collaborative decision-making and staff development. This is likely the reason such functions were not significant predictors of administrative effectiveness in this study, despite their prominence in the leadership literature.

Furthermore, the model's moderate level of explanation suggests that, despite the importance of leadership qualities, other organisational and contextual factors, such as the adequacy of funding, the quality of teachers, and the degree of community involvement, are also likely to impact the effectiveness of administration. This perspective was also taken in the OECD

(2016) report, which states that the influence of leadership operates under systemic conditions that, to varying degrees, limit or enhance its impact.

Conclusion

This study established that leadership capacities are significantly related to administrative effectiveness among secondary school principals in Kebbi State. Strategic vision and conflict management emerged as the most influential predictors of success. These findings highlight the importance of equipping principals with practical leadership skills tailored to the demands of their administrative roles. Strengthening leadership capacity through targeted training and merit-based appointments is crucial for enhancing school governance and improving educational outcomes in resource-constrained settings.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are offered for policymakers, education stakeholders, school leadership trainers, and researchers:

1. Professional development programs for principals should prioritise training in strategic planning and conflict management, as these capacities were most predictive of administrative effectiveness. Such training should be practice-oriented, context-sensitive, and tailored to the specific realities of public secondary schools in Kebbi State and similar regions.
2. The appointment of school principals should be based on demonstrated leadership competence rather than seniority or political affiliation. Competency-based recruitment frameworks, possibly incorporating leadership

assessment centres or psychometric tools, should be introduced by the Ministry of Education.

3. There should be a state-level policy mandating continuous professional development (CPD) for principals, with clear benchmarks for leadership growth. These programs should be embedded in partnerships with universities, teacher training colleges, and education think tanks.

4. Beyond individual training, efforts should also be made to strengthen the institutional support systems for principals. This includes timely funding disbursement, clear policy directives, autonomy in school governance, and monitoring mechanisms that encourage innovation rather than compliance alone.

5. Future studies should expand the current work by examining how external variables such as school size, community engagement, or government policy interact with leadership capacities to influence administrative outcomes. Qualitative inquiry could also offer more profound insights into how principals perceive and practice leadership under constraints.

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