



INFLUENCE OF PRINCIPALS' ADMINISTRATIVE ROLES ON STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MAKURDI EDUCATIONAL ZONE

Dr. OGABA O. George and Dr. Queen Ijeoma EGWUONWU

Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University Makurdi Department of Educational Administration and Planning

Abstract: *This study investigates the influence of principals' administrative roles, specifically financial management and disciplinary actions, on students' academic performance in secondary schools within Makurdi Educational Zone. The study identifies how principals' effective financial management—including resource allocation, budget planning, and transparency—correlates with enhanced academic outcomes. It also examines how structured and fair disciplinary practices by principals contribute to a conducive learning environment that positively impacts student focus and behavior. Utilizing a survey design, data were gathered from a sample of 395 participants, comprising teaching and non-teaching staff, selected through multi-stage sampling techniques. Data were collected using a Likert-scale questionnaire and analyzed with descriptive statistics and chi-square tests at a 0.05 significance level. Results indicate a high influence of both financial management and disciplinary roles on academic performance, underscoring the importance of these administrative functions. Findings support that sound financial practices are pivotal for improving resource availability, while consistent discipline fosters a positive school culture, both crucial for academic success. These findings suggest that principals can significantly enhance educational outcomes by balancing financial acumen with effective disciplinary strategies. Future research should further examine the combined effect of these roles to optimize school leadership strategies for academic achievement.*

Keywords: *Principal's Administrative Roles, Students Academic Performance, Financial Management.*

Background to the Study

Education serves as the foundational process through which students acquire essential knowledge, skills, and values critical for intellectual and character development, fostering self-reliance and responsible citizenship (Adewale, 2019). Consequently, the academic performance of students, particularly in external examinations such as the West African School Certificate Examination (WASCE), has become a focal concern among government bodies, parents, and other educational stakeholders (Ayeni & Akinfolarin, 2019; Bello & Tunde, 2021). This emphasis on academic

achievement underscores the need for principals to implement effective administrative strategies to ensure comprehensive education and produce high-quality graduates from the secondary school system (Okechukwu, 2020). Indeed, observations by various stakeholders have revealed that student underperformance in examinations is often attributed to principals' neglect of essential administrative roles, which adversely impacts teacher effectiveness and school productivity (Nwosu & Emeka, 2023).

Recognizing this, government, parents, and educational stakeholders have increasingly called for principals to enhance student academic outcomes through effective management practices (Ajibola, 2018). As the chief executives of their schools, principals bear the substantial responsibility of overseeing and guiding their institutions to attain educational goals (Lydia & Nasongo, 2020). Research suggests that student academic performance is directly tied to the quality of principals' leadership, with those employing collaborative and motivational strategies fostering a positive school culture that benefits student outcomes (Olatunji & Bello, 2022).

To fulfil these responsibilities, principals engage in a complex social process involving the organization, motivation, monitoring, and alignment of human and material resources within an integrated framework designed to achieve educational objectives (Obi & Iwuchukwu, 2021). Through such structured organization, principals can create a stable, supportive learning environment that significantly impacts student academic performance (Umeh & Yusuf, 2022). Here, academic performance refers to measurable outcomes that indicate the extent to which specific educational goals are achieved within instructional settings, including schools, colleges, and universities (Anderson & White, 2019).

The scope of a principal's authority in secondary schools, as noted by Ogbonnaya (2018), includes not only their positional role but also key functional responsibilities, such as implementing educational programs, ensuring adequate facilities, and fostering a conducive teaching and learning environment (Mgbodile, 2017). Ogbonnaya categorizes these roles into five main areas: educational program development and implementation, staff development, student relations, community relations, and financial management, all of which collectively enhance school performance and student success (Ogbonnaya, 2018; Bello & Ahmed, 2023). In particular, principals' roles extend to school plant management, instructional supervision, incentives provision, financial oversight, and student discipline (Ibrahim & Tijani, 2019). This study focuses specifically on the impact of principals' financial management and student discipline on academic performance in secondary schools within Benue State.

Research further emphasizes the importance of principals' financial management for improving student outcomes in Nigerian secondary schools. Effective financial management by school principals ensures the proper allocation and utilization of funds to support educational resources, facilities, and instructional materials—all factors directly influencing student achievement (Ogbogu, 2017). Studies show that schools with principals who practice sound

budgeting, resource allocation, and accountability tend to achieve higher academic performance (Akomolafe & Adesua, 2016). Conversely, inadequate financial management often results in shortages of essential learning materials, deteriorating infrastructure, and limited access to quality resources, negatively impacting students' performance (Olufunke & Ebunoluwa, 2019). Consequently, educational researchers in Nigeria highlight the need for principals to adopt transparent and efficient financial practices as a means to support students' academic success and overall school effectiveness.

Additionally, the principal's role in enforcing discipline significantly influences students' academic performance in secondary schools. Effective disciplinary practices foster a positive learning environment, reducing disruptive behaviors and enhancing student focus and engagement (Edeh, 2020; Obasi, 2021). Principals who establish clear behavioral expectations and address misconduct promptly create a school culture that promotes academic success. When discipline is managed effectively, teachers can concentrate on instructional activities, leading to improved academic outcomes (Ajayi & Oyedele, 2022). Conversely, ineffective discipline often results in increased behavioral issues, lowered student morale, and ultimately lower academic performance (Chukwu & Ekene, 2023). Thus, the principal's disciplinary role is essential in fostering an environment that supports high academic achievement. Against this background the study is investigating the influence of principals' administrative roles on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Makurdi Educational Zone.

Statement of the Problem

In the context of secondary education, principals play a crucial role in shaping students' academic performance. In the Makurdi Educational Zone, there is growing concern about how principals' administrative roles, particularly in financial management and discipline, impact student outcomes. Despite the recognized importance of effective school leadership, limited empirical evidence directly addresses the influence of principals' administrative roles on academic performance in this region.

This study aims to address this gap by examining two key aspects of principalship: financial resource management and discipline enforcement. Effective financial management is necessary for providing sufficient educational resources, while a strong disciplinary framework fosters a supportive learning environment. However,

the relationship between these roles and their impact on student performance remains underexplored. By investigating these dynamics, the research seeks to provide insights that can guide policy and practice, ultimately contributing to improved academic outcomes in secondary schools within the Makurdi Educational Zone.

Objective of the Study

The main aim of the study is to investigate the influence of principals' administrative roles on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Makurdi Educational Zone. Specifically the study seeks to:

- i. Investigate the influence of principals' financial management on students' academic performance in secondary schools.
- ii. Evaluate the impact of principals' disciplinary roles on students' academic performance in secondary schools.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

- i. What is the influence of principals' financial management on students' academic performance in secondary schools?
- ii. How does the disciplinary role of principals influence students' academic performance in secondary schools?

Hypotheses

- i. Principals' financial management has no significant influence on students' academic performance in secondary schools.
- ii. Principals' disciplinary role has no significant influence on students' academic performance in secondary schools.

Methodology

This study adopted the survey design. Survey research design according to Emaikwu (2012) is one, which a group of people or items are studied by collecting and analyzing data from a few group of people considered being a representative sample of the entire population. The design is considered appropriate because it allows for the collection of data from a sample that is a true representative of the population in a systematic manner. It also permits the collection of data from respondents in the natural setting. The design also enables the researcher to collect reliable data from a significant number of the population objectively. The target population of the study is 14032. This comprise teaching and non-teaching staffs in all the government secondary schools in Makurdi Educational Zone. Teaching and non-teaching staff were chosen because they are the ones who are more involved in the management process in higher institutions in the state. The sample size for this study is 395. It was drawn using Taro Yamane's Formula for sample size determination. The study adopted a multi-stage sampling techniques. This is because the study involves various stages and each stage requires different sampling techniques. The sampling techniques that

was used included purposive, proportionate stratified random sampling and simple random sampling technique. The first stage of selection was the selection of higher institutions in all the three zones in the state using purposive sampling technique. Proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used to sample the teaching and non-teaching staff of each sampled higher institutions respectively. Finally, simple random sampling technique was again use to select the teaching and non-teaching staff in the final sample

Data were collected using a self-structured questionnaire titled *Influence of Principals' Administrative Roles on Students' Academic Performance Questionnaire (PAROSPQ)*. This instrument, developed by the researcher, employed a four-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree) to address the study's research questions. The design of the questionnaire allowed respondents to express varying levels of agreement or disagreement, which facilitated the analysis of nuanced responses regarding administrative influences on academic performance.

To ensure the validity of the instrument, the questionnaire was reviewed thoroughly by the researcher's supervisor and three additional experts from the Faculty of Education at the Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi. This validation process assessed face and content validity, with reviewers providing critiques and recommendations to improve clarity, relevance, and accuracy, ensuring the questionnaire could effectively elicit the required information. Reliability testing of the questionnaire involved a trial conducted in two schools outside the main sample, with data collected from 40 teachers. Cronbach's alpha was used to determine internal consistency, resulting in a reliability coefficient of 0.92, which indicated high reliability according to Denga's (2003) threshold of 0.70 or above. This high reliability suggested that the instrument was consistent and dependable for the study. Three research assistants were engaged to administer the questionnaire, ensuring consistency and accuracy. Each respondent had up to two days to complete the questionnaire, with the researcher and assistants collecting completed responses promptly.

Data analysis employed descriptive statistics, specifically mean scores and standard deviation, to answer the research questions. A mean score cut-off point of 2.50 was used to determine whether a particular factor was deemed influential. Chi-square analysis tested the hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance, which was appropriate for examining significant differences between group means. This statistical method enabled the researcher to determine whether observed differences were significant enough to support the study's hypotheses (Emaikwu, 2012).

RESULTS

4.1. Descriptive Analysis

Research Question one: What is the influence of principals' financial management on students' academic performance in secondary schools?

Table 1 : Mean and Standard Deviation of Respondents on Influence of principals' financial management on students' academic performance in secondary schools?

S/N	Item Statement	Mean	StdDev	Decision
1	The principal effectively allocates financial resources for educational materials, contributing to better academic performance.	2.70	1.08	High Influence
2	The principal involves teachers in budget planning and financial decisions, which enhances instructional quality.	2.81	0.88	High Influence
3	The principal actively seeks additional funding or grants for school programs, positively impacting student learning outcomes.	3.08	0.90	High Influence
4	The financial management process is transparent to students and parents, fostering trust and engagement that supports academic success.	2.91	0.91	High Influence
5	The availability of financial resources positively affects my learning experience and overall academic performance.	2.86	1.18	High Influence
GRAND MEAN		2.87	0.98	High Influence

Source: Field Work 2024

The table analyses respondents' perceptions of how principals' financial management influences students' academic performance in secondary schools, revealing a grand mean of 2.87, categorized as "High Influence." Individual statements highlight that actively seeking additional funding (mean = 3.08) is viewed as the most impactful practice, while effective allocation of financial resources (mean = 2.70) received the lowest score. Other notable aspects include involving teachers in budget planning (mean = 2.81), ensuring transparency (mean = 2.91), and acknowledging the positive effect of available resources on learning experiences (mean = 2.86). The standard deviations, ranging from 0.88 to 1.18, indicate some variability in perceptions, particularly regarding resource availability. Overall, the findings underscore the critical role of effective financial management by principals in enhancing academic performance, suggesting that schools could benefit from improved financial practices.

Research Question Two: How does the disciplinary role of principals influence students' academic performance in secondary schools?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Respondents on influence of disciplinary role of principals on students' academic performance in secondary schools

S/N	Item Statement	Mean	StdDev	Decision
6	The school's disciplinary policies are clearly communicated by the principal, creating a conducive learning environment.	2.87	1.03	High Influence
7	The principal's disciplinary actions are fair and consistent, leading to improved student behavior and focus on academics.	2.70	0.97	High Influence
8	The principal frequently engages with students regarding behavior expectations, which encourages a commitment to academic excellence.	2.75	0.79	High Influence
9	The principal effectively handles disciplinary issues to promote a positive learning environment that enhances academic performance.	3.15	0.91	High Influence
10	The principal's approach to discipline positively impacts my academic performance and motivation to succeed	2.95	0.95	High Influence
GRAND MEAN		2.88	0.93	High Influence

Source: Field Work 2022

The table presents an analysis of respondents' perceptions regarding the influence of principals' disciplinary roles on students' academic performance in secondary schools, with a grand mean of 2.88 indicating a "High Influence" overall. Key findings include that the principal's effective handling of disciplinary issues (mean = 3.15) is viewed as having the most significant positive impact on creating a conducive learning environment that enhances academic performance. Additionally, the communication of disciplinary policies (mean = 2.87) is recognized for fostering a supportive atmosphere for learning. The fairness and consistency of disciplinary actions (mean = 2.70) are also seen as crucial for improving student behavior and focus. Engaging with students about behavior expectations (mean = 2.75) is perceived as encouraging a commitment to academic excellence, while the principal's disciplinary approach (mean = 2.95) is noted for positively affecting students' motivation and performance. The standard deviations, ranging from 0.79 to 1.03, indicate relatively consistent perceptions among respondents, particularly regarding the engagement with students on behavior expectations. Overall, the findings highlight the importance of a principled approach to discipline in promoting a positive learning environment and improving students' academic outcomes.

4.2.2 Testing Hypotheses

Chi-square was used in testing the hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level of significance

Hypothesis Two: Principals' financial management has no significant influence on students' academic performance in secondary schools.

Table 3: Chi-Square Test on influence Principals' financial on students' academic performance in secondary schools.

	Df	x^2_{cal}	Sig	Alpha Level	Remark
Pearson Chi-square	3	40.460	.000	.05	Significant
Number of Valid Cases		395			

P<.05

The chi-square test results in Table 3 indicate a statistically significant influence of principals' financial management on students' academic performance in secondary schools. With a calculated chi-square value of 40.460 and a significance (p-value) of .000, which is below the alpha level of .05, the result is deemed significant. This finding suggests that there is a meaningful association between principals' financial management practices and students' academic outcomes, supporting the hypothesis that effective financial management by principals positively impacts academic performance. The analysis included 365 valid cases, which strengthens the reliability of these results.

Hypothesis two: Principals' disciplinary role has no significant influence on students' academic performance in secondary schools.

Table 4: Chi-Square Test on influence of Principals' disciplinary role on students' academic performance in secondary schools.

	Df	x^2_{cal}	Sig	Alpha Level	Remark
Pearson Chi-square	3	89.900	.000	.05	Significant
Number of Valid Cases		395			

P<.05

The chi-square test results in Table 4 demonstrate a statistically significant influence of principals' disciplinary roles on students' academic performance in secondary schools. The calculated chi-square value of 89.900 and a significance level (p-value) of .000, which is below the alpha level of .05, indicate that the relationship is significant. This finding implies a substantial association between the disciplinary roles exercised by principals and students' academic outcomes, suggesting that effective disciplinary management by principals positively influences academic performance. The test included 365 valid cases, providing robustness to the analysis and findings.

Discussion of Findings

In this study, two null hypotheses were formulated and tested to understand the impact of various leadership styles on teachers' job performance. The findings are discussed below:

The first finding reveals that principals' financial management has significant influence on students' academic performance in secondary schools. This result aligns with Oladele's (2020) study, which indicated that financial management by school principals does directly contribute to improved academic outcomes among students. Oladele's research suggests that while financial resources are essential for the day-to-day functioning of schools, other factors such as instructional quality and student motivation may play a more prominent role in shaping academic achievement. Further supporting this view, Nwokocha (2022) found a strong correlation between principals' financial management practices and students' academic performance. Nwokocha posited that effective allocation of funds translate into academic success when complemented by strategic instructional practices and effective classroom management.

The second finding, in contrast, highlights a significant impact of the principal's disciplinary role on students' academic performance in secondary schools. Agbo (2020) observed that principals who consistently enforce structured and fair disciplinary measures tend to foster an environment more conducive to learning, thereby positively affecting students' academic performance. Agbo's findings emphasize the importance of discipline in creating a focused and supportive school atmosphere, which reduces disruptive behavior and allows teachers to concentrate on instruction, ultimately enhancing student outcomes. Yusuf (2022) further examined this perspective and, intriguingly, found a contrasting result. Yusuf's study concluded that the principal's disciplinary role showed no significant impact on academic performance, suggesting that while discipline may enhance school order and behavior, it might not directly influence academic achievements without complementary instructional improvements.

Together, these findings illustrate the complexity of school management roles, indicating that financial management alone may not drive academic success, while the impact of disciplinary practices may vary based on how they are implemented and perceived in different school environments. This suggests a need for a more nuanced understanding of the interplay between school administration practices and student outcomes, encouraging further research on how specific management strategies contribute to holistic academic improvements.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that principals' financial management and their disciplinary roles both have significant influences on students' academic performance in secondary schools. The evidence suggests that effective financial management is crucial for ensuring that adequate resources are allocated to support teaching and learning. When principals engage in sound budgeting and resource

allocation, they can create a more supportive educational environment, which directly impacts student achievement. Additionally, the findings indicate that the principal's disciplinary role significantly affects academic performance. By implementing structured and fair disciplinary practices, principals can cultivate a positive school culture that encourages student engagement and minimizes disruptive behaviors. This conducive learning environment allows teachers to focus more on instructional activities, thereby enhancing academic outcomes.

In light of these results, it is clear that both financial management and effective discipline are essential components of successful school leadership. Principals must balance these roles to foster an environment that supports high academic achievement. Future research should further explore the interplay between these two factors to identify comprehensive strategies that can lead to improved academic performance in secondary schools.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations have been proposed to enhance teachers' job performance in primary schools:

1. To improve academic performance, it is crucial to enhance financial management training for principals. This training should focus on key areas such as budgeting, resource allocation, and financial accountability. By equipping school leaders with the necessary skills and knowledge, principals will be better positioned to effectively manage their schools' finances. This includes making informed decisions about allocating resources toward essential educational materials, facilities, and programs that directly support student learning and achievement. Such training can lead to more strategic financial planning, ensuring that funds are utilized efficiently to create an environment conducive to academic success.
2. Additionally, schools should implement comprehensive discipline policies that are clear, consistent, and fair. These policies should be developed in consultation with teachers, staff, students, and parents to ensure a shared understanding of behavioral expectations. Training for principals and staff on effective disciplinary practices is essential, as it promotes a positive school culture that encourages respect and accountability. Furthermore, involving students in discussions about discipline can enhance their understanding and commitment to maintaining a conducive learning environment. By fostering an atmosphere of respect and accountability, schools can significantly improve student engagement, which, in turn, can lead to better academic performance.

References

- Adewale, A. (2019). The significance of education in fostering self-reliance and responsible citizenship. *Nigerian Journal of Educational Studies*, 12(1), 45-59.
- Agbo, A. (2020). The role of principals in enforcing discipline to improve student academic performance. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 58(2), 145-159.
- Ajayi, O. J., & Oyedele, A. F. (2022). The impact of effective disciplinary practices on students' academic performance in secondary schools. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 50(4), 523-538.
- Ajibola, A. (2018). The role of school principals in enhancing student outcomes: A focus on management practices. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 32(2), 230-245.
- Akomolafe, C. O., & Adesua, A. (2016). Effective financial management in schools: Implications for student achievement. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 54(3), 234-248.
- Anderson, R., & White, T. (2019). Measuring academic performance in educational settings: A comprehensive approach. *Educational Research Review*, 14, 1-15.
- Ayeni, A. J., & Akinfolarin, A. O. (2019). Concerns regarding students' performance in WASCE: A review of educational stakeholders' perspectives. *Educational Research and Reviews*, 14(10), 351-360.
- Bello, A., & Tunde, A. (2021). Examining the determinants of students' academic performance in secondary schools: A case study. *African Journal of Educational Research*, 27(2), 77-90.
- Bello, M. A., & Ahmed, A. (2023). Enhancing school performance through effective management practices: Insights from Nigerian principals. *Journal of Educational Leadership*, 6(1), 42-58.
- Chukwu, J., & Ekene, O. (2023). The relationship between discipline and academic performance in secondary schools: Evidence from Nigeria. *Educational Psychology Review*, 35(1), 67-85.
- Denga, D. I. (2003). *Introduction to educational measurement and evaluation*. 3rd ed. Rapid Educational Publishers.
- Edeh, J. A. (2020). Discipline as a factor in academic performance among secondary school students. *Journal of Studies in Education*, 10(4), 66-77.
- Emaikwu, S. O. (2012). *Fundamentals of Research Methods and Statistics*. Selfers Academic Press Limited.

- Ibrahim, B., & Tijani, S. (2019). The impact of principals' roles on students' academic success: A focus on discipline and supervision. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 10(20), 114-123.
- Lydia, J., & Nasongo, J. (2020). The principal's role as an educational leader: Implications for school performance. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 34(3), 547-561.
- Mgbodile, O. C. (2017). Functional responsibilities of school principals: A framework for effective school administration. *Nigerian Journal of Management Studies*, 14(2), 101-110.
- Nwokocha, A. (2022). Financial management practices and their influence on academic performance in secondary schools. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 36(1), 57-73.
- Nwosu, M. C., & Emeka, E. (2023). Administrative challenges facing school principals and their impact on academic performance. *Journal of Educational Administration and Policy Studies*, 15(1), 12-21.
- Obasi, A. (2021). Addressing misconduct in schools: The role of principals in fostering a positive academic environment. *Journal of Educational Research*, 15(3), 203-218.
- Obi, A. O., & Iwuchukwu, P. (2021). Organizational strategies for educational success: The role of school principals. *African Journal of Educational Management*, 8(1), 88-97.
- Ogbogu, C. (2017). Financial management practices in secondary schools: Implications for student performance. *Journal of Education and Training Studies*, 5(9), 121-130.
- Ogbonnaya, A. N. (2018). The authority and responsibilities of principals in secondary schools: A framework for effective leadership. *Journal of Educational Leadership and Policy*, 5(2), 1-14.
- Okechukwu, O. (2020). The role of educational administrators in enhancing students' academic performance in Nigeria. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 34(5), 973-987.
- Oladele, O. (2020). The impact of financial management on students' academic success in secondary schools. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 11(6), 76-84.
- Olatunji, S. O., & Bello, O. S. (2022). Leadership styles of principals and their influence on student outcomes. *Journal of School Leadership*, 32(6), 789-804.
- Olufunke, A., & Ebunoluwa, S. (2019). Consequences of inadequate financial management on school performance in Nigeria. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 47(4), 589-605.

Umeh, M., & Yusuf, S. (2022). The influence of school climate on academic performance: The mediating role of principal leadership. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 110, 101886.

Yusuf, I. (2022). Exploring the relationship between school discipline and academic performance: A study of secondary schools. *Educational Studies*, 48(3), 325-339.