Micromanagement Practices of Principals as Predictors of Teachers' Productivity in Private Secondary Schools in Rivers State, Nigeria

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Abstract
This study investigated micromanagement practices of principals as predictors of teachers' productivity in private secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. Three research questions and corresponding hypotheses guided the study. A correlational research design was adopted. The population comprised an estimated 21,225 teachers in 1,415 accredited private secondary schools in Rivers State, from which a sample of 393 teachers was determined using the Taro Yamane formula and selected through a multistage sampling procedure. Data were collected using two researcher-developed instruments: The Micromanagement Practices of Principals Questionnaire (MPPQ) and the Teachers' Productivity Questionnaire (TPQ). The instruments were validated by experts, while Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients of 0.83 and 0.87 were obtained for the two instruments, respectively. Simple regression was used to answer the research questions, while a t-test associated with simple regression was used to test the hypotheses. The findings revealed that excessive classroom supervision, overcontrol of instructional planning, and centralised decision-making each significantly predicted teachers' productivity to a low extent. The study concluded that principals' micromanagement practices significantly predict teachers' productivity. It was recommended, among others, that principals of private secondary schools should adopt supportive rather than excessive classroom supervision to enhance teachers' confidence and productivity.

Keywords: *Micromanagement Practices, Principals, Teachers' Productivity, Private Secondary Schools*

Introduction

Teachers are fundamental to the operation of secondary schools and the realisation of their core objectives. A secondary school can only function effectively when its teachers are productive, because teachers are directly responsible for instructional delivery, student engagement,

assessment, and the transformation of inputs (such as curricular resources and pedagogical supports) into measurable learning outcomes. Teachers' productivity underpins the capacity of the school to achieve educational goals such as improved academic performance, development of critical thinking skills, and the broader socio-economic objectives articulated in national policy. Research consistently positions teacher quality and performance as central determinants of student achievement and school effectiveness across contexts (Hallinger, 2024). In educational systems, teacher productivity is a multidimensional construct that encompasses the quality and quantity of work a teacher accomplishes within a specified period, including lesson preparation, instructional delivery, assessment of students, professional engagement, and contributions to school functioning. Productivity has been defined as the record of outcomes achieved for each job function during a specified period of time (Gungur, 2011, as cited in Yakubu, 2019). It involves not just the output of tasks but also the effectiveness, timeliness, cooperation, and professional conduct that contribute to educational quality. Conceptually, teachers' productivity can be understood as the ratio of outputs (student learning outcomes, curriculum coverage, learner progression) to the resources invested (including time, effort, expertise and instructional materials), a definition aligned with broader organisational productivity models applied in educational research. Productive teachers perform effectively across multiple professional domains. They design coherent lesson plans, apply effective pedagogical strategies, assess learner progress, adapt instruction to diverse needs, and contribute to the wider school environment through collaboration and extracurricular engagement. Teachers' productivity also reflects professional behaviours such as punctuality, responsibility, classroom management, and engagement in continuous professional development. In secondary schools, where the curriculum is complex and learner needs are varied, high teacher productivity translates into better examination results, improved student retention and progression rates, and enhanced school reputation and community trust (Ogosu, 2024). Given its centrality, researchers emphasise that schools cannot attain intended goals if teachers' productivity is low. For example, teacher productivity serves as the channel through which investment in education is transformed into tangible learning gains and broader societal returns. Teachers' productivity has been linked to effective leadership and supportive management practices, indicating that when teachers are enabled and motivated, their output and performance improve significantly. One factor affecting teacher productivity that has attracted research attention is principals' management practices, particularly micromanagement. Micromanagement describes irrelevant monitoring, excessive status checking, or unnecessary demands for detailed descriptions of work, mainly to demonstrate authority or control. According to Online Enchanter (2022), micromanagement is a management style whereby a manager closely observes, controls, and continually reminds subordinates or employees about their work. It is generally considered to have a negative connotation, mainly because it reflects a lack of freedom within the workplace. In the secondary school, micromanagement refers to supervisory behaviours in which principals excessively monitor, control, or dictate the daily professional tasks of teachers. The secondary school system is one of the environments where micromanagement may occur. When decision-making authority is excessively concentrated at the top levels of a department, it can lead to micromanagement. In such situations, teachers may feel disempowered and have little autonomy to make decisions within the school system. The suppression of relevant new ideas and initiatives by principals or the dismissal of innovative proposals from teachers constitutes a form of micromanagement practice.

Furthermore, Lewis (2014) posited that micromanagement is a management style in which administrators are excessively interested in minute details of tasks executed by subordinates, thereby restricting their creativity. Similarly, Sidhu (2022) stated that micromanagement creates a feeling among employees that all their activities are being monitored by the manager, and it is often associated with excessive attention to minor details in the workplace. On the other hand, Oloko (2019) referred to micromanagement as a management style that involves observing every move or activity performed by staff within an organisation. Micromanagement is a concept that has developed over the years as a means of controlling employees' attitudes, performance, productivity, and interpersonal relationships. Mahswavi (2017) focused on how micromanagement causes depression and low morale among employees, with little or no positive attention given to their actual job performance. From the above discussion, it can be deduced that micromanagement is characterised by excessive supervision, resistance to the delegation of duties, lack of subordinates' participation in decision-making during the discharge of their responsibilities, absence of employee creativity and initiative, employee depression, and unreasonable criticism. Micromanagement is one of the various forms of leadership and may be beneficial in some short-term circumstances, such as handling new employees, improving the efficiency levels of underperforming staff, managing high-risk areas, and situations where there is no one clearly assigned to take charge of a task. However, long-term reliance on micromanagement can have significant negative implications for organisational costs and effectiveness. It can result in high staff turnover, low employee morale, decreased productivity, and customer dissatisfaction.

Historically, micromanagement was discussed in The Human Side of Enterprise, published in 1960 by the renowned MIT Sloan School of Management professor, Douglas McGregor. In this work, he outlined two leadership styles: the "Theory X" manager and the "Theory Y" manager. The literature suggests that leadership styles and management practices impact teacher outcomes. For example, comprehensive reviews indicate that educational leadership that balances instructional support, autonomy, and collaborative engagement positively correlates with teacher productivity, motivation, and job satisfaction, while overly controlling leadership approaches have limited or negative effects on teacher performance (Nadeem et al., 2025). Similarly, effective school management, where principals provide guidance, resources and professional support rather than directive control, creates conditions that enhance teachers' motivation and performance.

Micromanagement may thus be conceptualised within the broader leadership continuum as an overly intrusive management style that can compromise teachers' intrinsic motivation and professional autonomy. This has implications for teachers' overall productivity and, by extension, school performance. Although such practices may be intended to uphold standards and accountability, micromanagement may also inhibit teacher autonomy, diminish professional creativity, and demoralise teachers by conveying a lack of trust and professional respect. Consequently, this study focused on some of these practices, such as excessive classroom supervision**,** overcontrol of instructional planning**,** and centralised decision-making**.**

Excessive classroom supervision refers to a situation in which principals engage in overly frequent, intrusive, and continuous monitoring of teachers' classroom activities beyond what is required for instructional support or quality assurance. While supervision is intended to improve teaching effectiveness, excessive supervision often signals mistrust and reduces teachers' confidence in their professional competence. Teachers who feel constantly watched may experience anxiety, reduced motivation, and reluctance to experiment with innovative teaching strategies, which can negatively affect their instructional delivery and overall productivity (Oloko, 2019).

Furthermore, overcontrol of instructional planning occurs when principals rigidly dictate lesson plans, teaching methods, instructional materials, and pacing of the curriculum, leaving little or no room for teachers' professional judgement. Such overregulation restricts teachers' ability to adapt instruction to learners' needs and contextual realities. When teachers are denied flexibility in instructional planning, they may become disengaged and less committed to their work, thereby reducing creativity, efficiency, and productivity in the classroom (Sidhu, 2022; Namrata et al., 2019). In addition, centralised decision-making is a micromanagement practice in which principals retain authority over routine academic and administrative decisions that could ordinarily be delegated to teachers. This approach limits teachers' participation in decision-making processes related to teaching, assessment, and school activities. The exclusion of teachers from decisions that directly affect their work reduces their sense of ownership and responsibility, leading to low morale and diminished productivity (Avolio & Yammarino, 2023; Mahswavi, 2021).

Studies in Nigerian private secondary schools have underscored the relevance of principal supervisory and administrative behaviours to teachers' productivity, noting mixed perceptions among teachers about the effectiveness of these practices (Awe et al., 2022). Additionally, supervisory practices that are perceived as overly controlling or unsupportive can weaken teacher morale, undermine professional growth and negatively impact instructional quality. Despite the theoretical and empirical insights highlighting the relationship between leadership and teacher productivity, the specific link between micromanagement practices of principals and teachers' productivity remains under-explored in many educational jurisdictions, especially within the context of Nigerian private secondary schools. Given that a productive teaching workforce is indispensable for school functioning and educational quality, a deeper understanding of how micromanagement affects teachers' professional output is warranted.

This study therefore investigated micromanagement practices of principals as predictors of teachers' productivity in private secondary schools in Rivers State, to illuminate how these management behaviours predict teachers' capacity to perform effectively and contribute to school goals. The findings are expected to inform school leadership policies and administrative practices that enhance teacher productivity and, ultimately, educational outcomes in private secondary schools.

Statement of the Problem

Private secondary schools in Rivers State are expected to provide quality education through effective teaching, sound curriculum implementation, and the holistic development of learners while maintaining high academic standards. However, concerns persist regarding declining teachers' productivity, as reflected in reduced instructional creativity, low professional commitment, diminished job satisfaction, and inconsistent students' academic performance. Although several factors influence teachers' productivity, principals' leadership practices, particularly micromanagement, have increasingly emerged as a concern requiring empirical investigation. Micromanagement in some private secondary schools is characterised by excessive supervision, close monitoring of teachers' activities, rigid enforcement of instructional procedures, and limited participation of teachers in decision-making. While these practices are often intended to ensure accountability and maintain the school's reputation, they may undermine teachers' professional autonomy, reduce motivation, discourage creativity, and increase work-related stress. Frequent reporting requirements, restrictive approval procedures, and constant classroom surveillance may also consume instructional time and negatively affect teachers' confidence, job satisfaction, and overall productivity.

In spite of these concerns, empirical evidence on the relationship between principals' micromanagement practices and teachers' productivity in private secondary schools in Rivers State remains limited. This gap constrains the development of evidence-based leadership strategies capable of promoting teacher effectiveness and improving school performance. It is against this backdrop that this study investigated principals' micromanagement practices as predictors of teachers' productivity in private secondary schools in Rivers State.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The study investigated the extent to which micromanagement practices of principals predict teachers' productivity in private secondary schools in Rivers State. Specifically, the objectives sought to:

1. determine the extent to which excessive classroom supervision predict teachers' productivity in private secondary schools in Rivers State.
2. examine the extent to which overcontrol of instructional planning predict teachers' productivity in private secondary schools in Rivers State.
3. ascertain the extent to which centralised decision-making predicts teachers' productivity in private secondary schools in Rivers State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent does excessive classroom supervision predict teachers' productivity in private secondary schools in Rivers State?
2. To what extent does overcontrol of instructional planning predict teachers' productivity in private secondary schools in Rivers State?
3. To what extent does centralised decision-making predict teachers' productivity in private secondary schools in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

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

$H0_1$: Excessive classroom supervision does not significantly predict teachers' productivity in private secondary schools in Rivers State.

$H0_2$: Overcontrol of instructional planning does not significantly predict teachers' productivity in private secondary schools in Rivers State.

$H0_3$: Centralised decision-making does not significantly predict teachers' productivity in private secondary schools in Rivers State.

Methodology

The study adopted a correlational research design to examine the relationship between principals' micromanagement practices and teachers' productivity in private secondary schools in Rivers State. The population comprised an estimated 21,225 teachers in 1,415 approved private secondary schools, from which a sample of 393 teachers was selected using the Taro Yamane formula and a multistage sampling technique involving stratification by senatorial districts and simple random sampling. Data were collected using the Micromanagement Practices of Principals Questionnaire (MPPQ) and Teachers' Productivity Questionnaire (TPQ), structured on four-point rating scales. The instruments were validated by the researcher's supervisors and two experts in Measurement and Evaluation, while a pilot study involving 30 respondents established their reliability using

Cronbach's alpha, yielding coefficients of 0.83 for micromanagement practices and 0.87 for teachers' productivity. The researcher, assisted by three research assistants, administered 393 copies of the questionnaire, of which 384 (98%) were retrieved and 379 (96%) were properly completed and considered suitable for analysis. Simple linear regression analysis was used to answer research questions 1–3, while the *t*-test associated with simple linear regression was used to test hypotheses 1-3 at the 0.05 level of significance.

Results and Analysis

Research Question 1: To what extent does excessive classroom supervision predict teachers' productivity in private secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 1: Simple Regression on the Extent to Which Excessive Classroom Supervision Predicts Teachers' Productivity in Private Secondary Schools in Rivers State

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R-Square	Extent of Prediction	Decision
1	0.612	0.375	0.373	37.5%	Low Extent

Scale of Measurement: 71% - 100% = Very High Extent, 51% - 70% = High Extent, 26% - 50% = Low Extent, 0% - 25% = Very Low Extent.

Table 1 revealed that the regression coefficient (R) and coefficient of determination (R^2) were .612 and .375, respectively, while the adjusted R^2 was .373. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 \times 100$) indicates that excessive classroom supervision accounted for 37.5% of the variation in teachers' productivity in private secondary schools in Rivers State. This implies that excessive classroom supervision predicts teachers' productivity to a low extent. The remaining 62.5% of the variation in teachers' productivity is attributable to other variables not included in the regression model and random error.

Research Question 2: To what extent does overcontrol of instructional planning predict teachers' productivity in private secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 2: Simple Regression on the Extent to Which Overcontrol of Instructional Planning Predict Teachers' Productivity in Private Secondary Schools in Rivers State

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R-Square	Extent of Prediction	Decision
1	0.654	0.428	0.426	42.8%	Low Extent

Scale of Measurement: 71% - 100% = Very High Extent, 51% - 70% = High Extent, 26% - 50% = Low Extent, 0% - 25% = Very Low Extent.

Table 2 revealed that the regression coefficient (R) and coefficient of determination (R^2) were .654 and .428, respectively, while the adjusted R^2 was .426. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 \times 100$) indicates that overcontrol of instructional planning accounted for 42.8% of the variation in teachers' productivity in private secondary schools in Rivers State. This implies that overcontrol of instructional planning predicts teachers' productivity to a low extent. The remaining 57.2% of the variation in teachers' productivity is attributable to other variables not included in the regression model and random error.

Research Question 3: To what extent does centralised decision-making predict teachers' productivity in private secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 3: Simple Regression on the Extent to Which Centralised Decision-Making Predict Teachers' Productivity in Private Secondary Schools in Rivers State

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R-Square	Extent of Prediction	Decision
1	0.671	0.450	0.449	45.0%	Low Extent

Scale of Measurement: 71% - 100% = Very High Extent, 51% - 70% = High Extent, 26% - 50% = Low Extent, 0% - 25% = Very Low Extent.

Table 3 revealed that the regression coefficient (R) and coefficient of determination (R^2) were .671 and .450, respectively, while the adjusted R^2 was .449. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 \times 100$) indicates that centralised decision-making accounted for 45.0% of the variation in teachers' productivity in private secondary schools in Rivers State. This implies that centralised decision-making predicts teachers' productivity to a low extent. The remaining 55.0% of the variation in teachers' productivity is attributable to other variables not included in the regression model and random error.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Excessive classroom supervision does not significantly predict teachers' productivity in private secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 4: t-test Associated with Simple Regression on the Extent to Which Excessive Classroom Supervision Significantly Predicts Teachers' Productivity in Private Secondary Schools in Rivers State

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	p-value	Alpha level	Decision
		B	Std. Error	Beta				
1	(Constant)	2.845	.081		35.123	.000	0.05	$H0_1$ Rejected (Significant)
	Excessive Classroom Supervision	0.300	.041	0.315	6.600	.000		

a. Dependent Variable: Teachers' Productivity.

The analysis of the hypothesis focused on determining whether excessive classroom supervision significantly predicts teachers' productivity in private secondary schools in Rivers State. The coefficient in Table 4 revealed that excessive classroom supervision had an unstandardised coefficient (B) of 0.300, a standard error of .041, a standardised beta coefficient of 0.315, and a t-value of 6.600 with a corresponding p-value of .000, which is less than the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that Excessive classroom supervision significantly predicts teachers' productivity in private secondary schools in Rivers State.

Hypothesis 2: Overcontrol of instructional planning does not significantly predict teachers' productivity in private secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 5: t-test Associated with Simple Regression on the Extent to Which Overcontrol of Instructional Planning Significantly Predicts Teachers' Productivity in Private Secondary Schools in Rivers State

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	p-value	Alpha level	Decision
		B	Std. Error	Beta				
1	(Constant)	2.845	.081		35.123	.000		
	Overcontrol of Instructional Planning	0.310	.041	0.330	7.000	.000	0.05	$H0_2$ Rejected (Significant)

a. Dependent Variable: Teachers' Productivity

The analysis of the hypothesis focused on determining whether overcontrol of instructional planning significantly predicts teachers' productivity in private secondary schools in Rivers State. The coefficient in Table 11 revealed that overcontrol of instructional planning had an unstandardised coefficient (B) of 0.310, a standard error of .041, a standardised beta coefficient of 0.330, and a t-value of 7.000 with a corresponding p-value of .000, which is less than the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that Overcontrol of instructional planning significantly predicts teachers' productivity in private secondary schools in Rivers State.

Hypothesis 3: Centralised decision-making does not significantly predict teachers' productivity in private secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 12: t-test Associated with Simple Regression on the Extent to Which Centralised Decision-Making Significantly Predicts Teachers' Productivity in Private Secondary Schools in Rivers State

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	p-value	Alpha level	Decision
		B	Std. Error	Beta				
1	(Constant)	2.845	.081		35.123	.000		
	Centralised Decision-Making	0.320	.041	0.345	7.400	.000	0.05	$H0_3$ Rejected (Significant)

a. Dependent Variable: Teachers' Productivity

The analysis of the hypothesis focused on determining whether centralised decision-making significantly predicts teachers' productivity in private secondary schools in Rivers State. The coefficient in Table 12 revealed that centralised decision-making had an unstandardised coefficient (B) of 0.320, a standard error of .041, a standardised beta coefficient of 0.345, and a t-value of 7.400 with a corresponding p-value of .000, which is less than the 0.05 level of significance.

Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that centralised decision-making significantly predicts teachers' productivity in private secondary schools in Rivers State.

Discussion of Findings

Excessive Classroom Supervision and Teachers' Productivity in Private Secondary Schools in Rivers State

The first finding revealed that excessive classroom supervision predicts teachers' productivity in private secondary schools in Rivers State to a low extent (37.5%). Also, the corresponding hypothesis tested established that excessive classroom supervision significantly predicts teachers' productivity in private secondary schools in Rivers State. These findings are consistent with the empirical studies of Ibrahim and Yusuf (2021), Hassan and Lawal (2021), Adebayo and Ogunleye (2023), and Abdullahi and Musa (2023), all of whom found that excessive classroom supervision significantly predicts teachers' productivity, although in a negative direction. Their studies revealed that excessive monitoring, fault-finding supervision, and intrusive classroom visits diminish teachers' morale, instructional creativity, professional autonomy, and overall effectiveness, thereby lowering productivity. The finding that excessive classroom supervision predicted teachers' productivity to a low extent may be attributed to the fact that, although supervision is necessary for accountability and instructional improvement, excessive monitoring often creates pressure, anxiety, and a sense of distrust among teachers. Other factors such as remuneration, school climate, leadership style, teacher motivation, and availability of instructional resources may have greater influence on teachers' productivity. This implies that principals should avoid overly controlling supervisory practices and instead adopt supportive, collaborative, and developmental supervision that provides constructive feedback while granting teachers adequate professional autonomy, thereby enhancing their confidence, commitment, and overall productivity in private secondary schools in Rivers State.

Overcontrol of Instructional Planning and Teachers' Productivity in Private Secondary Schools in Rivers State

The second finding of the study revealed that overcontrol of instructional planning predicts teachers' productivity in private secondary schools in Rivers State to a low extent (42.8%). Also, the corresponding hypothesis tested established that overcontrol of instructional planning significantly predicts teachers' productivity in private secondary schools in Rivers State. These findings are consistent with the empirical studies of Ibrahim and Salisu (2022), Onyema and Uchenna (2022), Adebayo and Ogunleye (2023), Hassan and Lawal (2025), and Abdullahi and Kenneth (2019), all of whom found that overcontrol of instructional planning significantly predicts teachers' productivity, though in a negative direction. Their studies consistently revealed that rigid administrative control over lesson planning, instructional methods, and classroom procedures limits teachers' creativity, professional autonomy, instructional flexibility, and commitment, thereby reducing their productivity and overall instructional effectiveness. The finding that overcontrol of instructional planning predicted teachers' productivity to a low extent may be attributed to the fact that, although instructional planning is essential for effective teaching, teachers' productivity is also influenced by factors such as leadership style, motivation, remuneration, school climate, professional development, workload, and instructional resources. This implies that principals and proprietors should avoid excessive control over instructional planning and instead encourage collaborative planning that gives teachers greater professional

autonomy. Such an approach is likely to enhance teachers' creativity, innovation, job satisfaction, instructional effectiveness, and overall productivity in private secondary schools in Rivers State.

Centralized Decision-Making and Teachers' Productivity in Private Secondary Schools in Rivers State

The third finding of the study revealed that centralised decision-making predicts teachers' productivity in private secondary schools in Rivers State to a low extent by 45.0%. Also, the corresponding hypothesis tested established that centralised decision-making significantly predicts teachers' productivity in private secondary schools in Rivers State. These findings support the empirical studies of Nwachukwu and Obinwa (2024), Lawal and Musa (2022), Onyekachi and Oyema (2022), and Ezi and Musa (2023), all of whom found that centralised decision-making significantly predicts teachers' productivity, though in a negative direction. Specifically, the studies consistently revealed that excessive concentration of decision-making authority in the hands of school principals' limits teachers' participation in instructional and administrative decisions, weakens their sense of belonging, reduces morale, professional commitment, instructional creativity, and job satisfaction, and ultimately leads to lower levels of teachers' productivity. The agreement between the present study and the reviewed studies may be attributed to the fact that teachers are generally more productive when they are actively involved in school decision-making, whereas excessive centralisation often reduces their motivation, commitment, and sense of ownership. Although centralised decision-making significantly predicted teachers' productivity, its influence was low (45.0%), suggesting that other factors such as remuneration, school climate, leadership style, professional development, and instructional resources also affect productivity. This implies that proprietors and principals should adopt participatory leadership practices by involving teachers in key administrative and instructional decisions to enhance their motivation, instructional effectiveness, and overall productivity in private secondary schools in Rivers State.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that principals' micromanagement practices significantly predict teachers' productivity in private secondary schools in Rivers State to a low extent.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Principals of private secondary schools should adopt supportive rather than excessive classroom supervision to enhance teachers' confidence and productivity.
2. School proprietors and principals should involve teachers in instructional planning and avoid excessive control over lesson preparation and curriculum implementation.
3. School administrators should decentralise decision-making by actively involving teachers in academic and administrative decisions affecting school operations.

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