



RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRINCIPALS' MANAGERIAL ROLES AND EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING IMPLEMENTATION IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ANAMBRA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The successful implementation of educational policies largely depends on the leadership capacity and managerial roles of school principals. Experiential learning, which emphasizes learning through direct experience, reflection, and practical engagement, has gained prominence in Nigerian secondary education as a strategy for improving students' academic achievement, engagement, and real-world competence. However, the extent to which principals facilitate and sustain the implementation of experiential learning policy remains under-researched, particularly in Anambra State. This study examined the relationship between principals' managerial roles and experiential learning implementation in public secondary schools in Anambra State, Nigeria. A correlational research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised all 269 principals in the 269 public secondary schools in Anambra State. A sample of 150 principals was selected using a proportionate stratified random sampling technique. Data were collected using two researcher-developed instruments: Principals' Managerial Roles Questionnaire (PMRQ) and Experiential Learning Implementation Questionnaire (ELIQ). The instruments were validated by experts in Educational Management and Measurement and Evaluation, and reliability indices of 0.82 and 0.85 were obtained using Cronbach's Alpha. Pearson Product Moment Correlation and multiple regression analyses were used to analyze the data at 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that principals' instructional leadership, provision of instructional resources, supervision of experiential activities, teacher professional development support, and community partnership significantly correlated with experiential learning implementation. The study concluded that principals play a pivotal role in translating experiential learning policy into classroom practice and student outcomes. It was recommended, among others, that government and education stakeholders strengthen principals' leadership capacity through continuous professional development and provide adequate funding and infrastructure to support experiential learning in public secondary schools.

Keywords: Principals, Managerial Roles, Leadership, Instructional Supervision, Experiential Learning, Implementation

1.1 Introduction

Education in the 21st century has increasingly shifted from teacher-centered instructional approaches to learner-centered pedagogies that emphasize active engagement, critical thinking, and real-life application of knowledge. One of the most prominent of such pedagogical approaches

is experiential learning. Experiential learning is grounded in the philosophy that students learn best when they actively participate in meaningful experiences and reflect on those experiences to construct knowledge (Kolb, 1984).

Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory conceptualizes learning as a cyclic process involving concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. This model has influenced contemporary educational reforms globally, including in Nigeria, where curriculum policies increasingly emphasize activity-based, project-based, and practical learning experiences (Federal Ministry of Education, 2013).

In Nigeria, the secondary school curriculum and teaching guidelines promote practical-oriented instruction, laboratory work, field trips, project-based learning, vocational skills acquisition, and ICT-supported learning, all of which align with experiential learning principles (FRN, 2014). Empirical studies conducted in different parts of Nigeria have consistently demonstrated that experiential learning strategies significantly improve students' academic achievement, interest, attitude, and skill acquisition (Bala, 2024; Muogbo, Okafor, & Okafor, 2025; Okoye & Obi, 2025).

Despite the documented benefits of experiential learning, the effective implementation of experiential learning policy in schools is not automatic. It depends largely on school leadership, particularly the role of principals as instructional leaders, policy implementers, and managers of school resources (Hallinger, 2011). Principals are responsible for creating enabling school environments, supervising instruction, motivating teachers, allocating resources, and building partnerships with communities to support teaching and learning (Eke & Okonkwo, 2023).

In Anambra State, public secondary schools face challenges such as inadequate instructional materials, limited laboratory facilities, overcrowded classrooms, insufficient funding, and varying levels of teacher preparedness for experiential pedagogies. These constraints make the principal's role even more critical in determining whether experiential learning policies are meaningfully implemented or remain theoretical directives.

Previous studies in Anambra State have focused primarily on the effects of experiential learning on students' academic achievement (Muogbo et al., 2025; Okoye & Obi, 2025). However, there is a noticeable gap in empirical research examining principals' leadership roles in the implementation of experiential learning policy and how such roles correlate with school outcomes. This study, therefore, seeks to fill this gap by investigating principals' managerial roles and experiential learning implementation in public secondary schools in Anambra State, Nigeria.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to examine principals' managerial roles and experiential learning implementation in public secondary schools in Anambra State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Determine the relationship between principals' instructional leadership and experiential learning implementation in public secondary schools in Anambra State, Nigeria.

2. Examine the relationship between principals' provision of instructional resources and experiential learning implementation in public secondary schools in Anambra State, Nigeria.
3. Ascertain the relationship between principals' supervision of instruction and experiential learning implementation in public secondary schools in Anambra State, Nigeria.
4. Determine the relationship between principals' support for teacher professional development and experiential learning implementation in public secondary schools in Anambra State, Nigeria.
5. Examine the relationship between principals' community partnership initiatives and experiential learning implementation in public secondary schools in Anambra State, Nigeria.

1.3 Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the relationship between principals' instructional leadership and experiential learning implementation in public secondary schools in Anambra State, Nigeria?
2. What is the relationship between principals' provision of instructional resources and experiential learning implementation in public secondary schools in Anambra State, Nigeria?
3. What is the relationship between principals' supervision of instruction and experiential learning implementation in public secondary schools in Anambra State, Nigeria?
4. What is the relationship between principals' support for teacher professional development and experiential learning implementation in public secondary schools in Anambra State, Nigeria?
5. What is the relationship between principals' community partnership initiatives and experiential learning implementation in public secondary schools in Anambra State, Nigeria?

1.4 Hypotheses

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

1. There is no significant relationship between principals' instructional leadership and experiential learning implementation in public secondary schools in Anambra State, Nigeria.
2. There is no significant relationship between principals' provision of instructional resources and experiential learning implementation in public secondary schools in Anambra State, Nigeria.
3. There is no significant relationship between principals' supervision of instruction and experiential learning implementation in public secondary schools in Anambra State, Nigeria.
4. There is no significant relationship between principals' support for teacher professional development and experiential learning implementation in public secondary schools in Anambra State, Nigeria.
5. There is no significant relationship between principals' community partnership initiatives and experiential learning implementation in public secondary schools in Anambra State, Nigeria.

2. Methods

This study adopted a correlational research design. This design was considered appropriate because it enabled the researcher to determine the nature and strength of relationships between principals' leadership roles and the implementation of experiential learning policy without manipulating any variables (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The study was carried out in Anambra State, Nigeria. Anambra State is located in the South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria and has six education zones with a total of 269 public secondary schools administered by the Anambra State Post Primary Schools Service Commission (PPSSC). The population of the study comprised all 269 principals in the 269 public secondary schools in Anambra State. A sample size of 150 principals was selected using proportionate stratified random sampling technique to ensure fair representation of principals across the six education zones in Anambra State.

Two instruments were used for data collection, namely, Principals' Managerial Roles Questionnaire (PMRQ) and Experiential Learning Implementation Questionnaire (ELIQ). Both instruments were structured on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree (4) to Strongly Disagree (1). The instruments were face- and content-validated by three experts in Educational Management and Measurement and Evaluation. Reliability was established using Cronbach's Alpha, yielding coefficients of 0.82 for PELIQ and 0.85 for ELOS. Pearson Product Moment Correlation and multiple regression analysis were used to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Findings/Results (Sample Tables)

Table 1: Relationship between Principals' Instructional Leadership and Experiential Learning Implementation

Variables	N	r	Sig.
Instructional Leadership & Experiential Learning Implementation	150	0.68	0.000

Table 2: Relationship between Provision of Resources and Experiential Learning Implementation

Variables	N	r	Sig.
Provision of Resources & Experiential Learning Implementation	150	0.64	0.000

Table 3: Relationship between Supervision of Instruction and Experiential Learning Implementation

Variables	N	r	Sig.
Supervision of Instruction & Experiential Learning Implementation	150	0.71	0.000

Table 4: Relationship between Support for Teacher Professional Development and Experiential Learning Implementation

Variables	N	r	Sig.
Teacher Professional Development Support & Experiential Learning Implementation	150	0.66	0.000

Table 5: Relationship between Community Partnership and Experiential Learning Implementation

Variables	N	r	Sig.
Community Partnership & Experiential Learning Implementation	150	0.62	0.000

Multiple Regression Analysis

To determine the combined contribution of principals' leadership variables to experiential learning implementation, a multiple regression analysis was conducted.

Table 6: Multiple Regression of Principals' Leadership Roles on Experiential Learning Implementation

Predictor Variables	Beta (β)	T	Sig.
Instructional Leadership	0.34	5.82	0.000
Provision of Resources	0.29	4.97	0.000
Supervision of Instruction	0.37	6.11	0.000

Predictor Variables	Beta (β)	T	Sig.
Teacher Professional Development Support	0.31	5.23	0.000
Community Partnership	0.26	4.41	0.000

R = 0.79, R² = 0.62, Adjusted R² = 0.60, F(5,144) = 46.21, p < 0.05

The regression results indicate that principals' leadership roles jointly explained 62% of the variance in experiential learning implementation in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Supervision of instruction and instructional leadership emerged as the strongest predictors.

4. Discussions

The findings of this study clearly demonstrate that principals' leadership roles significantly relate to the effective implementation of experiential learning in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The results affirm the centrality of school leadership in policy translation from official directives to classroom practice.

The study revealed a strong positive relationship between principals' instructional leadership and experiential learning implementation ($r = 0.68, p < .05$). This finding suggests that principals who actively provide instructional guidance, set academic goals, monitor teaching practices, and promote learner-centered methodologies significantly enhance experiential learning practices in their schools. This finding is consistent with Okaforcha and Okonkwo (2025), who found that principals' management and instructional strategies significantly predicted teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Their correlational study involving 267 principals demonstrated that principals' monitoring and instructional leadership strategies had a statistically significant impact on teachers' classroom practices and effectiveness. Similarly, Obi, Okaforcha, and Nweke (2025) reported that principals' administrative and instructional skills were strong correlates of teachers' job engagement in Anambra State. They argued that principals who emphasize instructional leadership create environments that support innovative and activity-based teaching approaches, which are core components of experiential learning. From a theoretical perspective, Hallinger's (2011) instructional leadership model emphasizes the principal's role in defining school mission, managing instructional programs, and promoting a positive school learning climate. In the Nigerian context, this study extends Hallinger's model by showing that instructional leadership is also critical for experiential learning policy implementation, particularly in resource-constrained public schools.

The study also found a significant positive relationship between principals' provision of instructional resources and experiential learning implementation ($r = 0.64, p < .05$). This implies

that experiential learning cannot be effectively implemented without adequate laboratories, instructional materials, ICT facilities, workshop tools, and funding support. This finding aligns with the study by Osegbue and Ohamobi (2024), which revealed that principals' administrative strategies for quality assurance in Anambra State included effective allocation of instructional resources and facility management as key predictors of school quality. They concluded that resource availability significantly influences the implementation of innovative teaching strategies. Similarly, Abdullahi et al. (2023) reported that inadequate funding and poor facilities constitute major barriers to effective policy implementation in Nigerian secondary schools. Their study on managing policy implementation emphasized that principals' ability to mobilize and manage resources determines the extent to which national education policies are effectively realized at the school level. In Anambra State, experiential learning often involves laboratory experiments, project-based learning, field trips, vocational skill acquisition, and ICT-supported instruction. These activities require material and financial support. Therefore, principals who prioritize resource provision create enabling environments for experiential learning to thrive.

The findings further revealed a strong positive relationship between principals' supervision of instruction and experiential learning implementation ($r = 0.71, p < .05$). This indicates that regular classroom supervision, monitoring of lesson delivery, and feedback to teachers significantly promote the use of experiential teaching strategies. This result corroborates the findings of Okaforcha and Uche (2025), who found that principals' supervisory skills significantly influenced teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Their study, which involved all 263 principals in the state, demonstrated that effective supervision enhanced teaching quality and instructional compliance. Similarly, Chinwuko, Onyali, and Anachuna (2024) found that the effective implementation of feedback from external supervision significantly improved quality assurance in Anambra public secondary schools. Their findings emphasized that supervision and feedback mechanisms are critical for sustaining instructional reforms and innovative teaching practices. Supervision plays a vital role in ensuring that teachers actually adopt experiential learning strategies rather than reverting to traditional lecture methods. Through supervision, principals reinforce accountability, instructional standards, and adherence to experiential learning policy guidelines.

The study also revealed a significant positive relationship between principals' support for teacher professional development and experiential learning implementation ($r = 0.66, p < .05$). This indicates that principals who organize workshops, seminars, mentoring, and in-service training significantly enhance teachers' capacity to implement experiential learning strategies. This finding supports Mbanefo and Ofojebe (2024), who reported that training, mentorship, and professional development practices adopted by principals significantly improved teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. They concluded that continuous professional development is essential for instructional innovation and school improvement. Similarly, Ndidi (2023) emphasized that on-the-job training and capacity building

are critical for sustaining effective teaching and learning in Anambra State public secondary schools. The study recommended increased investment in teacher training to support modern instructional approaches. Experiential learning requires specialized pedagogical skills, including facilitation, project-based instruction, reflective practice, and assessment of practical competencies. Without continuous professional development, teachers may lack the confidence and competence to effectively implement experiential learning policies.

The study further revealed that principals' community partnership initiatives significantly correlated with experiential learning implementation ($r = 0.62, p < .05$). This suggests that collaboration with parents, local industries, artisans, NGOs, and community leaders enhances experiential learning opportunities such as field trips, internships, project-based learning, and real-world exposure. This finding is consistent with Olibie (2012), who found that parental and community involvement significantly influenced curriculum implementation in Anambra State secondary schools. Although Olibie reported a low level of involvement, the study emphasized the need for principals to strengthen community engagement to support curriculum delivery. More recently, Mokwe et al. (2025) found that principals' transformative management strategies, particularly community involvement and staff development, significantly contributed to secondary school improvement in Anambra State. Their study highlighted that community partnerships enhance access to learning resources and practical learning opportunities. Experiential learning thrives in environments where schools are connected to their communities. Partnerships with local businesses, farms, hospitals, workshops, and ICT centers provide authentic learning contexts that enrich students' learning experiences and enhance the relevance of school curricula.

5. Conclusion

This study investigated principals' managerial roles in the implementation of experiential learning in public secondary schools in Anambra State, Nigeria. The findings provide strong empirical evidence that principals' leadership practices are central to the successful translation of experiential learning policy into meaningful classroom practices and improved school outcomes. The results revealed that principals' instructional leadership significantly influenced experiential learning implementation. Principals who provided clear academic direction, encouraged learner-centered methodologies, and promoted innovative instructional strategies created school climates that supported experiential learning. This confirms that instructional leadership is not only essential for general academic effectiveness but is also critical for modern pedagogical reforms such as experiential learning.

The study also established that the provision of instructional resources significantly correlated with experiential learning implementation. Experiential learning is resource-intensive, requiring laboratories, instructional materials, ICT facilities, vocational tools, and funding for projects and excursions. Principals who prioritized the acquisition, allocation, and maintenance of instructional resources were more successful in facilitating experiential learning activities. This

finding underscores the reality that policy directives alone are insufficient without adequate material support. Furthermore, supervision of instruction emerged as the strongest predictor of experiential learning implementation. Principals who regularly monitored classroom instruction, provided feedback, and ensured compliance with curriculum guidelines significantly enhanced teachers' adoption of experiential learning strategies. Effective supervision ensured that experiential learning was not merely prescribed but actually practiced in classrooms.

Support for teacher professional development was also found to be a significant determinant of experiential learning implementation. Teachers require continuous training to acquire the pedagogical skills necessary for experiential and activity-based teaching. Principals who organized workshops, seminars, mentoring, and in-service training programs enhanced teachers' competence and confidence in implementing experiential learning strategies. In addition, community partnership initiatives significantly influenced experiential learning outcomes. Schools that collaborated with parents, local industries, artisans, NGOs, and community organizations provided students with authentic learning experiences beyond the classroom. These partnerships enriched experiential learning by exposing students to real-life applications of knowledge and practical skill development.

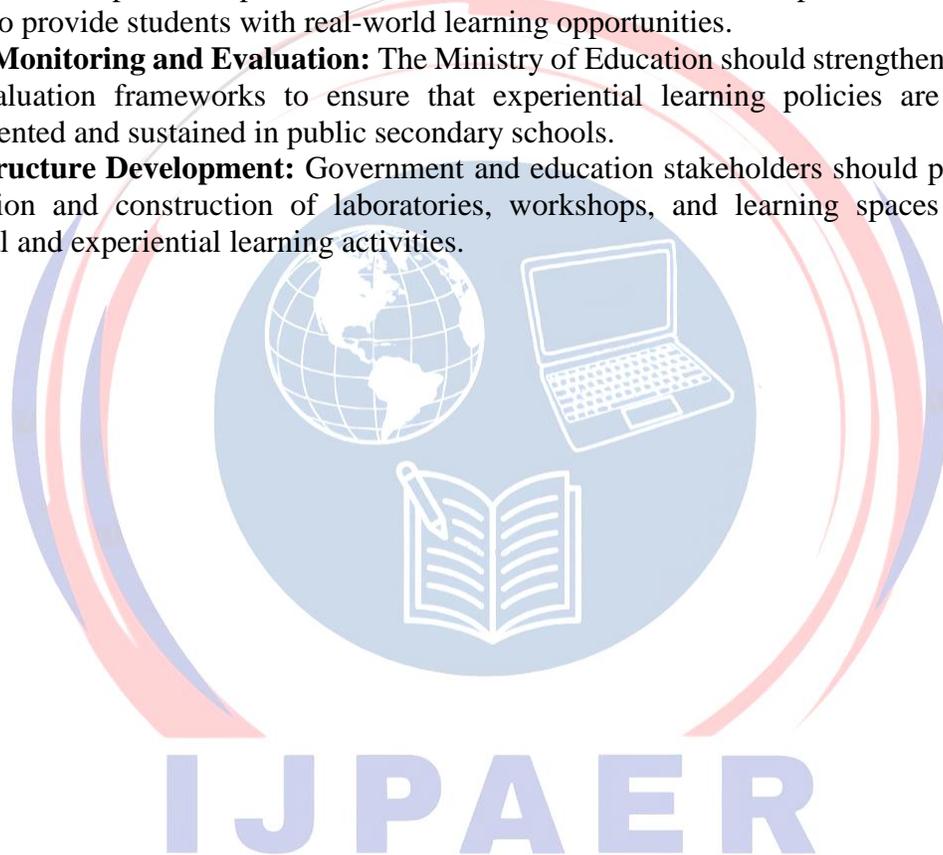
Overall, the study concludes that principals are pivotal actors in the successful implementation of experiential learning policy in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Principals' leadership roles, particularly instructional leadership, resource provision, supervision, professional development support, and community partnership, collectively and significantly determine the effectiveness of experiential learning practices and outcomes. This study contributes to Nigerian and Anambra-based educational leadership literature by empirically demonstrating the strong link between principals' leadership roles and experiential learning policy implementation. It also provides evidence-based insights for policymakers, education administrators, and school leaders seeking to improve the quality and relevance of secondary education through experiential learning.

Recommendations

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

1. **Strengthening Instructional Leadership Capacity:** The Anambra State Ministry of Education and PPSSC should organize regular leadership training programs for principals to enhance their instructional leadership competencies, with emphasis on experiential and learner-centered pedagogies.
2. **Improved Funding and Resource Provision:** The Government should increase budgetary allocation to public secondary schools to enable principals to procure laboratories, instructional materials, ICT facilities, and vocational tools required for experiential learning implementation.

3. **Institutionalization of Effective Supervision:** Principals should be supported and trained to adopt systematic classroom supervision practices, including lesson observation, feedback mechanisms, and monitoring of experiential learning activities.
4. **Continuous Professional Development for Teachers:** Regular in-service training, workshops, and seminars should be institutionalized to equip teachers with modern experiential learning strategies and assessment techniques.
5. **Strengthening School–Community Partnerships:** Principals should be encouraged to establish formal partnerships with local industries, artisans, farms, hospitals, ICT centers, and NGOs to provide students with real-world learning opportunities.
6. **Policy Monitoring and Evaluation:** The Ministry of Education should strengthen monitoring and evaluation frameworks to ensure that experiential learning policies are effectively implemented and sustained in public secondary schools.
7. **Infrastructure Development:** Government and education stakeholders should prioritize the renovation and construction of laboratories, workshops, and learning spaces to support practical and experiential learning activities.



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