



## PRINCIPALS' LEADERSHIP NEEDS FOR EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA

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### Abstract:

This research was an investigation titled Principals' Leadership Needs for Effective Management of Secondary Schools in Rivers State. Three research questions and two hypotheses were formulated to guide the research. A survey design was adopted with ex-post-facto characteristics. The population of the study consisted of 5,344 teachers and 243 principals in the 23 Local Governments Areas in Rivers State. The entire population was 5,587 respondents. Through stratified and random sampling, 473 teachers from upland and riverine areas and entire 243 principals in the Rivers State constituted the subjects. An instrument titled Principals' Leadership Needs Questionnaire (PLNRQ) was developed by the researchers. The instrument PLNRQ has 120 items. The instrument was validated and test of reliability utilizing Pearson Product Moment Correlation result was 0.74. Mean and chi-square were used to analyze the data generated from the three research questions and two hypotheses. The study revealed principals' need for effective communication, turning schools into professional learning community, being involved in curriculum evaluation and implementation. Furthermore, the result indicated the needs for principals and teachers to be involved in

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school inspection, supervision and continuous profession training of principals. Based on the result: recommendations were made as follows: Principals should be allowed to participate in curriculum implementation and formulation of policies supervision and provisions made for continuous professional re-training of principals to enable them manage their schools effectively.

**Keywords:** leadership needs, styles, effective management, professional retraining, skills

## 1. Introduction

The principal is primarily responsible for all aspects of school operation. He is the instructional and curriculum leader, administrator-manager and the link between the community, the Ministry of Educational, Secondary Education Management Board, the teachers and the school. The principal communicates core values, behaviours, expectations in everyday work and interaction with staff and students.

A principal who is not able to obtain the necessary resources for teachers cannot hire the most competent staff, cannot schedule and project them for teaching and cannot create a climate and school culture where the students are well disciplined and cognizant of school goals cannot be a successful principal. Expectedly, a principal must utilize the resources in the school and the community to achieve the school vision. Principals use effective management skills to acquire whatever their schools need to accomplish goals (Powell, 2004). A research into the leadership needs of secondary school principals for effective management is necessary because secondary school education is the bridge and strategic link between primary and tertiary education.

Researchers have carried out studies on the specific effect of leadership needs of the school principals, but this investigation analyzed the degree which the needs exert on effective management of secondary schools (Afianmagbon, 1999, Onyenze, 1999 & Amanchukwu, 2001). Earlier leadership requirement of principals in Kuwait was examined, but not the needs for effective management of secondary schools (Al Jabar 1996). Learning needs only were investigated by Asuga and Eacott (2012).

Spicer (2016) researched on school culture, school climate and the role of the principal but aspects like professional training and emergence of continuous learning were omitted. The study indicated that positive school culture stimulates professional development in collaboration with transformational leadership style exhibited by school principals (Lingam, 2011, Thom, 2013). Furthermore, the transformational leadership style adopted by principal induces them to indicate reference for tasks related to educational matters and management of students as their priority. (Phin, 2014)

Functional wellbeing and cultural features of schools were analyzed from the organizational context of schools as complex organizations. The study indicated that positive school culture of schools stimulates professional development in collaboration with transformational leadership styles exhibited by the school principals. Furthermore,

the transformational principals also indicate preference for tasks related to education matters and management of students. Finally, effective management of time was their most vital need in order to devote most of time and energy to their preferred role, and major task areas. (Engels, Hotton, Devos, Bouckenooghe & Aelterman, 2012)

An assessment of the perceived instructional leadership behaviour of assistant principals indicated that statistically significant differences were identified based on school level and gender. (Fullan, 2008) In his own study Blakesley (2012) examined the policy challenges that non-indigenous Yukon principals faced but the leadership need of principals for enhancing effective management was neglected. A principal whose leadership style facilitates a positive school climate and feelings of connectedness with one's school community is also associated with lower rates of bullying incidents. Furthermore, principals who rated themselves as less transformational were associated with higher rates of bullying incidents in their schools (Fuller, 2013). Monitoring changes and the issue of process also influence coordination and alignment of instructional process for enhancing professional development of teachers and principals. (Theoharis & Brooks, 2012) Research further showed that there was a negligible relationship between experience and ratings of assistant principal instructional leadership. (Akinson, 2013)

This study focused on school principal contemporary leadership needs, vital needs of principals, differences in the perception of teachers and principals. The result of this research may enable principals have an awareness of their needs and the importance of turning their schools into a learning organization with entrenched positive school culture. The following research questions were posed to guide this study.

- 1) What are the contemporary leadership needs for effective management of secondary schools in River State?
- 2) What are the needs of school principals for effective management of secondary schools in Rivers State?
- 3) What are the differences in the perception of secondary school teachers on the leadership needs of principals for effective management of schools in Rivers State?
- 4) The following null hypotheses were also formulated to guide the research and tested at 0.05 level of significance.
- 5) There is no significant difference between the perception of teachers and principals on the needs of principals for the effective management of secondary schools in Rivers State.
- 6) There is no significant difference between principals in rural and urban areas of Rivers State.

## 2. Methodology

The design of this research was a survey carried out ex-post-facto. The population of the study consisted of 51,344 teachers and 243 principals in the twenty-three Local

Government Areas in Rivers State. The entire population comprised only 5,587 subjects. Through stratified and random sampling, 473 teachers from upland and riverine areas were selected and through purposive sampling technique the entire 243 principals in the Rivers State were used. Hence the 473 teachers and 243 principals constituted the 716 respondents. An instrument titled "Principals' Leadership Needs Requirement Questionnaire (PLNRQ) was developed by the researchers. The instrument has 120 items. The PLNRQ has two parts, part 1 and 2. Part one elicited demographic information on sex, age, academic status, experience, type and location of school. The second part of PLNRQ has 120 items, with four sections. The sections were:

- 1) Contemporary needs of principals for effective management of secondary schools in Rivers State.
- 2) Vital needs of principals for effective management of secondary schools in Rivers State.
- 3) Perception of teachers on the needs of principal for effective management of secondary schools in Rivers State.

The 150 item on PLNRQ were structured on four point Likert Scale with a range of

- Strongly Agree (SA) 4 points;
- Agree (A) 3 points;
- Disagree (D) 2 points;
- Strongly Disagree (SD) 1 point respectively.

The instrument was validated by the researchers and two Lecturers in Measurement and Evaluation to ensure face and content validity. Their comments and suggestions were used to prepare the final draft of the instrument (PLNRQ). After the validation, the test of reliability utilizing Pearson Product Movement Correlation result was 0.74. The instrument was justified to be reliable.

Mean and chi-square were used to analyze the data generated from the four research questions and two hypotheses respectively.

### 3. Results

#### 3.1 Research Question One

**Table 4.1:** Contemporary Needs of Principals for Effective Management of Secondary Schools in Rivers State

S/N		SA	A	SD	D	Total	Mean	Agreed
1	Emphasis on getting work done by principals	501	201	-	101	2703	3.37	Agreed
2	Use of vertical and horizontal communication always	600	150	-	50	2902	3.62	"
3	Commensurate rewards of staff and students	400	300	31	70	2632	3.29	"
4	Strict on exam ethics	200	600	-	01	2601	3.25	"
5	Carrying both staff and students along	100	600	40	01	2341	2.92	"
6	Absence of cultism, physical violence and stealing by students	300	501	-	-	2703	3.37	

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7	Protection of staff from discordant students	500	201	-	100	2703	3.37	
8	Involvement in the planning of the various needs of the schools	50	50	101	600	652	0.81	Disagreed
9	Adequate authority and control in the appointment of staff (teachers).	400	300	3170	32	2581	3.22	Agreed
10	Participate in the admission of students	50	100	-	651	1151	1.44	Disagreed
11	Possess control over the appointment of non-teaching staff	400	400	-	01	2804	3.50	Agreed
12	Have control over discipline of students	700	50	21	30	3022	3.77	"
13	Responsible for initiating staff development programme	60	20	21	700	1041	1.29	Disagreed
14	Give greater authority with staff to select and prepare curriculum materials.	500	150	50	101	2651	3.31	Agreed
15	Use the reports send by principals as a criteria for promotion	-	01	150	650	953	1.19	Disagreed
16	Freehand in the selection of instructional materials	-	6	75	720	888	1.11	Disagreed
17	Legalise curriculum supervisory roles of the principals.	20	30	700	150	620	0.77	Disagreed
18	Allow them to participate actively in curriculum implementation and evaluation	600	70	31	100	2772	13.46	Agreed
19	Taking control of the performance appraisal of the teacher.	400	301	50	50	2653	3.31	Agreed
20	Give more freedom in the control of school funds	-	-	-	801	801	1.00	Disagreed
21	Allocate funds directly to the schools	300	450	-	51	2601	3.23	Agreed
22	Allow greater involvement of the principals in the allocation and implementation of school budget	380	400	21	-	2762	3.45	Agreed
23	Develop awareness of the importance of National Institute of Educational Administration and planning.	-	701	-	100	2203	2.75	Agreed
24	Have B.Ed. and M.Ed. degrees in Educational Administration and Planning.	550	250	1	-	2952	3.69	Agreed
25	Initiate specialize professional degree on educational leadership	61	640	-	100	2264	2.83	Agreed
26	Organize in-service training and seminars on management of schools.	500	300	-	01	2901	3.62	Agreed
27	Give training in financial management and budgeting techniques	100	701	-	-	2503	3.12	Agreed
28	Allow principals to have considerable discretion in determining their school staffing formula.	50	50	400	1	1751	2.19	Disagreed
29	Using their reports as a yardstick for promotion of staff.	-	100	01	700	1002	1.25	Disagreed
30	Divest the SEMB of most responsibilities except system wide policy making and monitoring.	-	-	50	751	851	1.06	Disagreed

Table 4.1 shows that items number 8, 10, 13, 15, 16, 20, 28, 29 and 30 had mean scores below the cut-off point of 2.5, indicating that they are not the contemporary needs of secondary school principals in Rivers State. Other items on the same table had mean scores above the cut-off point of 2.5. This indicates that they are the contemporary needs of secondary school principals in Rivers State. The highest mean rating of 3.45 was "allowing greater involvement of the principals in the allocation and implementation of school budget" while "legalizing curriculum supervisory roles of the principals" has 0.77 mean, the lowest.

### 3.2 Research Question 2

What are the vital needs of school principals for effective management of secondary schools in Rivers State?

**Table 4.2: Vital Needs of Principals**

S/N		SA	A	SD	D	Total	Mean	Agreed
31	Living accommodation in the school compound	500	300	-	01	2901	3.68	Agreed
32	An adequate office	400	300	31	70	2632	3.29	"
33	Provided with adequate working materials e.g. office equipment for academic work.	100	600	40	01	2341	2.92	"
34	Adequate security	400	301	50	50	2653	3.31	"
35	Democratic school environment	300	450	-	51	2601	3.23	"
36	Adequate staff of the school	550	250	1	-	2952	3.69	"
37	Effective staff participation in school work	400	301	50	50	2653	3.31	"
38	Effective students participation in school work	-	-	50	751	851	1.06	Disagreed
39	Student union	500	201	-	100	2703	3.37	Agreed
40	Vibrant PTA	50	50	700	01	1751	2.19	Disagreed
41	Vibrant Board of Governors	61	640	-	100	2264	2.83	Agreed
42	Tidy school environment	100	600	40	61	2341	2.92	"
43	Adequate funding of the school	-	-	-	801	801	1.00	Disagreed
44	Employment of three drivers per school	200	600	-	01	2601	3.25	Disagreed
45	Provision of private cafeteria	-	01	150	650	954	1.49	Disagreed
46	Provision of departmental library	-	100	01	700	1002	1.25	Disagreed
47	Provision of instructional materials	50	100	0	651	1151	1.44	Disagreed
48	Provision of infrastructures	400	400	-	01	2804	3.50	Agreed
49	Well-equipped lab	-	701	-	100	2203	2.75	Agreed
50	Adequate inspection	-	01	150	650	953	1.19	Disagreed
51	School vehicle	600	70	31	100	2773	3.46	Agreed
52	Adequate library	61	640	-	100	2264	2.83	Agreed
53	Adequate supervision	400	400	-	01	2804	3.50	Agreed
54	Provision of bore-hole or pipe borne water	200	600	-	01	2601	3.25	Agreed
55	Adequate fence to check students' movement	700	50	21	30	3220	3.52	Agreed
56	Adequate fence to check staff	500	201	-	100	2703	3.37	Agreed
57	provision of only indoor games	700	50	21	30	3022	3.77	Agreed
58	Provision of expatriate to teach physical education in order to improve sporting	50	50	700	01	1751	2.19	Disagreed

activities								
59	Must have musical instruments	-	-	-	801	801	1.00	Disagreed
60	Must have adequate imprest account.	50	100	-	651	1157	1.44	Disagreed

Table 4.2 shows that items 38, 40, 43, 43, 46, 47, 50, 58, 59 and 60 had mean scores below the cut-off points of 2.5 indicating that they are not the vital needs of secondary schools in Rivers State. On the other hand, all other items had mean score above the cut-off point showing that they are the vital needs required. Item 31, "living accommodation in the school compound", has 3.68 which was the highest mean while item 59 "must have musical instrument" has 1.00 the lowest.

### 3.3 Research Question 3

What are the differences in the perception of secondary school teachers on the leadership needs of principals?

**Table 4.3:** Teacher's perception of secondary school principals' effective management skills

S/N		SA	A	SD	D	Total	Mean	Agreed
61	Emphasis on getting work done by principals	303	200	50	50	1982	3.25	Agreed
62	Use of vertical and horizontal communication always	300	300	-	3	2182	3.49	"
63	Commensurate rewards of staff and students	400	200	-	3	2203	3.65	"
64	Strict on exam ethics	200	400	3	-	2006	3.33	"
65	Carrying both staff and students along	400	150	3	50	2106	3.49	"
66	Absence of cultism, physical violence and stealing by students	500	50	3	50	2206	3.66	"
67	Protection of staff from discordant students	600	3	-	-	2409	3.99	"
68	Involvement in the planning of the various needs of the schools	50	53	-	500	859	1.49	Disagreed
69	Adequate authority and control in the appointment of staff (teachers).	300	250	50	3	2053	3.40	Agreed
70	Participate in the admission of students	3	10	590	-	1222	2.04	Disagreed
71	Possess control over the appointment of non-teaching staff	-	601	-	2	1085	2.99	Agreed
72	Have control over discipline of students	400	200	-	3	2203	3.66	"
73	Responsible for initiating staff development programme	-	500	403	150	1106	1.83	Disagreed
74	Give greater authority with staff to select and prepare curriculum materials.	503	100	-	-	2312	3.83	Agreed
75	Use the reports send by principals as a criteria for promotion	-	-	600	3	1203	1.99	Disagreed
76	Freehand in the selection of instructional materials	-	-	400	203	1003	1.46	Disagreed
77	Legalise curriculum supervisory roles of the principals.	3	10	540	-	1222	2.03	Disagreed
78	Allow them to participate actively in curriculum implementation and evaluation	340	260	3	-	2246	3.56	Agreed
79	Taking control of the performance appraisal of the teacher.	450	50	3	100	2056	3.41	Agreed

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80	Give more freedom in the control of school funds	-	601	-	8	1805	2.99	Agreed
81	Allocate funds directly to the schools	470	200	-	3	2203	3.65	Agreed
82	Allow greater involvement of the principals in the allocation and implementation of school budget	400	200	8	1	2205	3.66	Agreed
83	Develop awareness of the importance of National Institute of Educational Administration and planning.	600	3	-	-	2409	3.99	Agreed
84	Have B.Ed. and M.Ed. degrees in Educational Administration and Planning.	580	20	3		2386	3.96	Agreed
85	Initiate specialize professional degree on educational leadership	50	50	3	-	2356	3.91	Agreed
86	Organize in-service training and seminars on management of schools.	550	50	3	-	2356	3.91	Agreed
87	Give training in financial management and budgeting techniques	600	3	-	-	2409	3.99	Agreed
88	Allow principals to have considerable discretion in determining their school staffing formula.	3	20	-	580	652	1.05	Disagreed
89	Using their reports as a yardstick for promotion of staff.	-	-	580	23	1183	1.96	Disagreed
90	Divest the SEMB of most responsibilities except system wide policy making and monitoring.	3	10	590	-	1222	2.63	Agreed
91	Living accommodation in the school compound	100	60	40	30	622	3.21	Agreed
92	An adequate office	120	50	2	22	658	3.39	"
93	Provided with adequate working materials e.g. office equipments for academic work.	30	150	10	4	594	3.06	"
94	Adequate security	-	180	-	114	564	2.91	"
95	Democratic school environment	10	170	-	14	564	2.91	"
96	Adequate staff of the school	-	190	-	4	574	2.96	"
97	Effective staff participation in school work	160	24	10	-	732	3.77	"
98	Effective students participation in school work	-	-	4	190	194	1.00	Disagreed
99	Student union	-	185	5	4	569	2.93	Agreed
100	Vibrant PTA	-	14	150	30	372	1.92	Disagreed
101	Vibrant Board of Governors	-	170	4	20	538	2.77	Agreed
102	Tidy school environment	100	80	10	4	664	3.48	"
103	Adequate funding of the school	-	-	160	34	354	1.82	Disagreed
104	Employment of three drivers per school	30	140	4	20	547	2.78	Agreed
105	Provision of private cafeteria	-	-	120	74	314	1.62	Disagreed
106	Provision of departmental library	-	-	54	140	248	1.28	Disagreed
107	Provision of instructional materials	-	-	52	144	244	1.26	Disagreed
108	Provision of infrastructures	120	54	-	20	662	3.41	Agreed
108	Well-equipped lab	5	188	4	5	573	2.95	Agreed
110	Adequate inspection	-	-	170	24	384	1.87	Disagreed
111	School vehicle	100	20	10	4	664	3.42	Agreed
112	Adequate library	80	90	20	4	674	3.47	Agreed



113	Adequate supervision	100	90	2	2	676	3.48	Agreed
114	Provision of bore-hole or pipe borne water	-	180	4	10	558	2.88	Agreed
115	Adequate fence to check students' movement	90	90	14	-	658	3.39	Agreed
116	Adequate fence to check staff	120	60	7	7	681	3.51	Agreed
117	provision of only indoor games	5	170	5	4	624	3.01	Agreed
118	Provision of expatriate to teach physical education in order to improve sporting activities	-	4	6	130	264	1.35	Disagreed
119	Must have musical instruments	-	1	3	190	199	1.22	Disagreed
120	Must have adequate imprest account.	-	-	180	14	374	1.93	Disagreed

Items number 68, 70, 73, 75, 76, 77, 80, 89, 90, 100, 103, 105, 106, 107, 118, 119 have mean score below the significant cut-off- point of 2.5 and on the contrary items number 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 71, 72, 73, 74, 79, 83, 84-87, 90, 91-97, 99, 101 and 104 have mean scores above 2.5 and therefore significant in the perception of teachers. Having M.ED degree in Educational Administration, item 84 has 3.96, the second while the highest was item 87, "give training in financial management and budgeting techniques", with 3.99 mean.

### 3.4 Hypothesis One

There is no significant difference between the perception of teachers and principals on the needs of principals for effective management of secondary schools in Rivers State.

**Table 4.5:** Summary of Differences between teacher's perception or principals' needs and effective management of schools

df	Alpha Level	X <sup>2</sup> Cal	X <sup>2</sup> Critical	Decision
2	0.05	10.16	12.598	There is no significant relationship
714				
716				

The calculated chi-square value is 10.16 with 2 degrees of freedom, 714 at 0.05 level of significance, while the table value (X<sup>2</sup>tab) was 12.598. Therefore, it was safe to assert that there was a significant difference between the perception of secondary school principals and teachers on the needs of principals for effective management of secondary schools in Rivers State.

### 3.5 Hypothesis Two

There is no significant difference between the leadership needs of principals in rural and urban areas of Rivers State.

**Table 4.6:** Summary of Leadership Needs of Urban and Rural Principals

Df	Significance Level	(X <sup>2</sup> cal)	X <sup>2</sup> Critical value	Decision
2	0.05	2.0	1.5	Rejected.
714				There is significance
716				

For 716 and 2 degrees of freedom at 0.05 level of significance the critical value ( $X^2_{cal}$ ) of 2.0 was greater than the table value ( $X^2_{tab}$ ) of 1.5. This implies there was a significant difference between the leadership needs of principal in rural and urban areas of Rivers State.

#### 4. Findings

- 1) The contemporary needs of principals for effective management of secondary schools in Rivers State were to get work done, use both vertical, circle, star and horizontal means of communication, carry staff and students along, and be strict on examination ethics and serious involvement in the school budgetary allocations.
- 2) They need to make the school environment free of cultism, physical violence, bullying and protect staff from dissidents.
- 3) The vital needs of principals in River State secondary schools include providing enough accommodation in the compound for staff, adequate office, enough instructional materials for teaching and learning in a secured school environment, enhancing the emergence of positive school culture, adequate funding of schools and vibrant parent – teacher association. Others include encouraging adequate inspection and supervision by the Secondary Education Management Board
- 4) Teachers and principals agree that principals should be involved in identification of the various needs of the schools. Furthermore, both principals and teachers emphasized the importance of having staff with higher degree in educational administration and planning as managers. Principals should be allowed to participate actively in curriculum implementation and evaluation.
- 5) Principals need to take control of the performance appraisal of the teachers and participate actively in curriculum implementation and evaluation.
- 6) Principals should be given training in financial management and budgeting techniques. The principal agreed that their needs are satisfied and met.
- 7) The impact would be secondary schools in River State will be effectively be managed and
- 8) The students will perform well in external examination and the positive school cultures will he entrenched;
- 9) Principals in urban and rural secondary school in Rivers State have similar leadership needs.
- 10) Having control over the discipline of students has the most significant on the needs of principals for effective management.

#### 5. Discussion

This study revealed that the contemporary leadership need's for effective management of secondary schools in Rivers State, is that principals should lay emphasis on getting

the work done. Furthermore, the result showed that principals need to use vertical, circle, star and horizontal means of communication to pass information to both staff and students. This is necessary in order to avoid communication gap which brings confusion in every organization including school system. This finding contradicted the work of Johnson (2006) which states that Principals need to hide information in order to enable him have more knowledge than his subordinates. This idea will not make principals carry staff and students along. This is because a gap in communication can keep both staff and students in suspense.

The study further indicated that principals need to raise the school environment, one free of cultism, physical violence and bullying and protect staff and students. This in line with the view of Fuller (2013) who states that a principal whose leadership style facilitates a positive school climate and feelings of connectedness with one's school community, is also associated with lower rates of bullying incidents.

The respondents generally agreed that Principals and Teachers should be involved in inspection, supervision and proper identification of various school needs which will in turn allow Principals to achieve their goals. This is in consonance with the works of Hoy, Miskel and Tartar (2013) who emphasized the strategic importance of school effectiveness. The research revealed that Principals should have adequate authority and control over admission of students, the discipline of student and initiating staff professional development programme/courses. The finding confirmed the studies of Thom (2013), Asuga and Eacott (2012) & Lingam (2011) on the strategic importance of continuous professional development of teachers and principals.

Principals need to be allowed to participate actively in curriculum implementation and evaluation. This finding confirms the research undertaken by Engels, Hotton, Deves, Bouckenooghe and Aeiterman, (2012) it was a research based on the fact that school administrator need to devote most of their time and energy to their preferred role of curriculum evaluation and other major task areas. Also, the research revealed that Principals need adequate financial management and budgeting. This is in consonance with Phin, (2014) who stress that for any principal to be successful in school business administration, he/she must be properly trained in financial techniques. The researchers maintained that this can be done through organizing workshops and seminars.

It has been confirmed that Principals in Rivers State need effective communication to participate actively in curriculum implementation, evaluation, adequate financial management and budget technique training for effective management of schools. These needs when provided may be utilized by the Principal for the achievement of their goals. The provision of these needs will enable the Principals turn other schools into professional learning community, ensure emergence of positive school culture and manage knowledge effectively.

- 1) Principals in Rivers State need to be encouraged by the Ministry of Education (Government) to utilize vertical star, circle and horizontal means of communication.

- 2) The government through the relevant agencies should assist the principals and teachers in Rivers State make the school environment free of secret cults, violence and bullying. This could be achieved through post-graduate diploma in educational leadership as a major criterion for principalship. The fundamental goal of this policy is usher in positive school culture to curb bullying, cultism and violence.
- 3) Enough funds and instructional materials should be provided to enable Principals in Rivers State manage their school effectively.
- 4) Principals should be allowed to participate in curriculum implementation and evaluation.
- 5) Adequate training in financial management and budgeting techniques should be given to Principals.

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