

Goals Setting and Scheduling Strategies of Head Teachers as Correlates of Primary School Effectiveness in Southwest, Nigeria

Author(s), IDOWU Olubunmi Mary

Abstract:

This study investigated the relationship between goal-setting and scheduling strategies of head teachers and primary school effectiveness in Southwest Nigeria. A descriptive survey design was adopted, with data collected from 135 head teachers and 1,350 teachers selected through a multistage sampling procedure across Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Osun, Ondo, and Ekiti States. Two self-designed instruments namely Goal Setting and Scheduling Strategies Questionnaire (GSSSQ) and the Primary School Effectiveness Questionnaire (PSEQ) were used, and both instruments were validated and tested for reliability. Data analysis involved descriptive and inferential statistics, with Pearson Product Moment Correlation used to test the hypotheses at a 0.05 significance level. The findings revealed a significant positive relationship between goal-setting and primary school effectiveness, highlighting that clearly defined goals provide teachers and pupils with direction, structure, and motivation, thereby enhancing collaboration, accountability, and instructional quality. Conversely, the study found no significant relationship between scheduling and school effectiveness. Overall, the study emphasizes the critical role of goal-setting as a leadership and time-management strategy in improving school effectiveness. While scheduling remains an important managerial tool, its potential benefits may only be realized when strategically applied in conjunction with goal-setting and other effective leadership practices.

Keywords: Goal-setting, Scheduling, Head teachers, Primary school effectiveness,

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About Author

Author(s):

IDOWU Olubunmi Mary

Bamidele Olumilua University of Education, Science and Technology,
Ikere Ekiti, Ekiti State

idowuolubunmi79@gmail.com



Introduction

Primary education plays a foundational role in national development, yet concerns about school effectiveness in primary schools across Southwest Nigeria continue to grow. Several observable indicators point to persistent inefficiencies that challenge the attainment of educational goals (Ogunjobi et al., 2023; Chang & Chou 2018). Teachers' punctuality and consistency in lesson delivery appear irregular, while their adaptation to curriculum innovations seems inadequate. In many schools, teachers' mastery of core subject content appears insufficient, a situation that may compromise the quality of instructional delivery and ultimately hinder pupils' learning outcomes. Incomplete syllabus coverage, weak presentation skills, and limited engagement with learners further heighten worries about deteriorating instructional quality. Additionally, head teachers and teachers often appear unable to effectively identify and address pupils' learning difficulties, resulting in unmet academic needs and stalled progress.

Communication among pupils, teachers, and school administrators appears weak, and the use of instructional materials, whether improvised or provided seems inconsistent and inadequate. Enforcement of school rules also appears irregular, causing avoidable operational inefficiencies. In some cases, instructional supervision by head teachers seems insufficient, and communication channels between school leaders and teachers appear disorganized. These challenges contribute to poor monitoring, weak feedback systems, and the absence of timely performance appraisals. Indiscipline among both teachers and pupils, coupled with minimal synergy between head teachers and learners, further impedes the achievement of school objectives. Reports of teachers prioritizing personal economic interests over instructional responsibilities intensify concerns about declining commitment and erosion of school effectiveness. These patterns suggest that deeper administrative issues, particularly ineffective goal-setting and poor scheduling practices among head teachers, may underlie the continued ineffectiveness of many primary schools.

Goal-setting is widely recognized as a foundational leadership and time-management strategy that supports the attainment of organizational objectives. When head teachers define clear, measurable, and achievable goals, they provide direction for teachers, clarify expectations, and create a shared vision for school improvement. Empirical evidence highlights the importance of goal-setting in improving educational performance and professional development. For instance, Adediran (2021) found that explicit delegation informed by clearly articulated goals enhanced teachers' professional growth and improved overall school performance. This suggests that when head teachers articulate specific goals and align responsibilities appropriately, teachers become more accountable and effective. Similarly, Oluwatayo and Adebayo (2020) emphasized that goal-setting strengthens collaborative practices within schools by providing shared targets and reinforcing collective action toward common educational objectives. This collaborative clarity fosters cooperation, improves teamwork, and enhances institutional outcomes.

Goal-setting also plays a crucial role in instructional effectiveness. Ajayi (2022) discovered that teachers who participated in structured goal-setting programs demonstrated significant



improvement in classroom management and instructional delivery compared to their counterparts who relied on conventional teaching approaches. The study underscores the importance of integrating goal-setting into professional practices to strengthen teaching quality and institutional performance. Beyond the teachers' domain, goal-setting also shapes learners' academic behaviours. Ogunjobi et al. (2023) established that students who set specific and measurable goals tend to manage their time more efficiently and perform better academically, highlighting the broader implications of goal-setting for the school environment. These findings collectively indicate that clear objectives, systematic planning, and well-defined targets are essential leadership tools that head teachers can employ to enhance teacher performance, strengthen collaboration, and improve school effectiveness.

Alongside goal-setting, effective scheduling is another critical strategy for optimizing time use and improving school operations. Scheduling enables head teachers to organize activities systematically, allocate time efficiently, and ensure that instructional and administrative tasks receive adequate attention. Research demonstrates that schools with well-structured schedules tend to experience fewer disruptions, more productive learning environments, and better organizational outcomes. Wang et al. (2021) found that efficient scheduling improved teaching quality by enabling optimal use of instructional time and reducing classroom interruptions. Teachers who operated within structured timetables reported enhanced lesson delivery and increased student engagement, showing that a thoughtful schedule directly contributes to better instructional experiences.

Scheduling also enhances classroom management and instructional time allocation. In a quasi-experimental study, Zhang (2020) revealed that teachers trained in scheduling techniques utilized classroom time more efficiently, leading to improved instructional delivery and better student outcomes. This implies that structured scheduling is not only an administrative tool but also a pedagogical asset. Furthermore, the collaborative dimension of scheduling has been highlighted in studies linking shared leadership with improved organizational performance. Dionísio et al. (2022) discovered that flexible scheduling combined with delegated responsibilities fostered a collaborative school culture, increased teacher engagement, and reduced burnout. These findings highlight the potential of scheduling to create supportive work environments that enhance both teacher well-being and school effectiveness.

Scheduling also plays a significant role in promoting continuous professional development. According to Galdames-Calderón (2023), head teachers who implemented regular schedules for teacher development sessions facilitated ongoing learning, improved teaching strategies, and enhanced student performance. This demonstrates the potential of scheduling to institutionalize professional learning and promote a culture of continuous improvement. On a broader scale, global evidence consistently supports the role of strategic scheduling in strengthening school leadership and organizational outcomes. Sun and Tsai (2020), in a synthesis of two decades of international case studies, concluded that principals who prioritized structured scheduling for instructional time, teacher collaboration, and



administrative responsibilities achieved superior organizational results, including improved teaching quality, enhanced student achievement, and higher teacher satisfaction.

Taken together, the evidence suggests that goal-setting and scheduling are indispensable time-management and leadership strategies that can significantly influence school effectiveness. In the context of Southwest Nigeria where issues such as weak instructional supervision, irregular teacher attendance, inadequate communication, poor syllabus coverage, and declining teacher commitment continue to threaten the quality of basic education, the integration of effective goal-setting and scheduling strategies by head teachers becomes critically important.

The study investigated goals setting and scheduling strategies of head teachers as correlates of primary school effectiveness in southwest, Nigeria.

The following research hypotheses were formulated for this study

1. There is no significant relationship between goals setting and primary school effectiveness
2. There is no significant relationship between scheduling and primary school effectiveness.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design to obtain data from a large population of head teachers across public primary schools in Southwest Nigeria. The population comprised all head teachers in the region's 3,971 public primary schools spread across Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Osun, Ondo, and Ekiti States. From this population, a sample of 135 head teachers and 1,350 teachers was selected through a multistage sampling procedure. In the first stage, three states were chosen using simple random sampling. This was followed by the random selection of three Local Government Areas from each senatorial district within the selected states, resulting in twenty-seven LGAs. Five public primary schools were then chosen from each LGA using stratified random sampling. Teachers were selected proportionately from the sampled schools, while the head teachers were purposively selected to assess their goal-setting and scheduling strategies.

Two self-designed instruments titled Goals Setting and Scheduling Strategies Questionnaire (GSSSQ) and Primary School Effectiveness Questionnaire (PSEQ) were used to collect relevant data. The GSSSQ consisted of two sections: Section A captured respondents' demographic information, while Section B contained 10 items on goal setting and scheduling, rated on a 4-point Likert scale. The PSEQ also had two sections, with Section A capturing demographic characteristics and Section B comprising 25 items designed to measure primary school effectiveness using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from Excellent to Poor. The instruments underwent face and content validation by experts in Educational Management and Tests and Measurement to ensure their appropriateness and relevance.

Reliability of the instruments was established through a test-retest procedure involving teachers and head teachers from schools not included in the main study. The instruments were administered twice within a two-week interval, and the resulting data were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation, yielding reliability coefficients of 0.81 for GSSSQ and 0.82 for PSEQ, indicating strong internal consistency. Administration of the instruments



was conducted by the researcher through direct visits to all sampled schools, which facilitated clearer understanding and ensured a high retrieval rate. Data collected were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics, with Pearson Product Moment Correlation used to test the two hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between goals setting and primary school effectiveness

Table 1: Relationship between goals setting and primary school effectiveness

Variables	N	Mean	Stand Dev	r-cal	P-value
Goals Setting	135	16.93	2.05	0.813*	0.000
Primary School Effectiveness	135	102.28	5.49		

* $P < 0.05$

Table 1 showed that the r-cal value of 0.813 is significant at 0.05 level of significance because the P-value (0.000) < 0.05 . The null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is a significant relationship between goals setting and primary school effectiveness in Southwest, Nigeria.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between scheduling and primary school effectiveness

Table 2: Relationship between scheduling and primary school effectiveness

Variables	N	Mean	Stand Dev	r-cal	P-value
Scheduling	135	16.56	1.98	0.027	0.534
Primary School Effectiveness	135	102.28	5.49		

$P > 0.05$

Table 2 showed that the r-cal value of 0.027 is not significant at 0.05 level of significance because the P-value (0.534) > 0.05 . The null hypothesis is not rejected. This implies that there is no significant relationship between scheduling and primary school effectiveness in Southwest, Nigeria

Discussion

The study that goal setting had a significant relationship with primary school effectiveness. The implication is that clear goals provide both teachers and pupils with direction, structure, and motivation, thereby improving collaboration and accountability. This finding suggests that goal clarity not only enhances teacher performance but also improves student outcomes by establishing shared expectations. This can be attributed to the fact that goal setting ensures that staff and learners remain focused on measurable targets, which enhances planning, consistency, and instructional quality. This is strongly supported by Durojaiye and Olorunfemi (2021), who found that goal setting improved teachers' professional development and institutional effectiveness. Ojo and Adebayo (2022) also concluded that goal setting fostered collaboration, accountability, and improved educational outcomes in Nigerian schools. Adeyemi (2019) reinforced this by showing that structured goal-setting practices improved classroom management and instructional effectiveness. In addition, Makinde

(2021) confirmed that SMART goal setting enhanced students' time management and academic success, thereby underscoring the broader educational relevance of this practice. However, the study revealed no significant relationship between scheduling and primary school effectiveness. The implication is that scheduling, as currently practised in Southwest Nigeria, may not substantially influence educational outcomes. This finding suggests that although scheduling is typically regarded as essential to effective school management, it may be poorly implemented, rigid, or disconnected from other leadership strategies in this context. One possible reason could be that headteachers either lack adequate training in scheduling practices or that systemic challenges limit their ability to apply it strategically. This result contrasts with findings in other contexts. For instance, Waddington (2020) established that efficient scheduling improved teaching quality and student engagement, while Zhang (2020) found that training in scheduling procedures led to more effective classroom management. Similarly, Dionísio et al. (2022) reported that flexible scheduling reduced teacher fatigue and promoted collaboration. Sun and Tsai (2020) also described scheduling as a core leadership function that contributes to student achievement and teacher satisfaction. The contradiction between these studies and the present finding indicates that the effectiveness of scheduling is context-dependent, and in Southwest Nigeria, it may not yet be meaningfully integrated into headteachers' strategic planning.

Conclusion

The findings of the study indicate that goal-setting by head teachers has a significant positive relationship with primary school effectiveness in Southwest Nigeria, suggesting that clearly defined goals and objectives play a crucial role in enhancing school performance and overall educational outcomes. In contrast, scheduling was found not to have a significant impact on school effectiveness, indicating that organizing school activities into schedules alone may not directly influence the overall performance of primary schools in the region. These results highlight the critical importance of goal-setting as a leadership strategy while suggesting that scheduling, without effective implementation and integration with other management practices, may be insufficient to drive school improvement.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made

1. The finding that goal setting significantly influenced school effectiveness suggests the need for clear planning. Thus, schools should adopt frameworks that help headteachers prioritize critical tasks and set measurable goals, as these strategies contribute to focused educational planning and improved outcomes.
2. Although scheduling did not significantly relate to school effectiveness in this study, headteachers should still be guided on how to make scheduling more flexible, realistic, and responsive to school needs, so that its potential benefits can be maximized in practice.

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