

Delegation and Task Prioritization as Correlates of Primary School Effectiveness in Southwest, Nigeria

AUTHOR(S): IDOWU Olubunmi Mary

Abstract:

Leadership practices play a vital role in determining the quality and effectiveness of primary education, yet limited attention has been given to how delegation and task prioritization influence school outcomes at this foundational level in Southwest Nigeria. This study examined delegation and task prioritization as correlates of primary school effectiveness across selected public primary schools in the region. A descriptive survey design was adopted, involving 135 head teachers and 1,350 teachers selected through a multistage sampling procedure. Data were collected using validated and reliable researcher-designed instruments namely the Delegation and Task Prioritisation Questionnaire (DTPQ) and the Primary School Effectiveness Questionnaire (PSEQ). Analyses were conducted using descriptive statistics and Pearson Product Moment Correlation at the 0.05 significance level. Findings revealed a significant positive relationship between delegation and primary school effectiveness ($r = 0.605$; $p < 0.05$) and an equally significant relationship between task prioritization and school effectiveness ($r = 0.661$; $p < 0.05$). These results indicate that effective distribution of responsibilities and strategic prioritization of tasks enhance operational efficiency, teacher performance, and overall school productivity. The study concludes that strengthening leadership competencies in delegation and task management is essential for improving learning outcomes and advancing educational development in Southwest Nigeria.

Keywords: Delegation, Task Prioritization, School Effectiveness, Head Teachers, Leadership Practices,

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About Author

Author(s):

IDOWU Olubunmi Mary

Bamidele Olumilua University of Education, Science and Technology,

Ikere Ekiti, Ekiti State

idowuolubunmi79@gmail.com



Introduction

Education remains a cornerstone of national development, serving as the foundation upon which societies build human capital capable of driving economic, social, and political advancement. In Nigeria, the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2013) emphasizes through the National Policy on Education that the attainment of educational goals depends on well-structured frameworks for educational delivery, quality assurance mechanisms, and efficient management strategies that promote teacher professionalism and overall system effectiveness. As the first level of formal education, primary schooling is critical to building the foundational competencies upon which later learning and citizenship participation are anchored. It is at this stage that pupils acquire essential skills, values, and knowledge that shape their academic trajectories and lifelong learning potential. Thus, the effectiveness of primary schools is pivotal, not only for individual development but also for national progress, as strong educational foundations enable societies to address poverty, ignorance, and underdevelopment while promoting socio-economic growth.

School effectiveness is commonly described as the extent to which educational institutions achieve their stated objectives and respond to the needs of learners and their environments. Within primary schools, effectiveness reflects the degree to which intellectual development, character formation, and basic literacy and numeracy competencies are attained (Benstowe & Obianwu, 2023). Head teachers, as the administrative and instructional leaders of primary schools, play a central role in improving these outcomes. Their ability to effectively manage human and material resources is fundamental to ensuring quality instructional delivery and fostering a supportive learning environment (Lema & Otieno, 2022). In contexts where resource constraints, staff turnover, and performance challenges exist, strategic leadership becomes even more essential to driving school improvement and promoting stability within the educational system.

However, achieving primary school effectiveness in Southwest Nigeria has been hindered by persistent operational and instructional challenges. Reports indicate irregular teacher attendance, poor lesson delivery, limited mastery of subject content, and weak adaptation to curriculum innovations. These issues negatively affect pupils' performance, particularly in the foundational domains of reading, writing, and arithmetic, which are essential for subsequent academic success. Inconsistent enforcement of school rules, weak communication among stakeholders, and the underutilisation of instructional materials further exacerbate the situation. Inadequate improvisation of teaching aids and minimal integration of modern pedagogical strategies also restrict teachers' ability to provide engaging and effective classroom experiences (Trentepohl et al., 2022). As these deficiencies compound, many primary schools struggle to meet national educational standards, undermining the goals articulated in the National Policy on Education.

Within this context, leadership practices such as delegation and task prioritization are increasingly recognised as strategic approaches that can enhance school management and improve instructional outcomes. Delegation allows head teachers to distribute responsibilities across staff members, ensuring that essential tasks receive adequate attention and reducing the likelihood of administrative overload. When effectively implemented, delegation promotes efficiency, shared ownership, and increased teacher participation in school decision-making processes. It not only enables school leaders to focus on instructional supervision and strategic planning but also contributes to enhanced teacher



satisfaction and organizational cohesion. Research evidence suggests that effective time management practices, including delegation, foster improved school performance and strengthen teacher–student relationships (Javornik et al., 2023; Lema & Otieno, 2022). Delegation also reduces procrastination and supports systematic task execution, which are essential for maintaining an orderly and productive school environment (Trentepohl et al., 2022). Studies across different educational contexts consistently affirm that delegation enhances leaders' efficiency and substantially contributes to organizational effectiveness (Benstowe & Obianwu, 2023).

Scholarly findings from multiple studies further highlight the importance of delegation in improving school outcomes. For instance, Kongnyuy (2020) demonstrated that delegation significantly enhances the quality of education delivered in schools, noting a strong relationship between distributed authority and improved educational practices. Similarly, Berezi (2024) reported a strong positive correlation between principals' delegation strategies and administrative effectiveness in secondary schools, emphasizing that trust and recognition of teachers' qualifications are essential for successful delegation. Aja-Okorie and Oko (2021) also found that principals in public secondary schools frequently delegate supervisory and disciplinary responsibilities, with such practices contributing to smoother school operations. Evidence from Morake et al. (2012) revealed consistent delegation practices in primary schools, where administrators collaborate with subordinates to reduce workload burdens. Studies in broader organizational contexts, such as those by Dionísio et al. (2022) and Galdames-Calderón (2023), highlight that distributed leadership and engagement enhance flexibility, shared responsibility, and professional development, further validating the relevance of delegation in educational settings. Collectively, these findings underscore the potential of delegation to strengthen school management, improve teacher effectiveness, and promote overall educational quality.

Alongside delegation, task prioritization is another vital time management strategy that supports school effectiveness. Prioritization allows head teachers to allocate time and attention to the most critical administrative and instructional activities, such as teacher supervision, curriculum implementation, and student welfare. Structured prioritization reduces distractions, enhances focus on high-impact tasks, and enables more systematic planning of school operations. Research has shown that structured prioritization mitigates procrastination and strengthens organizational capacity to meet set objectives, a necessity for sustainable educational development (Valente et al., 2024; Trentepohl et al., 2022). Prioritization also improves collaboration among staff and creates opportunities for meaningful engagement between head teachers, teachers, and other stakeholders, thereby enhancing school functioning (Lema & Otieno, 2022).

Empirical findings further validate the role of task prioritization in improving educational outcomes. Studies such as Sajeevanie (2020) reveal a strong positive correlation between prioritization skills and academic achievement among university lecturers. Ugwulashi (2013) found that prioritization significantly improves instructional delivery even in resource-constrained environments, enabling teachers to focus on tasks that yield the highest educational returns. Victor (2017) similarly demonstrated that prioritization enhances principals' administrative effectiveness by helping them manage competing demands more efficiently. Among students, prioritization has been found to correlate positively with academic achievement, indicating its broader relevance across educational levels (Adigun &



Bassey, 2021). Although some studies, such as Calonia et al. (2023), report modest relationships between time management and academic success, the general body of evidence affirms that prioritization remains a central component of effective school leadership and organizational performance.

Given the crucial role of leadership in educational quality, and the evidence demonstrating the influence of delegation and task prioritization on organizational effectiveness, there is a compelling need to examine these variables within the context of primary schools in Southwest Nigeria. Existing studies have largely focused on secondary schools, higher education, or international contexts, leaving a gap in understanding how these leadership strategies function within primary school environments, where foundational learning occurs. Therefore, the present study seeks to investigate the extent to which delegation and task prioritization are associated with primary school effectiveness in Southwest Nigeria. This inquiry is timely and essential, as strengthening leadership practices at the primary school level is pivotal to improving learning outcomes, enhancing teacher performance, and ensuring that Nigeria's educational system aligns with national development goals.

The aim of the study is to examine delegation and task prioritization as correlates of primary school effectiveness in Southwest, Nigeria.

The following research hypotheses were formulated for this study

1. There is no significant relationship between delegation and primary school effectiveness
2. There is no significant relationship between task prioritization and primary school effectiveness

Materials and Methods

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design to investigate delegation, task prioritisation, and primary school effectiveness in Southwest Nigeria. The population comprised all head teachers in the 3,971 public primary schools across the six states in the region. From this population, a sample of 135 public primary schools was selected, involving 135 head teachers and 1,350 teachers. A multistage sampling procedure was used: three states were randomly selected, followed by the random sampling of three Local Government Areas from each senatorial district in the selected states. Five public primary schools were then chosen from each of the 27 Local Government Areas using stratified random sampling. Teachers were selected through proportionate random sampling, while the head teachers were purposively selected to assess their time management practices.

Two self-developed instruments were used for data collection: the Delegation and Task Prioritisation Questionnaire (DTPQ) and the Primary School Effectiveness Questionnaire (PSEQ). The DTPQ consisted of two sections, with Section A capturing demographic data and Section B containing 10 items measuring delegation and task prioritisation using a 4-point Likert scale. The PSEQ also had two sections, with Section A capturing demographic information and Section B containing 25 items assessing school effectiveness using a 5-point Likert scale. Both instruments underwent rigorous face and content validation by experts in Educational Management and Tests and Measurement, who evaluated the clarity, relevance, and alignment of the items with the study objectives. Their feedback ensured the refinement of ambiguous statements and the inclusion of all necessary components for accurate measurement.

Reliability was established through a test-retest procedure carried out in four public primary schools outside the sampled area. The instruments were administered twice within two



weeks to 80 teachers and four head teachers, and the resulting data analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The reliability coefficients obtained 0.84 for DTPQ and 0.87 for PSEQ indicated strong consistency. Data collection was carried out personally by the researcher with assistance from trained research aides to ensure proper administration and retrieval of the instruments. The data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics and Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) to test the study's hypotheses at the 0.05 significance level.

Results

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between delegation and primary school effectiveness

Table 1: Relationship between delegation and primary school effectiveness

Variables	N	Mean	Stand Dev	r-cal	P-value
Delegation	135	16.84	2.11	0.605*	0.000
Primary School Effectiveness	135	102.28	5.49		

*P<0.05

Table 1 showed that the r-cal value of 0.605 is significant at 0.05 level of significance because the P-value (0.000) < 0.05. The null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is a significant relationship between delegation and primary school effectiveness in Southwest, Nigeria.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between task prioritization and primary school effectiveness

Table 2: Relationship between task prioritization and primary school effectiveness

Variables	N	Mean	Stand Dev	r-cal	P-value
Task Prioritization	135	16.71	2.18	0.661*	0.000
Primary School Effectiveness	135	102.28	5.49		

*P<0.05

Table 2 showed that the r-cal value of 0.661 is significant at 0.05 level of significance because the P-value (0.000) < 0.05. The null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is a significant relationship between task prioritization and primary school effectiveness in Southwest, Nigeria.

Discussion

The results showed that there was a significant relationship between delegation and primary school effectiveness. The implication here is that effective delegation contributes to improved school performance by empowering teachers, reducing administrative overload for headteachers, and promoting shared responsibility in school management. This indicates that when authority is distributed strategically, teachers are not only more accountable but also more engaged in achieving school goals. This finding can be explained by the fact that delegation enhances trust and collaboration, giving teachers a sense of ownership over instructional and administrative tasks, which in turn improves compliance and strengthens overall performance. This finding aligns with Kongnyuy (2020), who reported that delegation of authority enhanced the provision of quality education, although principals' personal philosophies on delegation sometimes limited its impact. Berezi (2024) also confirmed a positive relationship between administrators' trust in teachers' qualifications and effective



delegation practices, noting that such strategies fostered compliance and improved programme implementation. Similarly, Aja-Okorie and Oko (2021) found that delegation of supervisory duties enhanced school management in Ebonyi State, while Morake et al. (2012) emphasized its role in workload management and cooperation between school leaders and staff. These findings are further supported by Alasomuka (2020), who argued that delegation frees leaders to focus on broader institutional objectives, thereby enhancing overall leadership effectiveness.

The study further indicated that task prioritization was significantly related to primary school effectiveness. The implication is that headteachers who prioritize tasks are able to direct time and resources toward activities with the greatest impact, ensuring efficient execution of school responsibilities. This suggests that effective prioritization improves decision-making and supports the timely completion of essential school functions. This outcome is likely due to the fact that prioritization enables headteachers to identify urgent and important responsibilities, thereby streamlining administrative and instructional activities to maximize productivity. Sajeewanie (2020) provided evidence in support of this finding by showing that prioritization significantly influenced academic success among university professors, suggesting its relevance across education levels. Ugwulashi (2013) similarly reported that prioritization enabled more effective allocation of time to instructional tasks, thus enhancing school performance. Victor (2017) further observed that principals who effectively prioritized duties, such as curriculum implementation, were more successful in driving school effectiveness. Adigun and Bassey (2021) reinforced this by linking students' academic achievement to prioritization practices, confirming the broader educational benefits of this strategy. However, Calonia et al. (2023) offered a contrasting perspective, reporting little relationship between prioritization and academic success among education students, suggesting that contextual differences may influence the impact of prioritization on outcomes.

Conclusion

The findings of the study reveal that both delegation and task prioritization play crucial and positive roles in enhancing primary school effectiveness in Southwest Nigeria. The significant correlation between delegation and school effectiveness indicates that when head teachers distribute responsibilities efficiently, school operations improve and educational goals are better achieved. Similarly, the strong relationship between task prioritization and school effectiveness underscores the importance of structured time management practices in ensuring that essential administrative and instructional activities receive adequate attention. Overall, the study demonstrates that effective leadership practices, particularly in the areas of delegation and task prioritization, are central to improving the performance and productivity of primary schools.

Recommendations

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

1. Head teachers should adopt systematic delegation practices that assign specific tasks to competent staff members, thereby promoting shared responsibility and improving the overall efficiency of school operations.
2. Regular training workshops on time management and task prioritization should be organized for school leaders and teachers to strengthen their capacity to identify and focus on high-impact activities.



3. Education authorities should integrate leadership development programmes into professional development initiatives to equip head teachers with practical skills in delegation, planning, and prioritization needed to enhance school effectiveness.

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