



Educational Management Strategies for Building a Skilled and Inclusive Society in Rivers State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study examined educational management strategies for building a skilled and inclusive society in Rivers State, Nigeria. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised 6,043 respondents (367 principals and 5,676 teachers). The sample of the study was 375 respondents obtained through Taro Yamane formula. The stratified random sampling was used to obtain 37 principals and 338 teachers. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire titled Educational Management Strategies for Building a skilled and Inclusive society Questionnaire. The questionnaire was structured in the four-point summated rating scale response options of very high extent, high extent, low extent and very low extent. The instrument was validated by two experts in measurement and evaluation. Cronbach Alpha was used to obtain the reliability index of 0.86. Mean and Standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while z-test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. 375 copies of questionnaire were administered but only 372 copies were retrieved and used for the study. The study found no significant differences in the mean ratings of secondary school principals and teachers on the extent to which investing in teacher development and improving educational leadership as educational management strategies enhance the building of a skilled and inclusive society in Rivers State. The study concluded that investing in teacher development and improving educational leadership enhances the building of a skilled and inclusive society to a high extent. It was recommended that government should embark on training and development of teachers for them to acquire modern skills that will enable them contribute to the attainment of a skilled and inclusive society.

Keywords: Educational Management Strategies, Inclusive Society, Skilled Society.

Introduction

A society is a group of people who live within a geographical area, that share values, and work towards achieving a defined goal. It is an enclave which houses people from different background. It survives by succeeding generations. Every society follows laid down trends, norms and cultural practices (Obioha & Ariguzo, 2014). Clark in Onyeike (2014) posited that a society is an extended social group with distinct cultural and economic organization. It is characterized by patterns of relationships between individuals and entails a group of individuals who share a common system of customs, values and laws. From a conceptual viewpoint, society is centred on the fact that both men and society are units which are inexplicably linked. Human beings are an essential component of society secures its benefits from human interaction and association. Similarly, without society humans cannot secure their existence. Thus, there is an unavoidable relationship between man and society each depending on the other for its very survival (Onyeike, 2014). In an attempt to associate, communicate and understand the behavioural patterns of others within the society, man educates himself and acquires basic skills.

A skill is the habit of doing a particular thing competently. It is the ability to do a task expertly. It is the art of possessing the ability, power, authority or competence to do the task required of an individual on the job (Bolkt-Lew & Foster in Godspower & Ekpo, 2021; Abraham-Ibe, 2021). A skill is the manual dexterity acquired through repetitive performance of an operation. It does not depend solely upon a person's fundamental, innate capacities, but it must be developed through training, practice and experience acquired by an individual (Okorie in Godspower & Ekpo, 2021). On the other hand, inclusion is the fact of including something. It is the fact of being included (Hornby, 2010). It is part of a dynamic process of change to restructure a system to enable it to increase its capacity to respond to, and accommodate the diversity of needs (National Council for Special Education, 2024). It is seen as making an important contribution to the creation of an inclusive society. In the light of above facts, a skilled and inclusive society is a society that houses people with diverse skills and reduces the exclusion of individuals in acquiring education. It promotes equal access to education and ensures that marginalized groups such as girls, women, and persons living with disabilities have opportunities to participate in acquiring skills. Therefore, building a skilled and inclusive society can be enhanced through effective educational management.

Educational management is a field of study and practice concerned with the operation of educational organizations. The process of articulating the aims of education is at the heart of

education management (Ololube, 2017). Nwankwo in Okoroma (2019) stated that educational management is the arrangement of human and material resources as well as programmes available for education in such a way that they are carefully and systematically used for the achievement of educational objectives. It is this understanding that the federal government of Nigeria's national policy on education (FRN, 2014) noted that education is essential for the acquisition of appropriate skills and the development of mental, physical and social abilities and competencies that will equip individuals to live in and contribute to the development of the society. In the same vein, educational management promotes culturally responsive education that recognizes and value diversity of students' background and experiences. The purpose of educational management is to adequately allocate and manage resources effectively in order to promote the provision of education for all, and to enable individuals acquire information, skills and change in behaviour that will make them contribute very meaningfully to the improvement of their society (Berkat et al., 2025).

Berkat et al (2025) noted that building a skilled and inclusive society demands the facilitation of an inclusive education and teaching practices that take into consideration the diversity of learners, their full engagement, their respect for who they are, and their feeling safe and enjoying of sense of belonging, which can be achieved through effective educational management. Therefore, there are series of educational management strategies a society that is skilled and inclusive. These strategies include ensuring for building equitable access to education, investing in teacher development, promoting inclusive education, fostering lifelong learning, improving educational leadership, strengthening curriculum relevance, leveraging technology in education, encouraging community and stakeholders participation, using data-driven decision making, strengthening technical and vocational education and training (TVET), among others.

Investing in teacher development is an educational management strategy for building a skilled and inclusive society. A teacher is a person who delivers an educational programme, assess learner participation in an education programme and/or administers or provides consistent and substantial leadership to the educational programme (Queensland College of Teachers, 2015). Afe in Nwakougha (2014) asserted that a teacher is a person who instructs to provide the teaching learning process and who, in his capacity to do this function at various capacities as an educator, instructor, tutor, lecturer, counselor, professor, etc. Ojiako and Anyaogu (2014) posited a teacher is a person who teaches learners usually in an organized setting called school, having been trained and certified in some subject areas and pedagogy from an appropriate

college or university, and who possesses natural gifts that aid teaching and make learning transferable. The teacher is so fundamental that he is at the centre of all reforms and innovations in education.

In societies where things are done in the right ways, teachers are trained to demonstrate behaviours which stimulate and provoke in their learners the ability to think critically and rationally, lead in moral behaviours that can challenge and encourage their learners to reposition themselves in readiness for the tasks ahead as well as go extra miles in ensuring that learners become morally and reasonably responsible in the future (Nwakougha, 2014). Therefore, teachers need to be developed. Investing in teacher development describes the formal ongoing efforts that are made within institutions to improve the performance and self-fulfillment of staff through a variety of educational methods and programmes (Rusubya in Ogbonna, 2024). Teacher development refers to practices, policies, and methods employed to increase teachers' expertise, competencies, and effectiveness in order to benefit the school and individual staff members (Egwegbete, 2024). Teachers need to be given the opportunity to develop on the job in order to acquire new knowledge, skills and abilities in order to grow and contribute maximally to the attainment of school goals (Fasannis in Akomolafe & Bello, 2019).

Teacher development is a systematic development of the knowledge, skills and attitudes required of teachers to perform adequately on a given task. It includes all the planned processes undertaken by the teacher to modify attitude, knowledge, skill and behaviour through learning experience to achieve effective performance in an activity or range of activities (Alachi in Precious-Woko, 2026). It is any learning activity which is directed towards the acquisition of specific knowledge and skill for the purpose of an occupation or task (Cole, 2014). Investing in teacher development has become a necessity due to growing complexity of the work environment, fast and constant change in organizational and technological advancement. In this regard, teacher development is expected to help teachers to acquire, possess and utilize the knowledge and skill needed for effective and efficient job performance (Okotoni & Erero, 2015). Teachers need development programmes to keep abreast of changes in modern society (Iwundu in Precious-Woko, 2026). Educational management plays a critical role in teachers' training and development in order to enhance teaching quality and ensure that students receive the best possible education. The development of teachers' skills and professional competencies is very necessary not only for the teachers but also for the learners in order to build a skilled and inclusive society through educational management.

Improving educational leadership is an educational management strategy for building a skilled and inclusive society. Leadership is the ability to inspire or influence others towards the attainment of institutional goal. It is about working as a team to create dynamic, exciting and inspiring programmes for organizational competitiveness (Nwakudu & Okata, 2015). Ukeje et al in Nwakudu and Okata (2015) asserted that leadership involves the ability to influence, direct and coordinate group activities in such a way that the people work willingly towards achieving the goals and objectives of the organization. Baporikar (2018) stated that leadership, effectively exercised, will result in a team of people who enjoy clear purpose, shared values, who are empowered by knowing that their initiatives are aligned with the supported by team members, and who believe that there is mutual benefit deriving from their individual commitments in turning their common vision into reality. Amah and Nkuda (2014) averred that leadership is the process of providing a suitable environment and influencing people to strive willingly and enthusiastically toward the achievement or attainment of group or organizational goals. The Global Ethics Network (2018) opined that leadership is a process by which an executive can direct, guide and influence the behaviour and work of others towards accomplishment of specific goals in a given situation.

Educational leadership is leadership found in the universities, schools, colleges and other bodies performing teaching, research and training functions. It emphasizes on possessing and applying the leadership skills and abilities necessary for the success of the institution. It involves applying all the processes and obtaining the leadership skills and abilities necessary for the success of the institution's mission (Chiemeka-Unogu, 2018). Nwakudu and OKata (2015) noted that leadership in an educational institution is regarded as an input into the organization intended to influence the behaviour of the members in order to attain the organizational objectives through initiating, motivating, directing and coordinating the functions of other members of the group. Improving leadership in schools entails acquiring some leadership skills to manage the school for the production of students. It promote teaching, learning, administration and research in the school (Nwakudu & Okata, 2015). Based on the above facts, educational management critically examines how leadership affect education quality. Therefore, a well-structured leadership framework fosters an environment where academic activities can thrive, leading to better student engagements and outcomes, as well as national development (Adelakun & Ogunyemi, 2024).

Statement of the Problem

Educational management is the live wire of educational institutions, without which attainment of educational goals will be very difficult, it takes a proactive role in strengthening the development of innovative, critical thinking, problem-solving skills as well as other skills in schools. Effective educational management promotes equal access to education, ensuring that marginalized groups such as girls, women, and persons with disabilities have opportunities to participate and acquire education. But in recent times, it has been observed by the researcher that the issue of accessibility has become a problem, as there are over 15 million out of school children in Nigeria. Currently, the inclusive schools in Nigeria are generally not friendly and accessible to persons with disabilities. Accessibility of routes to major facilities such as classrooms, libraries, laboratories, and others is challenging for persons living with disabilities. Educational management should address these problems in order to close the gap between persons with disabilities and those without, in accessing school facilities and services. Hence, this study examines the extent to which investing in teacher development and improving educational leadership as educational management strategies enhances the building of a skilled and inclusive society in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to examine educational management strategies for building a skilled and inclusive society in Rivers state, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to achieve the following objectives:

1. Identify the extent to which investing in teacher development as an educational management strategy enhances the building of a skilled and inclusive society in Rivers state.
2. Determine the extent to which improving educational leadership as an educational management strategy enhances the building of a skilled and inclusive society in Rivers State.

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of secondary school principals and teachers on the extent to which investing in teacher development as an educational management strategy enhances the building of a skilled and inclusive society in Rivers State.
2. There is no significance difference in the mean ratings of secondary school principals and teachers on the extent to which improving educational leadership as an educational

management strategy enhances the building of a skilled and inclusive society in Rivers State.

Methodology

The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised 6,043 respondents (367 principals and 5,676 teachers) in the 367 public senior secondary schools in Rivers state (Source: Statistics Unit, Planning, Research and Statistics Department, RSSSSB, 2026). The sample of the study consisted of 375 respondents. The Taro Yamane formula was used to obtain the sample size. The stratified random sampling was used in obtaining 37 principals and 338 teachers. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire titled “Educational Management Strategies for Building a Skilled and Inclusive Society Questionnaire (EMSBSISQ)”. The questionnaire was structured in the four-point summated rating scale response options of very high extent (VHE) = 4 points, high extent (HE) = 3 points, low extent (LR) = 2 points, and very low extent (VLE) = 1 point. The instrument was validated by two experts in measurement and evaluation. Cronbach Alpha was used in obtaining the reliability index of 0.86. Mean and standard deviation were used in answering the research questions, while z-test was used in testing the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The criterion decision rule was that any mean value from 3.50 – 4.00 was regarded as VHE, from 2.50 – 3.49 was regarded as HE, from 1.50 – 2.49 was regarded as LE, and from 0.50 – 1.49 was regarded as VLE. Similarly, any hypothesis with z-calculated value less than the z-critical value of + 1.96 was accepted, while any with z-calculated value greater than the z-critical value of + 1.96 was rejected.

Analyses of Data and Results

The analyses of data were presented on Tables. Out of the 375 copies of questionnaire administered to the respondents, only 372 were retrieved and used for the study.

Research Question 1: To what extent does investing in teacher development as an educational management strategy enhance the building of a skilled and inclusive society in Rivers State?

Table 1: Extent to which investing in Teacher Development as an Educational Management Strategy enhances a skilled and inclusive society

S/N	Questionnaire Items	Principals N = 36			Teachers N = 336		
		X ₁	SD ₁	Remarks	X ₂	SD ₂	Remarks
1.	Investigating in teacher development enable teachers to be trained to demonstrate	3.18	0.60	High Extent	3.14	0.61	High Extent

	behaviours that stimulate in learners the ability to think critically.						
2.	It gives teachers the opportunity to acquire new skills in order to contribute to the attainment of a skilled society.	3.16	0.62	High Extent	3.12	0.63	High Extent
3.	It enables teachers acquire specific knowledge for the purpose of developing in learners the required skills in the society.	3.14	0.63	High Extent	3.10	0.68	High Extent
4.	It enables teachers modify their behaviour to achieve effective performance in imparting knowledge to learners in the society.	3.20	0.58	High Extent	3.18	0.58	High Extent
5.	It helps teachers possess and utilize the skills needed for the effective and efficient performance of their duties.	3.10	0.67	High Extent	3.06	0.70	High Extent
6	It enables teachers ensure that learners receive the best possible education to build an inclusive society.	3.06	0.69	High Extent	3.08	0.69	High Extent
	Aggregate Mean/SD	3.14	0.63	3.11	0.65		

Source: Field Survey Data, 2026

The data on Table 1 reveals that items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 with mean values of 3.18, 3.16, 3.14, 3.20, 3.10, 3.06 and standard deviation values of 0.60, 0.62, 0.63, 0.58, 0.67, and 0.69 for principals and mean values of 3.14, 3.12, 3.10, 3.18, 3.06, 3.08 and standard deviation values of 0.61, 0.63, 0.68, 0.58, 0.70, and 0.69 for teachers respectively, fell within the range of high extent. Therefore, with an aggregate mean of 3.14 and standard deviation of 0.63 for principals; and an aggregate mean of 3.11 and standard deviation of 0.65 for teachers respectively, it was evident that secondary school principals and teachers agreed that investing in teacher development as an educational management strategy enhances the building of a skilled and inclusive society in Rivers State to a high extent.

Research Question 2: To what extent does improving educational leadership as an educational management strategy enhance the building of a skilled and inclusive society in Rivers State?

Table 1: Extent to which improving Educational Leadership as an Educational Management Strategy enhances a skilled and inclusive society

S/N	Questionnaire Items	Principals N = 36			Teachers N = 336		
		X ₁	SD ₁	Remarks	X ₂	SD ₂	Remarks
7.	Improving educational leadership enable staff of the school work as a team to create inspiring programmes that enhance students' acquisition of practical skills.	3.20	0.66	High Extent	3.16	0.68	High Extent
8.	It enables principals coordinate school activities in such a way that everyone is included and work towards achieving the goals of the school.	3.26	0.63	High Extent	3.24	0.64	High Extent
9.	It enables principals possess leadership skills and abilities needed for the success of school and society	3.22	0.69	High Extent	3.18	0.66	High Extent
10.	It enables school leaders acquire skills to manage their schools for the production of students who are skillful in the society.	3.28	0.62	High Extent	3.22	0.65	High Extent
11.	It fosters on environment where academic activities leads to better student engagement and societal advancement.	3.10	0.67	High Extent	3.06	0.70	High Extent
6	It enables teachers ensure that learners receive the best possible education to build an inclusive society.	3.24	0.64	High Extent	3.26	0.63	High Extent
	Aggregate Mean/SD	3.24	0.65	3.21	0.65		

Source: Field Survey Data, 2026

The data on Table 2 reveals that items 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 with mean values of 3.20, 3.26, 3.22, 3.28, 3.24 and standard deviation values of 0.66, 0.63, 0.69, 0.62, and 0.64 for principals and mean values of 3.16, 3.24, 3.18, 3.22, 3.26 and standard deviation values of 0.68, 0.64, 0.66, 0.65, and 0.63 for teachers respectively, fell within the range of high extent. Therefore, with an aggregate mean of 3.24 and standard deviation of 0.65 for principals; and an aggregate mean of 3.21 and standard deviation of 0.65 for teachers respectively, it was evident that secondary school principals and teachers agreed that improving educational leadership as an educational management strategy enhances the building of a skilled and inclusive society in Rivers State to a high extent

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of secondary school principals and teachers on the extent to which investing in teacher development as an educational management strategy enhances the building of a skilled and inclusive society in Rivers State.

Table 3: Z-test Analysis of Difference in the Mean Ratings of Principals and Teachers on investing in Teacher Development

Respondents	N	X	SD	Df	Level of Sign.	z-Cal	z-Crit	Decision
Principals	36	3.14	0.63					
				370	0.05	0.28	± 1.96	Ho ₁ Accepted
Teachers	336	3.11	0.65					

Source: Survey Result, 2026

The data on table 3 shows that the z-test statistics calculated and used in testing the null hypothesis was 0.28 while the critical z-value was +1.96, using 370 degree of freedom and 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated z-value was less than the critical z-value, the researcher accepted the null hypothesis of no significant difference in the mean ratings of secondary school principals and teachers on the extent to which investing in teacher development as an educational management strategy enhances the building of a skilled and inclusive society in Rivers State.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of secondary school principals and teachers on the extent to which investing in teacher development as an educational management strategy enhances the building of a skilled and inclusive society in Rivers State.

Table 4: Z-test Analysis of Difference in the Mean Ratings of Principals and Teachers on improving Educational Leadership

Respondents	N	X	SD	Df	Level of Sign.	z-Cal	z-Crit	Decision
Principals	36	3.24	0.65	370	0.05	0.28	±1.96	Ho ₂ Accepted
Teachers	336	3.21	0.65					

Source: Survey Result, 2026

The data on table 4 shows that the z-test statistics calculated and used in testing the null hypothesis was 0.26 while the critical z-value was +1.96, using 370 degree of freedom and 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated z-value was less than the critical z-value, the researcher accepted the null hypothesis of no significant difference in the mean ratings of secondary school principals and teachers on the extent to which improving educational leadership as an educational management strategy enhances the building of a skilled and inclusive society in Rivers State.

Discussion of Findings

On the extent to which investing in teacher development as an educational management strategy enhances the building of a skilled and inclusive society in Rivers State, the finding of this study revealed that investing in teacher development enable teachers to be trained to demonstrate behaviours that stimulate in learners the ability to think critically; gives teachers the opportunity to acquire new skills in order to contribute to the attainment of a skilled society; enable teachers acquire specific knowledge for the purpose of developing in learners the required skills in the society; enable teachers modify their behaviour to achieve effective performance in parting knowledge to learners in the society; helps teachers possess and utilize the skills needed for the effective and efficient performance of their duties; and enable teachers ensure that learners receive the ebst possible education to build an inclusive society. This finding agrees with the assertion of Nwakougha (2014) that in societies where things are done in the right ways, teachers are trained to demonstrate behaviours which stimulate and provoke in their learners the ability to think critically and rationally, lead in moral behaviour that can challenge and encourage their learners to reposition themselves in readiness for the tasks ahead as well as go extra miles in ensuring that learners become morally and reasonable in the future. Iwundu in Precious-Woko (2026) supported that teachers need development programmes to keep abreast of changes in modern society.

On the extent to which improving educational leadership as an educational management strategy enhances the building of a skilled and inclusive society in Rivers State, the finding of this study revealed that improving educational leadership enable staff of the school work as a team to create inspiring programmes that enhance students' acquisition of practical skills; enable principals coordinate school activities in such a way that everyone is included and work towards achieving the goals of the school; enable principals possess leadership skills and abilities needed for the success of school and society, enable school leaders acquire skills to manage their schools for the production of students who are skillful in the society; and fosters an environment where academic activities leads to better student engagement and societal advancement. this finding aligns with the assertion of Baporikar (2018) that lreadership, effectively exercised, will result in a team of people who enjoy clear purpose, shared values, who are empowered by knowing that their initiatives are aligned with and supported by team members, and who believe that there is mutual benefit deriving from their individual commitments in turning their common vision into reality. Adelakun and Ogunyemi (2024) collaborated that a well-structured leadership framework fosters an environment where academic activities can thrive, leading to better student engagements and outcomes, as well as national development.

Results from the findings of this study produced 0.28 and 0.26 z-test analyses of difference in ratings of secondary school principals and teachers on the extent to which investing in teacher development and improving educational leadership as educational management strategies enhances the building of a skilled and inclusive society in Rivers State. This implies that there were no significant differences in the principals and teachers' mean ratings on the extent to which investing in teacher development and improving educational leadership enhances the building of a skilled and inclusive society in Rivers State. this finding is in agreement with the assertion of Berkat et al (2025) that the purpose of educational management is to adequately allocate and manage resources effectively in order to promote the provision of education for all, and to enable individuals acquire information, skills and change in behaviour that will make them contribute very meaningfully to the improvement of their society.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that investing in teacher development and improving educational leadership as educational management strategies enhances the building of a skilled and inclusive society to a high extent. This is because investing in teacher development enable teachers to be trained to demonstrate behaviours that stimulate in learners

the ability to think critically, and improving educational leadership enable staff work as a team to create inspiring programmes that enhance students' acquisition of practical skills.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made by the researcher based on the findings of the study.

1. Government should embark on training and development of teachers for them to acquire modern skills that will enable them contribute to the attainment of a skilled and inclusive society.
2. School administrators should ensure that they possess leadership skills and abilities needed for the success of school and society.

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