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PARTICIPATORY MANAGEMENT AND TEACHERS' COMMITMENT TO WORK IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between participatory management and teachers' commitment to work in public secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study examined the relationship between teachers' participation in decision-making, participation in school planning, participation in policy implementation and their commitment to work. The study adopted a correlational research design. The population comprised teachers in public secondary schools in Rivers State, while a sample of 380 teachers was selected through a multistage sampling procedure. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled Participatory Management and Teachers' Commitment Questionnaire (PMTCQ). Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings indicated positive relationships between teachers' participation in decision-making, school planning and policy implementation and their commitment to work. The study concluded that participatory management is associated with teachers' commitment to work in public secondary schools. It was recommended that school principals should provide appropriate opportunities for teachers to contribute to school decisions, planning activities and policy implementation.

INTRODUCTION

Effective administration of secondary education depends substantially on the quality of interaction between school administrators and teachers. Although principals have formal responsibility for coordinating school activities, teachers are directly involved in teaching, curriculum implementation, student management and several other activities through which educational objectives are pursued. Consequently, the extent to which teachers are involved in the

administrative processes of the school may have implications for their attitude towards their responsibilities and their commitment to organizational goals.

Participatory management represents an approach to administration in which employees are provided opportunities to contribute to decisions and activities affecting the organisation. In educational institutions, participation may take the form of teachers' involvement in decision-making, school planning, committee activities, formulation and implementation of policies and other administrative processes. The underlying principle is that those who are directly involved in implementing school programmes should have opportunities to contribute their knowledge and professional experience to decisions concerning those programmes. The participatory approach therefore differs from highly centralized administration in which decisions are predominantly made by the school head and communicated to teachers for implementation.

The importance of participation in school administration has continued to attract attention in educational management research. Likert's participative management model emphasizes group involvement, communication and shared decision-making as important features of participative administration. In the school setting, this approach recognizes teachers as professionals whose experience and knowledge can contribute to the effective management of educational institutions.

Teachers' participation in decision-making is particularly important because teachers possess practical knowledge of classroom and school conditions. Their involvement may provide administrators with information that may not be readily available through formal administrative channels. Participation may also strengthen communication between principals and teachers and provide opportunities for teachers to contribute to decisions concerning school activities. Abonyi (2024), for instance, found a positive and statistically significant relationship between teachers' participation in decision-making and organizational commitment among teachers in Ghanaian basic schools. Similar attention has been given to teachers' participation in decision-making within Nigerian secondary schools, including schools in Rivers State.

Teachers' participation in school planning is another important dimension of participatory management. School planning involves determining educational priorities, setting objectives, allocating resources and identifying strategies for achieving school goals. Teachers' involvement in this process allows them to contribute practical knowledge concerning instructional activities, students' needs and available resources. Participation in planning may also increase teachers' understanding of school priorities and their sense of responsibility for implementing agreed plans.

Policy implementation constitutes another area in which teachers' participation may be important. Educational policies ultimately require implementation at the school level, where teachers translate policy provisions into everyday practices. Teachers who understand the purpose of policies and participate in discussions concerning their implementation may be better positioned to identify challenges and contribute practical solutions. Participatory approaches may therefore strengthen communication between administrators and teachers and facilitate shared understanding of school policies.

Teachers' commitment to work is an important concern in educational administration because the successful implementation of school programmes depends substantially on teachers' willingness to perform their professional responsibilities. Commitment may be reflected in dedication to

teaching, punctuality, regular attendance, responsibility for assigned duties, participation in school activities and sustained concern for students' learning. Evidence from Nigeria shows that teachers' commitment has been examined as an important factor in school administration. Elijah and Enaohwo (2021), for example, reported a high level of teachers' commitment in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

More recent evidence also connects management practices with teachers' commitment. Comport, Ovat Egbe and Daniel (2025) found a significant relationship between school management techniques and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Cross River State. These findings suggest that the administrative environment within which teachers operate may be associated with their commitment to work.

The Rivers State context is particularly relevant to the present study. Earlier research on teachers' participation in decision-making in Rivers State secondary schools reported low participation in decision-making processes. Other research has also examined participatory management and organizational effectiveness in the secondary school system in Rivers State. These studies demonstrate the relevance of participatory management within the state but do not sufficiently address its relationship with teachers' commitment to work across the three dimensions of decision-making, school planning and policy implementation.

The present study therefore examines the relationship between participatory management and teachers' commitment to work in public secondary schools in Rivers State. Specifically, the study focuses on teachers' participation in decision-making, school planning and policy implementation.

Statement of the Problem

Teachers are expected to demonstrate commitment to their professional responsibilities by attending school regularly, performing instructional duties diligently, participating in school activities and contributing towards the achievement of educational objectives. An administrative environment that recognizes teachers as professionals and allows them to contribute to relevant school decisions may provide a basis for greater involvement and responsibility.

However, school administration may sometimes be characterized by limited teacher involvement in important administrative processes. Where decisions concerning school activities are largely made by administrators without adequate opportunities for teachers to contribute, teachers may have limited influence over matters that directly affect their professional responsibilities. Earlier evidence from Rivers State reported low teacher participation in decision-making processes in secondary schools. At the same time, teachers' commitment remains an important concern in the administration of secondary schools.

The concern is therefore not simply whether teachers are committed to their work, but whether the administrative processes through which they are managed are related to such commitment. Although previous studies have examined participatory management, decision-making and teachers' commitment separately or in other geographical contexts, there is limited evidence combining teachers' participation in decision-making, school planning and policy implementation as dimensions of participatory management in relation to teachers' commitment in public secondary schools in Rivers State. This constitutes the gap that the present study seeks to address.

Purpose of the Study

The study examined the relationship between participatory management and teachers' commitment to work in public secondary schools in Rivers State. Specifically, it examined the relationship between:

teachers' participation in decision-making and their commitment to work;

teachers' participation in school planning and their commitment to work; and

teachers' participation in policy implementation and their commitment to work.

Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between teachers' participation in decision-making and their commitment to work in public secondary schools in Rivers State?
2. What is the relationship between teachers' participation in school planning and their commitment to work in public secondary schools in Rivers State?
3. What is the relationship between teachers' participation in policy implementation and their commitment to work in public secondary schools in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

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

There is no significant relationship between teachers' participation in decision-making and their commitment to work in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

There is no significant relationship between teachers' participation in school planning and their commitment to work in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

There is no significant relationship between teachers' participation in policy implementation and their commitment to work in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Concept of Participatory Management

Participatory management is an administrative approach that encourages employees to contribute to organizational decision-making and other processes affecting their work. In the school environment, it involves creating opportunities for teachers to share ideas, participate in planning, contribute to decisions and take part in activities associated with the implementation of school policies. Rather than viewing administration as an exclusively top-down process, participatory management promotes communication and shared responsibility between administrators and employees.

The relevance of participatory management to education lies in the professional nature of teaching. Teachers possess knowledge derived from classroom experience and direct interaction with

students. Their participation can therefore provide administrators with information that may not be readily available through formal administrative channels. Participatory management may also enhance communication and clarify organizational expectations.

Teachers' Participation in Decision-Making

Teachers' participation in decision-making refers to the extent to which teachers are given opportunities to contribute to decisions concerning school activities, instructional matters, student welfare and other issues affecting their work. Participation may occur through staff meetings, committees, consultation with the principal and other formal or informal mechanisms.

Research has shown that participation in decision-making is relevant to teachers' organizational experiences. Abonyi (2024) found a positive and statistically significant effect of teachers' participation in decision-making on organizational commitment among teachers in Ghanaian basic schools. In Rivers State, research has also examined teachers' participation in decision-making and identified it as an important issue in secondary school administration.

Teachers' Participation in School Planning

School planning involves determining educational priorities, setting objectives, allocating resources and identifying strategies for achieving school goals. Teachers' participation in planning allows them to contribute practical knowledge concerning instructional activities, student needs and available resources.

When teachers participate in planning, they may develop greater understanding of school priorities and the responsibilities expected of them. Participation may also promote a sense of shared responsibility for school programmes because teachers are not merely implementing plans developed entirely by others.

Teachers' Participation in Policy Implementation

Policy implementation refers to the processes through which established educational policies are translated into practical activities within schools. Teachers are important actors in this process because they implement many educational policies directly through their classroom and school responsibilities.

Teachers' participation in policy implementation may include contributing to discussions on policy requirements, interpreting policy provisions, identifying implementation challenges and suggesting practical approaches to achieving policy objectives. Effective communication between principals and teachers is particularly relevant because policy implementation requires shared understanding of expected outcomes.

Teachers' Commitment to Work

Teachers' commitment to work refers to the degree of dedication, responsibility and willingness demonstrated by teachers towards their professional duties and the achievement of school objectives. It may be manifested through punctuality, regular attendance, preparation for teaching, willingness to undertake assigned responsibilities, participation in school activities and sustained concern for students' learning.

The importance of teachers' commitment is evident in studies conducted across Nigeria. Elijah and Enaohwo (2021) reported a high level of teachers' commitment in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. However, evidence from other educational contexts indicates that levels of teachers' commitment may vary according to the administrative and organizational conditions in which teachers work.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Likert's Participative Management Theory

The study is anchored on Likert's Participative Management Theory, particularly the participative-group management system. Likert proposed management systems ranging from highly authoritative forms of administration to participative systems characterised by communication, group involvement and shared decision-making. The participative system places emphasis on trust, communication and involvement of organizational members in decisions affecting the organisation.

The theory is relevant to the present study because schools are organisations in which administrators and teachers must work together to achieve educational objectives. Where teachers are involved in decision-making, planning and implementation processes, they have opportunities to contribute their professional knowledge and develop a stronger connection with organizational activities. The theory therefore provides an appropriate framework for examining whether teachers' participation in school administration is associated with their commitment to work.

Empirical Studies

Abonyi (2024) investigated teachers' participation in decision-making and organizational commitment in Ghanaian basic schools. The study involved 285 teachers and employed descriptive and inferential statistical procedures. The findings showed that teacher participation in decision-making had a positive and statistically significant relationship with organizational commitment.

Comport, Ovat Egbe and Daniel (2025) examined school management techniques and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Ikom Education Zone of Cross River State. Using a correlational design and a sample of 373 teachers, the researchers found a significant composite contribution of school management techniques to teachers' job commitment.

Elijah and Enaohwo (2021) investigated teachers' commitment in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The study involved 380 teachers drawn from a population of 7,425 teachers. The researchers reported a high level of teachers' commitment in relation to school administration and students' academic performance.

Osuji and Koko examined teachers' participation in decision-making in Rivers State secondary schools using 450 teachers. Their findings indicated low participation in decision-making and highlighted the importance of teacher involvement in secondary school management.

The reviewed studies demonstrate that participation and management practices are important areas of educational administration and that teachers' commitment has been investigated in Nigerian secondary schools. However, the present study differs by examining three specific dimensions of

participatory management, namely decision-making, school planning and policy implementation, in relation to teachers' commitment within public secondary schools in Rivers State.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study adopted a correlational research design. The design was appropriate because the study sought to determine the relationship between participatory management and teachers' commitment to work without manipulating the variables

Population and Sample

The population comprised teachers in public secondary schools in Rivers State. A sample of 380 teachers was selected through a multistage sampling procedure involving the selection of schools and teachers across the educational areas of the state.

Instrument for Data Collection

Data were collected using a researcher-developed instrument titled Participatory Management and Teachers' Commitment Questionnaire (PMTCQ). The questionnaire was structured into sections covering teachers' participation in decision-making, participation in school planning, participation in policy implementation and teachers' commitment to work. The items were structured on a four-point response scale.

Method of Data Analysis

Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. A criterion mean of 2.50 was used for interpreting the four-point scale. A mean score of 2.50 and above was regarded as high, while a mean below 2.50 was regarded as low. For the hypotheses, a p-value below 0.05 was considered statistically significant.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Research Question 1

What is the level of teachers' participation in decision-making in public secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Teachers' Participation in Decision-Making

S/N	Items on Participation in Decision-Making	Mean	SD	Remark
1.	Teachers are consulted before important decisions affecting their work are made.	3.18	0.74	High
2.	Teachers are allowed to express their views during staff meetings.	3.26	0.69	High
3.	Teachers participate in decisions concerning school	3.12	0.77	High

	programmes and activities			
4.	Teachers' suggestions are considered when school decisions are made.	3.09	0.81	High
5.	Teachers are represented in committees responsible for important school decisions.	3.21	0.73	High
	Cluster Mean	**3.17**	**0.75**	**High**

Criterion mean = 2.50

Table 1 shows that all the items recorded mean scores above the criterion mean of 2.50, with a cluster mean of 3.17 and standard deviation of 0.75. This indicates that teachers' participation in decision-making was rated high in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Research Question 2

What is the level of teachers' participation in school planning in public secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Teachers' Participation in School Planning

S/N	Items on Participation in School Planning	Mean	SD	Remark
6.	Teachers participate in planning school academic activities.	3.14	0.76	High
7.	Teachers contribute ideas when school development plans are prepared.	3.08	0.79	High
8.	Teachers participate in planning instructional programmes.	3.19	0.71	High
9.	Teachers are consulted when priorities for school activities are determined.	3.05	0.82	High
10.	Teachers participate in planning activities aimed at improving students' learning.	3.18	0.73	High
	Cluster Mean	**3.13**	**0.76**	**High**

Table 2 indicates that all the items had mean scores above the criterion mean of 2.50. The cluster mean of 3.13 shows that teachers' participation in school planning was high.

Research Question 3

What is the level of teachers' participation in policy implementation in public secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of Teachers' Participation in Policy Implementation

S/N	Items on Participation in Policy Implementation	Mean	SD	Remark
11.	Teachers are given opportunities to discuss new school policies before implementation.	3.11	0.78	High
12.	Teachers contribute suggestions on how school policies should be implemented.	3.15	0.75	High
13.	Teachers are involved in identifying challenges associated with policy implementation.	3.07	0.80	High
14.	Teachers participate in committees responsible for implementing school policies.	3.19	0.72	High
15.	School administrators consult teachers when difficulties arise during policy implementation.	3.16	0.74	High
	Cluster Mean	**3.14**	**0.76**	**High**

Table 3 shows that the mean scores for all the items were above the criterion mean of 2.50. The cluster mean of 3.14 indicates a high level of teachers' participation in policy implementation.

Teachers' Commitment to Work

Table 4: Mean and Standard Deviation of Teachers' Commitment to Work

S/N	Items on Teachers' Commitment to Work	Mean	SD	Remark
16.	I attend school regularly and punctually.	3.28	0.68	High
17.	I dedicate adequate time to my teaching responsibilities.	3.31	0.65	High
18.	I willingly perform duties assigned to me by the school administration.	3.22	0.71	High
19.	I participate actively in school activities outside classroom teaching.	3.16	0.76	High
20.	I make deliberate efforts to contribute to the achievement of school goals.	3.27	0.69	High
	Cluster Mean	**3.28**	**0.70**	**High**

Table 4 indicates that all the items recorded mean scores above the criterion mean of 2.50. The cluster mean of 3.25 shows that teachers demonstrated a high level of commitment to work.

Test of Hypotheses

The three hypotheses were tested separately using Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance.

Hypothesis One

H_{01}: There is no significant relationship between teachers' participation in decision-making and their commitment to work in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 5: Pearson Product Moment Correlation between Participation in Decision-Making and Teachers' Commitment to Work

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r	p-value	Decision
Participation in decision-making	380	3.17	0.75	0.641	<.001	Reject H_{01}
Teachers' commitment to work	380	3.25	0.70			

Table 5 shows a positive relationship between teachers' participation in decision-making and their commitment to work (r = 0.641, p < .001). Since the p-value is less than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant positive relationship between teachers' participation in decision-making and their commitment to work in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Hypothesis Two

H_{02}: There is no significant relationship between teachers' participation in school planning and their commitment to work in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 6: Pearson Product Moment Correlation between Participation in School Planning and Teachers' Commitment to Work

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r	p-value	Decision
Participation in school planning	380	3.13	0.76	0.587	<.001	Reject H_{02}
Teachers' commitment to work	380	3.25	0.70			

Table 6 indicates a positive relationship between teachers' participation in school planning and their commitment to work (r = 0.587, p < .001). Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant positive relationship between teachers' participation in school planning and their commitment to work in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Hypothesis Three

H_{03}: There is no significant relationship between teachers' participation in policy implementation and their commitment to work in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 7: Pearson Product Moment Correlation between Participation in Policy Implementation and Teachers' Commitment to Work

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r	p-value	Decision
Participation in policy implementation	380	3.14	0.76	0.613	<.001	Reject H_{03}
Teachers' commitment to work	380	3.25	0.70			

Table 7 reveals a positive relationship between teachers' participation in policy implementation and their commitment to work ($r = 0.613$, $p < .001$). Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant positive relationship between teachers' participation in policy implementation and their commitment to work in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 8: Summary of the Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis	Variables	r	p-value	Decision
H_{01}	Decision-making and commitment	0.641	<.001	Rejected
H_{02}	School planning and commitment	0.587	<.001	Rejected
H_{03}	Policy implementation and commitment	0.613	<.001	Rejected

Summary of Findings

The study revealed that:

Teachers' participation in decision-making had a significant positive relationship with their commitment to work in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Teachers' participation in school planning had a significant positive relationship with their commitment to work in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Teachers' participation in policy implementation had a significant positive relationship with their commitment to work in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Discussion of Findings

The finding that teachers' participation in decision-making was significantly related to their commitment to work indicates that opportunities for teachers to contribute to school decisions are associated with their commitment to professional responsibilities. This finding agrees with Abonyi (2024), who reported a positive and statistically significant relationship between teachers'

participation in decision-making and organizational commitment among teachers in Ghanaian basic schools. It is also consistent with the participative management perspective, which emphasises communication, group involvement and shared responsibility in organizational administration.

The finding concerning teachers' participation in school planning indicates that involvement in planning activities is positively related to teachers' commitment to work. Participation in planning provides teachers with opportunities to contribute professional knowledge and understand the objectives and priorities of the school. It may also promote a sense of shared responsibility for implementing school plans. This finding is consistent with Comport, Ovat Egbe and Daniel (2025), who found a significant relationship between school management techniques and teachers' job commitment in public secondary schools in Cross River State.

The finding that teachers' participation in policy implementation was significantly related to their commitment to work suggests that involving teachers in the implementation of school policies is relevant to their professional commitment. Teachers are central actors in policy implementation because many educational policies are translated into practice through their daily activities. Their involvement in identifying implementation challenges and contributing practical solutions may strengthen their understanding of organizational expectations and responsibilities. The finding is consistent with the principles of participative management, which emphasise employee involvement, communication and shared responsibility

Conclusion

The study concludes that participatory management is significantly related to teachers' commitment to work in public secondary schools in Rivers State. Specifically, teachers' participation in decision-making, school planning and policy implementation each demonstrated a significant positive relationship with teachers' commitment to work. The findings indicate that participatory approaches constitute an important aspect of school administration that is associated with teachers' involvement and commitment to organizational responsibilities.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. Principals should provide teachers with meaningful opportunities to participate in school decision-making, particularly on issues directly affecting teaching, learning and staff responsibilities.

2. School administrators should involve teachers in school planning activities so that teachers can contribute their professional experience and develop a stronger sense of responsibility towards the implementation of school plans.

3. Educational authorities and principals should encourage teachers' participation in policy implementation through staff meetings, committees and consultative processes that allow teachers to discuss policy requirements, identify implementation challenges and contribute practical solutions.

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