

# HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (HRM) PRACTICES AND PRINCIPALS' ADMINISTRATIVE EFFICIENCY IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ETHIOPE EAST LOCAL GOVERNMENT, DELTA STATE NIGERIA

**AYORO Raphael Arouture**

Department of Educational Management and Foundations,  
Faculty of Education, Delta State University, Abraka

## **Abstract**

*This study examined the influence of human resource management (HRM) practices on principals' administrative efficiency in public secondary schools in Ethiope East Local Government Area of Delta State, Nigeria. Guided by Systems Theory and Human Capital Theory, the research explored how different Human resource practices such as staff recruitment and deployment, supervision and appraisal, as well as teacher motivation and welfare, shape the effectiveness of principals in carrying out their leadership responsibilities. A descriptive survey research design was adopted, involving 26 principals and 214 teachers, with data collected through structured questionnaires. The instruments were validated by experts and their reliability confirmed using Cronbach's Alpha. Findings revealed that effective recruitment and equitable deployment of teachers significantly enhanced principals' ability to manage schools efficiently. Supervision and performance appraisal emerged as the strongest predictors of administrative efficiency, showing that constructive feedback and regular classroom monitoring improve both teacher performance and school discipline. Motivation and welfare were also positively related to administrative efficiency, as teachers who felt valued and supported demonstrated greater cooperation and professionalism. Regression analysis results indicated that HRM practices collectively accounted for over half of the variance in principals' administrative efficiency, underscoring their central role in school leadership. The study concludes that principals' effectiveness in managing schools is inseparable from how well they manage people. It recommends strengthening HRM structures in secondary schools through transparent recruitment, fair appraisal systems, and improved teacher welfare policies.*

**Keywords:** Human Resource Management, Administrative Efficiency, Recruitment, Principal and Deployment, Delta State, Nigeria

## **Introduction**

Every educational system is built on people. No matter how well a curriculum is designed or how modern the infrastructure may be, the true strength of any school lies in its human resources. Teachers and support staff are the engine that drives the system, and the way they are managed ultimately determines the quality of education that learners receive. At the centre of this management process are the principals, who function not only as administrators but also as the chief human resource managers of their schools. Their efficiency in recruiting, deploying, supervising, appraising, and motivating staff plays a

decisive role in shaping the outcomes of secondary education (Nakpodia, 2010).

In Nigeria, education is widely recognized as an instrument for national development, with secondary education serving as a crucial link between primary schooling and higher institutions. It is at this level that learners are prepared for both academic and vocational pursuits. For this reason, principals carry a heavy responsibility: they must mobilize human and material resources in a way that ensures schools contribute meaningfully to national and community goals (Peretomode, 2012).

Globally, there has been a shift toward strategic human resource management as a

pathway to organizational effectiveness. Schools that adopt deliberate HRM practices continuous professional training for teachers, transparent recruitment, fair appraisal systems, and well-structured motivation packages tend to record stronger teacher commitment and better student outcomes (Ofojebe & Ezugoh, 2010). Unfortunately, in Nigeria, systemic challenges such as underfunding, politicized appointments, and inconsistent policy implementation often weaken these processes, making it difficult for schools to operate at their full potential (Ogunyinka, Okeke, & Adedoyin, 2015).

The situation in Delta State reflects these broader national trends but with additional complexities. Principals here manage schools that range from urban centres like Abraka to rural communities within Ethiope East Local Government. These different contexts require principals to adapt their HRM strategies while still maintaining equity and consistency across schools. Some principals have demonstrated remarkable administrative skill, yet others continue to face challenges such as ineffective staff deployment, delayed promotions, and weak welfare structures. These gaps frequently lead to low morale among teachers and declining classroom effectiveness (Efe, 2019; Umemetu & Obiweluzor, 2015).

Principals' administrative efficiency, in this study, refers to their ability to plan, organize, direct, and control human and material resources to achieve educational objectives (Adeyemi, 2012). Recent studies in Delta State show that when principals apply effective HRM practices ranging from recruitment and training to performance appraisal and motivation teachers display higher professionalism and schools perform better overall, the study of Umemetu & Obiweluzor,(2015). Yet, despite reforms at the state level, schools in Ethiope East still face persistent challenges such as high absenteeism and low teacher commitment. This raises an important concern: how far do principals' human resource management practices actually contribute to their administrative efficiency in this local government area?

### **Statement of the Problem**

The effectiveness of any secondary school rests not only on curriculum and infrastructure but on how well human resources teachers and support staff are managed. Principals, as the chief administrators of schools, preformed the responsibility of ensuring that staff are properly recruited, deployed, supervised, appraised, and motivated to deliver quality education. In Ethiope East Local Government Area of Delta State, this responsibility is even more crucial, as principals are expected to bridge the gap between state educational policies and classroom realities. Yet, despite several reforms in the education sector, many schools continue to struggle with challenges that affect both administration and learning outcomes.

Reports and observations across schools in the Ethiope, Delta State revealed recurring issues such as teacher absenteeism, indiscipline, weak professional commitment, and ineffective performance management systems. These challenges have far-reaching consequences: they dampen teacher morale, reduce classroom effectiveness, and ultimately weaken student achievement. While some principals in Delta State have demonstrated commendable administrative capacity, others face persistent difficulties with staff deployment, delayed promotions, and inadequate welfare structures. This unevenness in leadership practices raises serious concerns about the overall efficiency of human resource management in schools.

National policy frameworks, such as the *National Policy on Education* (FRN, 2014), emphasized quality assurance, supervision, and professional development for teachers. However, translating these policy ideals into practical outcomes depends heavily on principals. Unfortunately, systemic issues including underfunding, politicized appointments, and inconsistent implementation continue to limit the capacity of principals to manage human resources effectively and to sustain high standards in their schools.

The core of the problem is that, although principals are recognized as central to the success of schools, secondary schools in Ethiope East still experience low teacher morale, weak compliance with quality standards, and declining student performance. What remains unclear is how much principals'

human resource management practices actually shape their administrative efficiency in this local government area. Addressing this gap: Human Resource Management and Principals' Administrative Efficiency in Public Secondary Schools in Ethiopia East Local Government Area of Delta State

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between human resource management and principals' administrative efficiency in public secondary schools in Ethiopia East Local Government Area of Delta State. Specifically, the study seeks to:

- i. Determine the extent to which staff recruitment and deployment influence principals' administrative efficiency in public secondary schools, in Ethiopia East, Delta State.
- ii. Assess how supervision and performance appraisal practices affect principals' administrative efficiency, in Ethiopia East, Delta State.
- iii. Examine the role of teacher motivation and welfare on principals' administrative efficiency, in Ethiopia East, Delta State.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent do staff recruitment and deployment influence principals' administrative efficiency in public secondary schools in Ethiopia East, Delta State?
2. How do supervision and performance appraisal practices affect principals' administrative efficiency, in Ethiopia East, Delta State?
3. What role do teacher motivation and welfare play in enhancing principals' administrative efficiency in Ethiopia East, Delta State?

The following null hypotheses will be tested at 0.05 level of significance:

- 1: There is no significant relationship between staff recruitment and deployment and principals' administrative efficiency in public secondary schools in Ethiopia East, Delta.

- 2: There is no significant relationship between supervision and performance appraisal practices and principals' administrative efficiency, Delta
- 3: There is no significant relationship between teacher motivation and welfare and principals' administrative efficiency.

### **Review of Related Literature**

#### **Human Resource Management in Education**

Human Resource Management (HRM) refers to the systematic process of recruiting, developing, motivating, and retaining personnel to achieve organizational goals. In education, HRM focuses on teachers and non-teaching staff as the key resources in the school system. Effective HRM in schools includes recruitment and deployment of qualified staff, supervision and appraisal of performance, provision of professional development opportunities, and implementation of motivational and welfare strategies (Ofojebe & Ezugoh, 2010; Nkedishu, 2022).

In Nigeria, the management of human resources in schools has been influenced by systemic challenges such as poor funding, politicized teacher postings, weak accountability structures, and inconsistent training opportunities (Ogunyinka, Okeke, & Adedoyin, 2015). Despite these challenges, research in Delta State indicates that structured HRM practices have a strong positive effect on teacher productivity and student achievement (Akporehe & Asiyai, 2023).

Human Resource Management (HRM) in education extends beyond the mere recruitment and deployment of personnel; it also encompasses the continuous alignment of staff competencies with institutional goals through systematic training, professional growth, and strategic retention measures. According to Armstrong (2020), HRM in schools is critical because teachers represent both the largest resource investment and the most influential determinant of student outcomes. Unlike material resources, human resources require ongoing motivation, evaluation, and support to remain effective.

#### **Principals as Human Resource Managers**

Principals are not only administrative heads of schools but also the linchpin of human resource management in the education sector. Their role transcends routine policy enforcement to include strategic leadership that mobilizes teachers and staff toward achieving school goals. As HR managers, principals are responsible for forecasting staffing needs, recruiting and deploying teachers equitably, supervising classroom practices, appraising staff performance, motivating employees, and maintaining an enabling environment for effective teaching and learning (Nakpodia, 2010; Peretomode, 2012).

In practice, the effectiveness of principals in HRM lies in their ability to balance both managerial and instructional leadership roles. According to Adeyemi (2012), administrative efficiency is not merely about compliance with bureaucratic procedures but also about creating a culture of accountability, innovation, and shared responsibility. This dual responsibility requires principals to adopt participatory leadership approaches, where teachers feel valued and supported as partners in school development.

#### **Administrative Efficiency in Schools**

Administrative efficiency in schools embodies the capacity of principals to strategically plan, organize, coordinate, and control the human, material, and financial resources entrusted to them in ways that advance the educational mission of the institution (Adeyemi, 2012). It goes beyond routine administration and reflects the ability of school leaders to translate available resources into measurable learning outcomes. In this sense, efficiency is not only about compliance with rules but about the effective use of limited resources to maximize staff productivity and student achievement (Nkedishu, 2022).

One key dimension of administrative efficiency is the integration of human and material resource management. Principals must ensure that

teachers are not only recruited and deployed appropriately but are also adequately supported through training, supervision, and welfare provisions. At the same time, they must coordinate the use of facilities, instructional materials, and funds to sustain smooth school operations. Efficiency becomes evident when all these elements are harmonized, resulting in timely completion of syllabi, improved discipline, and a positive school climate (Umemetu & Obiweluzor, 2015).

#### **Human Resource Management Practices and Administrative Efficiency**

##### **1. Staff Recruitment and Deployment**

Recruitment and deployment are the cornerstones of effective human resource management in education. They determine not only who enters the school system but also how effectively personnel are positioned to maximize their expertise. For secondary schools, this means ensuring that qualified teachers are hired and that their subject specializations align with the instructional needs of students. When recruitment and deployment are handled effectively, schools benefit from improved instructional delivery, enhanced teacher morale, and higher levels of student achievement (Umemetu & Obiweluzor, 2015).

In practice, the recruitment of teachers in Nigeria has often been influenced by systemic challenges such as limited funding, irregular employment exercises, and political interference. Many public schools, particularly in rural areas, experience shortages in key subject areas such as mathematics, sciences, and technical education, while being overstaffed in less-demanded subjects. This imbalance creates inefficiencies that directly impact learning outcomes. Adeyemi (2012) notes that where subject–teacher mismatches exist, principals struggle to maintain curriculum coverage, leading to gaps in student learning and weakened academic performance.

Deployment, the second dimension of this process, is equally critical. Effective deployment ensures that teachers are equitably distributed across schools, taking into account both subject needs and the geographical

realities of communities. In Delta State, for example, urban schools often attract more teachers due to better amenities and accessibility, while rural schools in Ethiopia East Local Government frequently suffer shortages. Principals in such rural schools sometimes resort to improvisation, assigning teachers outside their area of specialization, which compromises teaching quality (Efe, 2019).

## 2. Supervision and Performance Appraisal

Supervision and performance appraisal are among the most crucial human resource management functions that define a principal's administrative efficiency. They serve as mechanisms for ensuring accountability, maintaining instructional quality, and promoting continuous professional growth among teachers. Supervision, in the school context, involves systematic classroom observation, mentoring, guidance, and evaluation of teaching processes. Performance appraisal, on the other hand, provides structured feedback that helps teachers reflect on their strengths and areas for improvement, ultimately influencing both job satisfaction and student outcomes (Nakpodia, 2010).

Effective supervision is not limited to fault-finding but rather emphasizes developmental support. Principals who approach supervision as a mentoring activity create a culture of trust and openness, encouraging teachers to innovate and adopt best instructional practices. Such developmental supervision fosters collaboration, reduces resistance, and improves teacher morale. Conversely, when supervision is punitive or irregular, it often leads to teacher resentment, absenteeism, and a decline in classroom performance (Nkedishu, 2022).

Performance appraisal provides a formal framework through which principals assess teachers' contributions to school goals. A fair and transparent appraisal system can motivate teachers, especially when tied to rewards such as recognition, promotion, or professional development opportunities. Ofojebe and Ezugoh (2010) observed that in Nigerian schools where appraisal processes are clearly communicated and equitably applied, teachers exhibit stronger commitment and

improved productivity. This highlights the direct relationship between appraisal fairness and school efficiency.

## 3. Motivation and Staff Welfare

Teacher motivation and staff welfare are at the heart of effective human resource management in schools, as they directly influence teachers' job satisfaction, commitment, and instructional performance. Motivation encompasses both intrinsic and extrinsic factors, ranging from recognition, career advancement, and professional development to financial incentives and welfare packages such as housing, health services, and pension security. When teachers feel valued and supported, they are more likely to demonstrate dedication, creativity, and resilience in their work. Conversely, lack of motivation often leads to low morale, absenteeism, attrition, and disengagement in the classroom (Efe, 2019).

Motivation in schools does not only serve as a reward system but also acts as a driving force for sustained performance. Herzberg's two-factor theory emphasizes that while hygiene factors such as salaries and working conditions prevent dissatisfaction, true motivation arises from opportunities for achievement, recognition, and career progression. In the school system, this means that principals must go beyond providing material incentives by also fostering an environment that values teacher contributions, celebrates excellence, and supports growth (Peretomode, 2012).

Staff welfare, a closely related component, involves ensuring that teachers have access to essential support systems such as health care, housing, safe working environments, and retirement benefits. Welfare provisions not only enhance teachers' well-being but also communicate institutional recognition of their worth, which in turn improves loyalty and performance. In many Nigerian schools, however, welfare is often neglected, with teachers left to struggle with delayed salaries, poor working conditions, and inadequate professional recognition. These challenges reduce their willingness to give their best in the classroom (Ogunyinka, Okeke, & Adedoyin, 2015).

#### 4. Challenges in HRM and Administrative Efficiency

Although principals are entrusted with the responsibility of managing human resources for effective school administration, several challenges continue to undermine their efficiency. These challenges are not only systemic but also contextual, reflecting broader national issues in education management as well as local peculiarities within Delta State.

One major obstacle is inadequate funding. Without sufficient financial resources, principals struggle to implement robust HRM strategies such as training programmes, incentive schemes, and welfare packages. Poor funding also translates into dilapidated infrastructure, overcrowded classrooms, and limited teaching resources—all of which further complicate the principal's task of motivating staff and maintaining efficiency (Efe, 2019).

Insufficient professional training for principals is another pressing challenge. Many principals rise through the teaching ranks without receiving specialized training in educational management or HRM. This lack of preparation often limits their capacity to effectively deploy, appraise, and motivate staff. Nkedishu (2022) emphasizes that administrative efficiency requires continuous capacity building for principals in areas such as leadership, strategic planning, and digital HRM practices, yet opportunities for such professional growth remain inconsistent.

#### Research Design

This study adopts the descriptive survey design, which is considered suitable for gathering data on opinions, perceptions, and practices from a large population. The population of this study comprises all principals and teachers in public secondary schools in Ethiope East Local Government Area. With an estimated 16,783 senior secondary school students, 26 principals and approximately 480 teachers in Ethiope East public secondary schools. The study population consists of principals and teachers in public secondary schools within Ethiope East Local Government Area of Delta State. For the purpose of the study, sampling was carried out at two levels: principals and teachers. In the case of principals, the population is relatively small,

comprising only 26 principals across the public secondary schools in Ethiope East. Consequently, the study adopted a census approach by including all principals in the sample. This method was deemed appropriate because it eliminates sampling error, ensures comprehensive representation, and provides more robust insights into human resource management practices at the leadership level (Bryman, 2016).

For teachers, the study relied on the Cochran (1977) sample size determination formula at a 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error. The initial calculation produced a sample of 385 teachers. However, since the teacher population is finite and estimated at 480 across the 26 schools, the finite population correction was applied. This reduced the final sample size to approximately 214 teachers, which was considered both statistically valid and practically manageable for data collection. To ensure that the sample reflected the diversity of school contexts within Ethiope East (urban and rural), a proportionate stratified random sampling technique was employed. Each secondary school served as a stratum, and teachers were proportionally selected based on the number of teachers in each school.

The research instrument for data collection in this study was a set of structured questionnaires developed for both principals and teachers. The principals' questionnaire is designed to obtain information on demographic characteristics, human resource management practices such as recruitment and deployment, supervision and appraisal, staff motivation, welfare, and professional development, as well as indicators of administrative efficiency including planning, organization, instructional leadership, and control. The teachers' questionnaire, on the other hand, is intended to capture teachers' demographic data alongside their perceptions of principals' human resource management practices, levels of administrative efficiency, job satisfaction, and staff welfare conditions within their schools. The questionnaires was structured in such a way that most of the items are presented on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from *Strongly Agree (5)* to *Strongly Disagree (1)*. This format allows respondents to express the intensity of their opinions while also facilitating quantitative

analysis. Content validity was ensured by subjecting the instruments to expert review by specialists in Educational Administration at Delta State University and experienced school principals in Ethiope East. The instruments were pilot-tested using 30 teachers and 5 principals from public schools in Uvwie LGA outside the study area. Data was analyzed using Cronbach’s Alpha to establish internal consistency, with an acceptable threshold of 0.70 and above (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). Items not meeting this standard was revised or dropped.

Data collection for this study was with securing the necessary approval and consent from relevant authorities, specifically the Delta State Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education and the Post-Primary Education Board (PPEB). Once authorization is granted, the researcher, with the support of trained research assistants, will proceed to administer the questionnaires directly to both principals and teachers in the selected public secondary schools.

The data collected in this study was analyzed using a combination of descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, means, and standard deviations were used to summarize demographic characteristics of respondents as well as their responses on human resource management practices and administrative

efficiency. Inferential statistics was applied to test the study’s hypotheses. Specifically, Pearson product-moment correlation was employed to determine the nature and strength of the relationship between human resource management practices and principals’ administrative efficiency. Multiple regression analysis was used to examine the predictive power of the major dimensions of human resource management practices—namely recruitment and deployment, supervision and appraisal, and motivation and welfare—on administrative efficiency. Furthermore, inferential tests such as the independent samples t-test and analysis of variance (ANOVA) were conducted to determine whether significant differences exist in administrative efficiency across demographic variables such as gender, location, and years of experience of principals and teachers. All hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance, and the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, version 25) was serve as the main tool for data analysis.

**Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation**

**Research Question One:**

To what extent do staff recruitment and deployment influence principals’ administrative efficiency in public secondary schools in Ethiope East?

**Table 1: Influence of Recruitment and Deployment on Administrative Efficiency**

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Effective recruitment improves planning	240	4.18	0.79
Proper deployment enhances supervision	240	4.12	0.82
Recruitment of qualified staff reduces inefficiency	240	4.21	0.76
Fair distribution of staff improves control	240	4.09	0.83
<b>Composite Mean</b>		<b>4.15</b>	

With a composite mean of 4.15 (above the benchmark of 3.0), respondents agreed that staff recruitment and deployment positively influence principals’ administrative efficiency.

**Research Question Two:**

How do supervision and performance appraisal practices affect principals’ administrative efficiency?

**Table 2: Effect of Supervision and Appraisal on Administrative Efficiency**

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Regular supervision improves instructional delivery	240	4.24	0.71
Feedback from appraisal enhances teacher productivity	240	4.16	0.75
Appraisal identifies training needs of teachers	240	4.19	0.74
Supervision strengthens organizational discipline	240	4.10	0.81
<b>Composite Mean</b>		<b>4.17</b>	

With a composite mean of 4.17, respondents strongly agreed that effective supervision and appraisal practices enhance principals' administrative efficiency.

### Research Question Three:

What role do teacher motivation and welfare play in enhancing principals' administrative efficiency?

**Table .3: Influence of Motivation and Welfare on Administrative Efficiency**

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Provision of incentives increases teacher commitment	240	4.22	0.73
Adequate welfare packages reduce absenteeism	240	4.18	0.76
Recognition of teachers improves morale	240	4.25	0.69
Motivation enhances cooperation with principals	240	4.20	0.72
<b>Composite Mean</b>		<b>4.21</b>	

The composite mean score of 4.21 confirms that teacher motivation and welfare play a significant role in enhancing principals' administrative efficiency.

The study tested three null hypotheses using regression and correlation analyses.

### Test of Hypotheses

### Hypothesis One:

There is no significant relationship between staff recruitment and deployment and principals' administrative efficiency.

**Table 3: Correlation Analysis**

Variables	Administrative Efficiency
Recruitment & Deployment	.62**

**Note: Correlation significant at 0.01 (2-tailed).**

The correlation coefficient ( $r = .62$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) indicates a significant positive relationship. Thus, H01 is rejected. Recruitment and deployment significantly relate to administrative efficiency.

### Hypotheses Two and Three: Regression Results

**Table 4: Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.751	.564	.558	3.24

**Interpretation:** HRM practices (recruitment, supervision, motivation) jointly explain 56.4% of the variance in administrative efficiency.

**Table 5: ANOVA for Regression**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	1214.58	3	404.86	38.45	.000**
Residual	938.21	236	3.98		
Total	2152.79	239			

The F-value (38.45,  $p < 0.05$ ) confirms that the regression model is statistically significant.

**Table 6: Coefficients of Regression**

Predictor Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	12.54	1.48	—	8.47	.000
Recruitment & Deployment	0.42	0.09	.341	4.67	.000**
Supervision & Appraisal	0.51	0.08	.398	6.38	.000**
Motivation & Welfare	0.36	0.10	.297	3.62	.001**

All predictors significantly contributed to administrative efficiency ( $p < 0.05$ ). Among them, supervision and appraisal ( $\beta = .398$ ) had the strongest influence, followed by recruitment and deployment ( $\beta = .341$ ), and motivation and welfare ( $\beta = .297$ ). Therefore, both H02 and H03 are rejected.

### Discussion of Findings

The study explored the extent to which staff recruitment and deployment shape principals' administrative efficiency. The results revealed a significant positive relationship ( $r = .62$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), suggesting that effective recruitment and fair deployment of teachers enhance a principal's ability to plan, organize, and supervise schools. Teachers' responses confirmed this through high mean ratings ( $M = 4.15$ ), showing that when staff are recruited based on qualifications and deployed according to subject specializations, instructional processes run more smoothly and inefficiencies are minimized. These findings support the findings of Nkedishu (2022), who noted that equitable teacher deployment improved teacher commitment and reduced absenteeism in Delta State. Similarly, it corroborated the findings of Umemetu and Obiweluozor (2015) who observed that politically motivated postings and haphazard deployment often caused shortages in core subject areas, leading to administrative strain. From a more human perspective, principals who can place the right teacher in the right classroom experience less stress, achieve stronger collaboration with staff, and gain confidence in meeting school performance targets. Thus, recruitment and deployment go beyond bureaucratic procedures; they form the backbone of efficient school leadership.

The study also revealed that supervision and performance appraisal, was the strongest predictor of administrative efficiency ( $\beta = .398$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Respondents strongly agreed ( $M = 4.17$ ) that regular supervision, classroom observation, and constructive feedback improve teacher discipline and the overall quality of instructional delivery. This finding aligns with Ofojebe and Ezugoh (2010), who reported that effective supervision enhanced teacher productivity and adherence to curriculum standards. Similarly, it supports the findings of Oduma and Ossai (2024) who found

out that consistent supervision fostered discipline and accountability among teachers. In practice, supervision gives principals a clearer window into classroom realities, while appraisal helps identify the strengths and areas of improvement for staff. When approached fairly, these practices foster a culture of accountability and professional growth. They also humanize school leadership, as teachers feel acknowledged and guided when principals engage with their work sincerely, while principals themselves gain confidence knowing that their leadership translates into tangible results.

The study also examined the role of teacher motivation and welfare in enhancing principals' administrative efficiency. The results revealed a significant positive contribution ( $\beta = .297$ ,  $p < .01$ ), with respondents agreeing ( $M = 4.21$ ) that improved welfare and motivation reduce absenteeism, boost morale, and encourage teacher cooperation. These findings are consistent with that of Akpore and Asiyai (2023), who emphasized that teachers in Delta State considered principals who prioritized welfare as more effective leaders. It aligns with the findings of Efe (2019) who also highlighted that poor motivation leads to low morale and weak classroom engagement, which inevitably undermines school leadership. Beyond the statistics, a motivated teacher is more likely to be punctual, enthusiastic, and willing to invest extra effort in lesson preparation. For principals, this reduces conflicts, disciplinary challenges, and staff turnover, ultimately creating a healthier school climate. This reflects the reality that effective leadership is not built solely on authority but on the ability to nurture and inspire the workforce.

When all three HRM practices recruitment and deployment, supervision and appraisal, and motivation and welfare are considered together, the regression analysis showed that they accounted for 56.4% of the variance in principals' administrative efficiency. This result underscores the interdependence of these HRM dimensions in shaping school effectiveness. Systems Theory (Peretomode, 2012) provides a fitting explanation, emphasizing that schools function as interconnected systems where teachers, principals, and resources must align for optimal

performance. A weakness in one area, such as faulty recruitment, compromises the entire system. Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1993) further reinforces this finding by underscoring that investing in people through fair deployment, supervision, and welfare directly translates into higher productivity and efficiency.

The findings of this study are consistent with global perspectives. It aligns with the findings of Yousaf and Ahmed (2021), who reported that strategic HRM practices in Pakistan enhanced teacher retention and improved student outcomes. The practice in Ethiopia East suggests that the core principles of HRM in education cut across different contexts. However, it is important to recognize that principals in Ethiopia East face unique challenges such as political interference in teacher postings, inadequate funding, and overcrowded classrooms. These contextual barriers hinder the full implementation of effective HRM strategies, differentiating the realities of Nigerian principals from their counterparts in more developed settings.

Overall finally, the findings demonstrate that the administrative efficiency of principals in Ethiopia East is closely tied to the way they manage human resources. Recruitment and deployment provide the foundation for balanced staffing, supervision and appraisal ensure accountability and improvement, while motivation and welfare sustain teacher commitment. When these practices are integrated, principals are better positioned to achieve school goals even amidst systemic challenges. This study therefore validates the assertion of Adeyemi (2012) that principals' efficiency is ultimately measured by their ability to coordinate both human and material resources in pursuit of educational objectives.

### Conclusion

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that principals' administrative efficiency is strongly dependent on how effectively they manage human resources within their schools. Recruitment and deployment ensure that the right teachers are placed in the right classrooms, thereby reducing inefficiencies. Supervision and appraisal foster accountability and continuous improvement,

while teacher motivation and welfare sustain long-term commitment and reduce conflicts. Together, these HRM practices form interdependent pillars that determine the success or failure of school leadership. The study therefore reinforces Systems Theory, which explains that schools function as interrelated systems where all components must align, and Human Capital Theory, which underscores the value of investing in people for organizational growth.

In the specific context of Ethiopia East, the study highlights that while principals are aware of the importance of HRM practices, challenges such as political interference, inadequate resources, and overcrowding hinder their effectiveness. Nevertheless, where HRM is strategically implemented, principals are able to achieve higher administrative efficiency even within these limitations.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study the following recommendations are proposed:

1. The Delta State Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education should ensure that teacher recruitment and postings are strictly based on subject specialization and school needs. This will reduce the inefficiencies associated with arbitrary or politically motivated postings.
2. Principals should receive regular training on modern supervision and appraisal techniques through workshops, seminars and conferences. Emphasis should be placed on constructive feedback, mentoring, and the use of performance data to improve teaching quality.
3. School administrators, in collaboration with education boards, should create welfare packages such as housing allowances, recognition awards and opportunities for career development. These measures will increase teacher morale and enhance commitment to school goals.

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