



Educational Leadership: Emerging Practices Transforming Teaching and Learning in Public Schools in Nigeria and Kenya

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Abstract

Educational leadership practices are crucial in transforming schools to enhance the quality and achievement of educational goals. This study examines the emerging practices in educational leadership that are reshaping teaching and learning in public schools across Nigeria, including their leadership challenges, and the impact of COVID-19 on school leadership practices. It also proffers solutions to leadership issues relating to teaching and learning in Nigeria. The study used a descriptive survey with structured and unstructured questionnaires to collect data from 108 school leaders in public schools in Nigeria and Kenya using Google Forms. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics. As both nations contend with challenges such as resource constraints, large student populations, and socioeconomic disparities, innovative leadership strategies are being adopted to bridge gaps in educational outcomes. The study highlights key practices, including integrating technology in classrooms, teacher capacity-building programs, community engagement initiatives, and data-driven decision-making. Drawing on qualitative and quantitative data, the paper underscored the importance of collaborative leadership, policy alignment, and sustainable practices in transforming public education systems. The research identifies lessons and actionable strategies for improving teaching and learning while emphasizing the pivotal role of leadership in achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4 on quality education.

Keywords: Education Leaders, COVID-19, Technology integration, Transformational Leadership, sustainable practices

Introduction

Educational leadership is important in shaping the vision, direction, and strategies that drive educational institutions toward transformational change. Due to the rapid advancement of technology in the 21st-century knowledge economy and evolving learner needs, educational leaders are adopting emerging practices to create innovative educational environments to achieve educational goals. These practices encompass a range of strategies that foster student engagement, personalized learning experiences, and technology integration into teaching and learning. Educational leadership plays a pivotal role in shaping public school teaching and learning quality. In Nigeria, leaders face numerous challenges, including resource constraints, shortages of teachers, and socioeconomic disparities. Despite these challenges, emerging practices in leadership are transforming teaching and learning, contributing to improved outcomes. This study examines leadership styles, strategies, and innovations relating to both countries.

Transformational leadership is one style of leadership that impacts teaching and learning. This form of leadership is characterized by vision-setting, motivation, and innovation as widely studied in African education contexts. Concerning Nigeria, Adeyemi and Bolarinwa (2019) found that its practices in secondary schools within Lagos State positively impacted teacher motivation and student academic performance. Leaders who involved teachers in decision-making processes fostered a sense of ownership and accountability. Wanjiru and Njoroge (2020) highlighted a similar outcome and reported that transformational leadership in Kenyan public schools enhances teacher collaboration and student engagement, particularly in under-resourced rural areas. A second style of

leadership that focuses on improving teaching practices and curriculum delivery is instructional leadership. Adebayo, et., al, (2018) reported that principals who frequently supervised classroom instruction and provided feedback significantly improved teaching quality and student outcomes in Nigeria. Similarly, Mwangi (2019) observed that instructional leadership in Nairobi County public schools in Kenya led to better teacher preparation and adherence to pedagogical standards, although high administrative workloads hindered its implementation. Education leaders have been effective in re-strategizing their practices through the adoption of digital tools for school management. It was reported by Akinyele (2020) that adopting digital technology, such as School Management Systems (SMS) in Nigerian secondary schools, streamlined administrative tasks and improved communication between teachers and school leaders. Makori and Onderi (2021) found that using digital platforms for data management and performance tracking showed higher levels of accountability and efficiency in Kenyan public schools. Another leadership strategy that relies on online platforms is the E-learning leadership strategy. For instance, during the COVID-19 pandemic, Nigerian school leaders embraced online learning platforms to sustain teaching and learning. A study by Okonkwo, Nwachukwu, and Adebayo (2021) found that strong leadership support was crucial for successful e-learning implementation despite infrastructural challenges. In Kenya, students participated more actively in virtual classrooms when school administrators funded teacher training for e-learning platforms (Mwang'ombe ,2021). Parental involvement is a third kind of strategy that fosters community engagement and stakeholders' collaboration. Given this, Adebisi and Olanrewaju (2020) found that educational leaders who fostered strong relationships with parents saw increased student attendance and performance, especially in low-income communities in Nigeria. Similarly, Kenyan head teachers who engaged parents in school governance improved resource mobilization and created a more supportive learning environment (Njenga, 2020).

Using Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs), educational leadership in Nigeria has taken some innovative steps in its engagement in the last decade. In literature, there is evidence of collaborations with private organizations to provide infrastructure and learning materials in underserved areas, as espoused in the National Policy on Education (Federal Government of Nigeria, 2013). Similar success was documented by Ngina (2024) in Kenyan schools, where partnerships with NGOs facilitated teacher training and the provision of digital learning resources. However, challenges to effective Leadership have inhibited the effort to be more expansive in innovative ideas. Nigeria faces severe funding shortages, which have limited the ability of school leaders to implement innovative practices (Oduro & Simiyu, 2020). Both countries have also experienced inadequate Professional Development. A study by Ogegbo and Olujuwon (2025; Waari (2022) found that many school leaders lacked access to leadership training programs and technological leadership in Nigeria, thereby limiting their effectiveness. In the same vein, Mworira and Wanjiru (2021) reported similar findings in Kenya, which emphasized the need for continuous professional development for educational leaders. In addition to these challenges, Cultural and Socio-Economic barriers are common to both countries, and socio-economic disparities affect school leadership. As a result, leaders in low-income communities may not be able to provide for their fundamental educational needs. Amidst all the challenges, educational leadership has many success stories and Best Practices achieved through leadership academies and training programs. In Nigeria, there have been initiatives through the National Institute for Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA) that have provided targeted training for school leaders, yielding positive results (Fakoya, 2020), while Kenya has utilized programs such as the African Leadership Academy (ALA) for School Excellence to train principals in innovative leadership practices, as highlighted by Onyango (2021). Furthermore, empirical research in both nations has demonstrated that leaders who utilize data to guide policies and initiatives improve teacher effectiveness and student outcomes when it comes to data-driven decision-making. Therefore, emerging leadership practices in Nigeria and Kenya demonstrate a shift toward transformational, instructional, and technology-driven approaches. Despite challenges such as funding and inadequate professional development, innovative practices like e-learning leadership, stakeholder collaboration, and digital management systems are transforming teaching and learning in public schools. Addressing systemic barriers through targeted policies and capacity-building initiatives will further enhance the impact of educational leadership in these countries. In Kenya, the Digital Literacy Programme (Tondeur, et., al, 2021), provided digital devices to primary school students, which enhanced access to digital learning resources. In the same vein, Nigeria witnessed the adoption of virtual classrooms during the COVID-19 pandemic, which was driven by leadership initiatives to sustain continuity in education (Adeoye, Adanikin & Adanikin, 2020). However, infrastructure limitations in the areas of unreliable electricity and limited internet access in rural areas are still critical challenges (World Bank, 2022). Leadership practices in both countries emphasized the need for the professional growth of teachers, which gave rise to the introduction of the Teacher Service Commission (TSC) as well as Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programs to equip educators with modern pedagogical and technological skills in Kenya (Wanzare, 2021). Similar efforts were invested in Nigeria, where training programs supported by the

Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) emerged to improve teacher effectiveness (Edozie, 2019) but were faced with inadequate funding and inconsistent implementation, undermining the sustainability and impact of these programs (Njuguna & Orodho, 2022). As reported by Mutuku et al. (2020), Kenya is known to have a strong tradition of school management committees (SMCs) that empower communities to take part in school decision-making, while Nigeria is renowned with Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) which have played similar roles depending on region and cultural attitudes (Adeyemi & Adeyemi, 2020). Collaboration among internal and external stakeholders have strengthened mobilization of resources and responsibility (UNESCO, 2021). Kenya's National Education Management Information System (NEMIS) has enabled leaders to monitor students' enrolment (Wainaina & Mwangi, 2022), much like Nigeria's Unified Basic Education Monitoring System aids in resource allocation and tracking progress (Olaniyan, Adekola & Gbadegesin, 2021). Despite numerous areas of advancement, challenges such as data inaccuracies and limited technical expertise hinder full implementation (UNICEF, 2020). Educational leaders in Nigeria and Kenya have prioritized equity and inclusion to address disparities in access to quality education. In Kenya, initiatives targeting marginalized communities, such as nomadic populations and children with disabilities, have improved educational access (Koskei et al., 2020). In Nigeria, leadership-driven programs, such as the Girl-Child Education Project, have tremendously improved enrolment and retention rates for girls, predominantly in the northern regions (Yusuf, Afolabi & Hassan, 2021). Ngware, Abuya and Mutisya (2020) believed that leaders who adopt these approaches prioritize collaboration, innovation, and capacity building among teachers and stakeholders. They are rather known as transformational leaders in both Nigeria and Kenya who mobilize communities and resources to foster shared visions for improved education outcomes (Wanzare, 2021). Educational Leadership within the context of Nigeria has experienced emerging practices that can transform teaching and learning in public schools. This theoretical framework draws on several established educational leadership theories to understand the emerging practices transforming teaching and learning in public schools in both countries. The theories offer insights into how educational leadership can address challenges, foster change, and improve educational outcomes in resource-constrained settings. The framework focuses on transformational leadership, instructional leadership, distributed leadership, change management, and situational leadership theories to explore how educational leaders in these countries navigate their roles and influence teaching and learning. The Transformational Leadership Theory emphasizes leaders' ability to inspire and motivate followers to exceed their self-interests for the greater good of the organization (Bass, 1985). In educational contexts, transformational leaders are known for their ability to foster positive change, create a shared vision, and encourage innovation and professional development among teachers. In Nigerian public schools, transformational leadership practices such as setting a clear vision, motivating teachers, and fostering a culture of collaboration have been identified as key drivers of improvement in teaching and learning. Research by Adeyemi and Bolarinwa (2019) in Nigeria and Wanjiru and Njoroge (2020) in Kenya highlights how school leaders, by motivating teachers and students, have led to improved academic performance, particularly in low-resourced schools. Leaders who embrace transformational leadership encourage a shift from traditional practices to innovative teaching methods, such as the integration of technology and collaborative learning. The theory would facilitate the production of leaders who are visionary, inspirationally motivated, intellectually stimulated, and individualized. The Instructional Leadership Theory focuses on improving teaching and learning through strong leadership in curriculum and instruction (Hallinger, 2005). It underscores the role of school leaders in supporting and supervising teachers, ensuring high-quality teaching, and fostering a learning environment conducive to student achievement. Instructional leadership is critical in both countries, where leaders are responsible for ensuring effective curriculum delivery and improving teaching quality. Adebayo et al. (2018) in Nigeria found that principals who engaged in regular classroom observations and provided constructive feedback helped enhance teachers' pedagogical practices. Similarly, Mwangi (2019) reported that instructional leadership in Kenyan schools led to better curriculum implementation, particularly in mathematics and science education. The theory stresses that leadership should be directly focused on improving the quality of instruction and ensuring that teachers have the resources and support needed to succeed. Inspirational and intellectual leaders do not fall from heaven but are the product of a well-supervised curriculum, teacher support and development programmes, performance monitoring and feedback, and the creation of a positive learning environment. The Distributed Leadership Theory suggests that leadership is a collective process where multiple individuals at different levels of the organization share leadership responsibilities (Spillane, 2006). Rather than being the sole responsibility of a single leader, leadership is distributed among teachers, principals, and other staff, allowing for greater collaboration and shared decision-making. In Nigerian schools, the concept of distributed leadership has been emerging as a response to the complex challenges schools face. Leaders in these countries often rely on teachers and other stakeholders to take leadership roles in curriculum design, professional development, and school governance. A study by Adebisi and Olanrewaju

(2020) in Nigeria and Njenga (2020) in Kenya found that schools that encouraged collaborative leadership structures—such as involving teachers in decision-making—had improved student outcomes. This approach is especially crucial in contexts where school leaders may be overburdened with administrative tasks and need support from other educators to drive change. The key focus is to enhance decision-making, collaboration, and teamwork; empower teachers and staff; and increase the role of middle management.

The Change Management Theory emphasizes the importance of guiding organizations through a structured process of change (Kotter, 1996). This theory outlines the eight steps necessary for successful organizational transformation, including creating a sense of urgency, building a guiding coalition, developing a vision, and anchoring the changes in the organizational culture. In the context of Nigerian public schools, educational leaders face the challenge of transforming outdated systems and practices. Change management theory offers a framework for effectively navigating these transformations. For instance, Kotter's steps have been applied in Kenyan schools to guide the adoption of new pedagogical methods, such as ICT integration (Makori & Onderi, 2021). In Nigeria, leaders have used Kotter's framework to foster the adoption of school management systems and digital platforms, improving administrative efficiency and enhancing teaching practices (Akinyele, 2020). The theory's focus on creating urgency and building strong leadership teams is particularly relevant in the effort to modernize educational practices. Its key constructs cover creating a sense of urgency, building a coalition for change, developing a shared vision, and anchoring changes in the culture.

Situational Leadership Theory posits that effective leadership depends on the leader's ability to adapt their style to the maturity and capabilities of the followers, the task at hand, and the context in which they operate (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969). This theory is based on the premise that there is no one-size-fits-all leadership approach, and leaders should modify their behavior situation-wise. Educational leaders in Nigeria and Kenya often operate in challenging environments where they must adjust their leadership styles to meet the varying needs of teachers, students, and the local community. For instance, in resource-poor settings, school leaders may need to adopt a more direct approach when implementing new policies or curricula, but take a more supportive and delegating approach in well-established schools (Fakoya, 2020). Hersey and Blanchard's theory helps explain the flexibility required of educational leaders in these two countries as they balance various demands and lead their schools through complex and ever-changing circumstances. The focus includes directing, supporting, participating in, and delegating leadership; using a flexible and adaptable style; and assessing followers' maturity and readiness.

This theoretical framework provides a comprehensive lens through which to examine the emerging practices of educational leadership in Nigerian public schools. By combining transformational leadership, instructional leadership, distributed leadership, change management, and situational leadership, the framework offers a holistic understanding of how leaders can navigate challenges, promote innovation, and enhance the teaching and learning process in both countries. These theories, while grounded in Western leadership contexts, have shown considerable relevance in the African educational landscape, with important implications for improving educational practices and outcomes in resource-constrained environments.

Objective

The objective of the study was to explore the emerging practices in educational leadership that reshape teaching and learning in public schools across Nigeria and Kenya

Research Questions

1. How do principals perceive educational leadership concerning teaching and learning in Nigeria and Kenya?
2. What are the roles of school leaders in teaching and learning in Nigerian and Kenyan public secondary schools?
3. In what ways did the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic affect school leadership practices in Nigeria and Kenya?
4. What are the remedies to the leadership issues relating to teaching and learning in Nigeria and Kenya?

Research Methodology

This study employed a descriptive research survey design to examine the context of emerging leadership practices that are transforming teaching and learning in public schools in Nigeria. This will help to determine emerging leadership practices, their challenges, and the strategies needed to enhance teaching and learning in the 21st-century knowledge economy. Data for the study were collected through the filling of questionnaires on Google Forms by school leaders in Nigeria and Kenya. This Google Form is a free web-based management tool used for designing web-based questionnaires that respondents can access anytime and anywhere in the world at their convenience. This web application assisted us in the design and in development of structured and unstructured questionnaires, which enabled us to obtain responses from respondents and thus helped significantly in data

collection and analysis. The objectives and research questions formulated were tailored toward understanding their perception of emerging leadership practices in enhancing teaching and learning.

The study population was school leaders in public secondary schools in Nigeria and Kenya. We established contacts with their unions and personal contacts to enable us to get rich information from them for the study. The Google Forms link was sent to their WhatsApp group and emails within five months for wider participation, with instructions on the aims and expectations of the study. Adherence to ethical standards, such as informed consent and anonymity with data management, was emphasized in the document. Participants were not coerced into participating in the research. They were informed that they could withdraw from the research at any time, as this would not affect the research. To safeguard participants' anonymity, the data did not reveal their identities or those of their schools.

The questionnaire was divided into sections. Section A sought information on the social and demographic characteristics of respondents, such as their consent to participate in research, gender, qualification, category of school as the head, position, country, work, and length of years spent as a school head. Section B of the research elicited information on their perception concerning school leadership, tasks, functions, how COVID-19 affected leaders, and the challenges encountered. Section C was designed for respondents to suggest the way forward. A total of 108 principals responded to the questionnaire, consisting of 74.1 % females and 25.9 % males. The qualifications of the respondents range from a Bachelor's degree 72.2% to a Master's 16.7% while the rest belong to first degree. There were 38% headmasters/Head teachers, 22.2% headmistresses, 16.7% Principals, and 9.3% Deputy principals/Vice principals. The respondents were 96.3 Nigerians, while the remaining were Kenyans. Concerning the number of years as a school head, some have been there between 1 and 5 years, 50%, those over 15 years were 38.9%, 9.3% were between 6 and 10 years, and the remaining were 11-15 years. Data analysis was done using Mean and percentage and presented in charts.

Results and Findings

RQ1. How do teachers perceive educational leadership concerning teaching and learning in Nigeria and Kenya?

Fig 1. Teachers' perception of educational leadership concerning teaching and learning in Nigeria

The outcome in Figure 1 depicts that Nigerian teachers have 95% and 88.95% perception of educational leadership as a concept that requires good understanding, respectively, and 95% and 92.57% perception of school leadership as an important component of educational leadership. 95% and 90.29% believe that teachers' content knowledge affects teaching and learning, and 90% and 91.05% support the creation of a conducive learning environment in the school. 90% and 85.71% believe in an efficient assessment and reporting system within the school, and 90% and 80% support for undertaking regular leadership training. It showed that teachers in Nigeria are similar in perception, as they have excellent support for a good understanding of leadership, precisely school leadership, teachers' content knowledge, conducive learning environment, efficient assessment and reporting system, and regular leadership training as indispensable components of educational leadership.

RQ2. What are the roles of school leaders in teaching and learning in Nigerian and Kenyan public secondary schools?

In Kenya, 25% of the participants play the role of overall instructional leader; 25% function as administrator, financial manager, lead teacher, and quality assurance in academics; 25% take up the very important role of giving guidance and directing curriculum implementation and 25% take the noble and sometimes humbling leadership role of helping graduates to navigate through their personal issues and professional space. In Nigeria, the teachers' roles include: impacting good moral conduct in the public life of the pupils and making sure they are good ambassadors wherever they find themselves 2%; collaborating with the government of the day to handle matters concerning the school 2%; fostering positive working relationships that help staff to realize their full potential 2%; educating and liberating pupils from bondage of ignorance and do short and long observation to the teachers when teaching 2%; encouraging the use of technology for the 21st century teaching and learning 2%; ensuring that time sensitive co-curricular activities are not left behind so that the pupils can be given transformational education 3%; directing the affairs of staff and pupils in the school for progress 3%; maintaining quality education that improves the ability of numeracy and literary in school 3%; providing necessary instructional materials needed by the teachers 3%; inculcating self-discipline among the teachers and pupils by ensuring that they are regular and punctual to school and no one is roaming around when lesson is in progress 4%; serving as good model for the students and teachers and safeguard the principles of education by providing information to the teachers and pupils on the teaching and learning processes 4%; constantly monitor staff attendance as well as what

they are giving out to the children align with the curriculum 5%; coordinating and overseeing the activities in a conducive environment 6%; impacting knowledge to pupils and ensuring that teachers teach pupils with love by making learning always child centered 7%; guiding, supporting and mentoring the teachers who are directly in charge of delivering teaching packages to pupils to see that both the short and long term goals of the establishment are met 9%; ensuring that efficient, effective, hitch-free, impactful and conducive teaching and learning takes place and pupils are developing in their various classes 20%; and managerial, leadership and supervisory role 23%. It revealed that Nigerian public secondary school teachers are far more dynamic and diversified in their display of leadership roles concerning teaching and learning than Kenyan teachers.

R3. In what ways did the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic affect school leadership practices in Nigeria?

In Kenya the emergence of COVID-19 affected syllabus coverage 18%; and led to the innovation of remote learning 11%; teachers were advised to balance work-life 10%; some learners lost parents to COVID-19 10%; teachers have to become parents to these children 10%; several students were infected at school 8%; teachers realized that they were not well equipped for disasters and calamity 8%; the government came in to support the medical aspect 8%; learning was seriously affected since teachers could not reach the learners who were infected 6%; most learners in special schools needed support in activities of daily living 6%; there was shortage of non-teaching staff 3%; and inadequate funding and poor methods for remote teaching highly affected our effectiveness 2%. Much like Kenya, it was observed that COVID-19 affected school leadership practices in Nigeria both negatively and positively. On the negative aspect it cannot be disputed that it severely limited physical interaction and enforced the use of information technology like zoom, Google classroom and WhatsApp platforms to facilitate teaching and learning and dissemination of information (9.4%), disrupted smooth academic calendar and impeded students' academic progress (6.1%), brought harsh economy, financial constraint of parent and lack of interest in digital education (4.5%), stopped all extracurricular activities like the interschool spelling bee competition, inter-house sports, culture day and so many activities that go along with teaching and learning (4.2%), brought about social distancing that led to deficiency that affected the quality of work delivered in classes (4.1%), hampered school managerial roles and increase drop-out rate (3.6%), made parents skeptical to release their children while students completely forfeited some terms during the locked down that resulted in learning vacuum (3.5%), reduced school enrolment and population due to loss of job and relocation of parents (3.4%), affected relationship and communication gap within the school environment and students - teacher collaboration (3.2%), made effective monitoring and supervision of learners' activities very difficult and created poor coverage of syllabus and extra work for the teachers and school leader (2.6%), financially affected schools with little to provide necessary washing hands materials as well as promotion and placement exam (2.4%), resulted to closure of schools, later to shifting and rotational classes (2.3%), prevented physical training, leadership and management of professional development where the teachers come together to enlightened themselves on a particular topic (1.9%), punctuality and regularity (1.7%), stopped PTA meeting (1.6%), regular supervision but promoted online observation of teaching (1.5%), made BECE result for that year very discouraging and increased inflation rate with great negative impact on teaching and learning in schools (1.4%), led to trauma of sexual abuse and domestic violence (1.3%), reduction in length of hours of learning in some schools and affected the school curriculum because the subjects and topics were not taking (1.2%).

However, the positive impacts of the emergence of COVID-19 pandemic on school leadership practices include more online interactions with pupils, parents, staff and other stakeholders in and outside the education sector (5%), increased awareness and use of different technologies (4.5%), inculcating cleanness within school leadership practice and provision of sanitizing materials (4.2%), neatness, environmental health consciousness and use of internet for interactions, which include teaching pupils the importance of washing their hands, cleaning their classroom and the use of nose mask in and outside the school environment (4%), students were encouraged to observe neatness and clean environment (2.4%), as stipulated in the curriculum (2.3%), the use of ICT devices and relevant applications to implement and evaluate teaching - learning process in the school as well as keeping school inventory (2.2%), school leaders' utilization of specific behaviours, skills and competencies in order to respond to the crisis and address the needs of students, teachers and communities (1.6%). It was concluded that COVID-19 was dreaded by humanity because the negative impacts far outnumber the positive, its consequences range from reptiles entering the classrooms with dilapidated bookshelves, double expenditure on administrative materials, finance, and energy, up to collapsed structures which consumed huge sums of money for the purchase of nose mask, sanitizer, and other sanitary materials, staggered learning and attention drift from school towards handwork. It revealed that the impact of COVID-19 on educational leadership in Nigeria far outweighed that of Kenya concerning effective teaching and learning.

RQ4. What are the remedies to leadership issues relating to teaching and learning?

The challenges faced by teachers in Kenya at the emergence of COVID-19 can be overcome through extra working hours; encouraging students; trying to get sponsorship for them and exempting some from paying school fees; provision of funds to enable the construction of infrastructure; providing more training and capacity building for the teachers; exposure to alternative sources of teaching and learning; To combat the challenges encountered in leadership practices for Nigerians, the suggested solutions include the need for state government to provide frequent workshops and seminars, focus on internal mobility and reskilling (6.1%), provide more fund to run facility expenses, recruitment of resource persons to sensitize the pupils and staffs in general (5.2%), provide kids gadgets that can aid teaching and learning at home (4.4%), training and retraining of teachers is key, subsidize the price of ICT devices (1%), enforce and make sure that people are conscious of our health, enlightenment of the society to reduce the numbers of out of school students (1%), provide more infrastructures in schools for both the pupils and the teachers for effective teaching and learning, more trainings for the teachers, make available all the equipment beforehand (1%), provide free food and education materials. Reliable power supply, computers and good internet connectivity (0.6%), provide more small-scale businesses to boost the economic crash resulting from the effects of covid-19 (0.2%), provide more free educational amenities to entice parents like writing materials, big exercise books, pencils, biro and uniforms. Local Government Education Authority to publicize enrolment in form of posters, road walk, visiting drivers in public places like market, open spaces (1%), provide school buses to the schools, fund the schools, encourage the parents to do the needful (1%), providing all the materials to the school regularly and always fumigating the schools (1%), seek help from company to provide writing materials (1%), motivate teachers through adequate incentives (1%), organise more trainings and workshops for school leaders (1%), address the issue of inadequate teaching staff (1%), provide learning materials such as tablets, phones, and e-tutors (1%), create awareness to the community to let them know that school has resumed, adopt the use of technology in learning (1%), adopt the use of technology during teaching and learning to bridge learning gap, constantly motivating learners through dynamic teaching practices (1%), provide learning geared towards technology and adoption of 21st century teaching skills in impacting knowledge (1%), provide free constant electricity to schools, pipe-borne water and creating awareness in the society that though the period has gone (1%), maintain healthy and sanitation habits, adequate funding of primary school and supply of things that will make teaching and learning effective (1%).

The West African and National examination bodies (WAEC & NECO) should only administer assessments to students with evidence of completing the six-year course (1%). The Ministry of Education should invest in e-learning and train teachers in the use of ICT applications (1%), counselling unit should visit the school often, provision mobile gadgets, internet facilities, and online classes, making teaching most attractive (13.4%), provide teachers with a tablet to teach our pupils in primary school (6.3%), observing teachers as they apply new teaching and learning strategies. School administrators to carry the staff along with decisions in order for them to feel the impulse of administration and the challenges associated with leadership position (5.4%), provide teachers with modern instructional materials for effective transmission of knowledge and educating parents about the importance of returning children to school, being proactive to teachers well-being to enable them put more effort (3.2%), advise parents to feed their children well and provide writing materials for pupils (2%), encourage parents to monitor their children and to provide enough writing materials for them so as to promote teaching and learning activities in the school (2%), the school provide wash hand basin, soap, fumigation of classroom, thermometer, face mask, regular communication with the parents (2%), take feedback from the members of staff and pupils, complement members of staff and pupils who have done exceptionally (1%), encourage members of staff to go for more training online and physically to better improve their skills especially in technology, better improve their skills especially in technology (1%), ensure pupils are taking enough homework and extra work, engage pupils in teamwork where they will provide solutions by themselves (1%), attend more seminars to improve their skills as trained leaders, provide orientation for parents and pupils (1%), attend more training and capacity building (1%). Expose teachers to alternative sources of teaching and learning (1%), provide equipment that makes the worker's work easier and convenient such as washing machines, vacuum cleaners, medical equipment, and supplies, this being a special needs schools, and collaborate with other institutions to enable exposure and learning experiences from other countries and institutions (1%).

Parents should continue to work towards excellent standards and goal achievement, teach wards to always wash their hands with soap water, and a sanitizer, use nose masks always, and be fully involved in educating their children, not that they should leave everything to the government (5.6%). Stakeholders should assist the school with their needs and engage in a house-to-house campaign for more enrolment (5.4%). Teachers should always follow the instructions from the government to protect themselves and maintain social relationships with peers who are not threatened by sickness. Pupils should be encouraged to be punctual in school, and programs should be created that can motivate the pupils to learn to improve school attendance (4.5%). Health officers should

provide regular health talks on mask-wearing, protective measures, social distancing, the practice of self-care, establishing good mental health habits, collaboration, and communication (3.4%). There should be a way of regulating the proper use of Android phones during school hours for academic purposes rather than acting as distractors to students and teachers (3%). Teachers should be constantly equipped with the necessary training and workshops that could confront emergency events like the pandemic brought to the educational landscape (2.3%). The findings have shown that educational leaders in Nigeria and Kenya have recognized the transformative potential of technology in bridging educational gaps. In Kenya, the Digital Literacy Programme (DLP) has provided digital devices to primary school students, enhancing access to digital learning resources (Tondeur et al., 2021). Similarly, during the COVID-19 pandemic, Nigeria witnessed the adoption of virtual classrooms, driven by leadership initiatives to sustain education continuity (Adeoye et al., 2020). However, infrastructure limitations, such as unreliable electricity and limited internet access in rural areas, remain critical challenges (World Bank, 2022). Leadership practices in both countries emphasize the professional growth of teachers. For instance, Kenya's Teacher Service Commission (TSC) introduced Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programs, equipping educators with modern pedagogical and technological skills (Wanzare, 2021). In Nigeria, similar efforts include training programs supported by the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) to improve teacher effectiveness (Edozie, 2019). However, inadequate funding and inconsistent implementation undermine the sustainability and impact of these programs (Njuguna & Orodho, 2022).

In both countries, educational leaders have emphasized the role of community participation in improving public education. Kenya has a strong tradition of school management committees (SMCs) that empower communities to take part in school decision-making (Mutuku, Mwangi & Kariuki, 2020). In Nigeria, Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) have played a similar role, although their effectiveness varies depending on regional dynamics and cultural attitudes (Adeyemi & Adeyemi, 2020). Collaborative partnerships between schools and external stakeholders, including NGOs, have also bolstered resource mobilization and accountability (UNESCO, 2021). The use of data to inform decision-making has emerged as a key leadership practice in transforming public schools. Kenya's National Education Management Information System (NEMIS) has enabled leaders to effectively monitor student enrollment, attendance, and performance (Wainaina & Mwangi, 2022). Similarly, Nigeria's Unified Basic Education Monitoring System aids in resource allocation and tracking progress (Olaniyan et al., 2021).

Despite these advancements, challenges such as data inaccuracies and limited technical expertise hinder full implementation (UNICEF, 2020). Educational leaders in Nigeria and Kenya have prioritized equity and inclusion to address disparities in access to quality education. In Kenya, initiatives targeting marginalized communities, such as nomadic populations and children with disabilities, have improved educational access (Koskei, Kipchumba & Kogo., 2020). In Nigeria, leadership-driven programs, such as the Girl-Child Education Project, aim to improve enrollment and retention rates for girls, particularly in the northern regions (Yusuf et al., 2021). However, deeply rooted cultural and socioeconomic barriers still pose significant challenges to achieving widespread equity. The findings reveal that transformational and distributed leadership styles are particularly effective in driving educational reform. Leaders who adopt these approaches prioritize collaboration, innovation, and capacity-building among teachers and stakeholders (Ngware et al., 2020). Transformational leaders in both Nigeria and Kenya have mobilized communities and resources to foster shared visions for improved education outcomes (Wanzare, 2021). However, the success of these approaches often depends on individual leaders' skills and the support provided by policymakers.

The findings underscored the importance of strategic and innovative leadership in addressing systemic challenges and the emergence of crises to foster sustainable educational reforms. For both Nigeria and Kenya, scaling successful practices, such as technology integration, community involvement, and professional development, requires consistent funding, policy alignment, and leadership training programs. Moreover, regional collaboration between the two countries can facilitate the exchange of best practices and lessons learned, enhancing the overall impact on public education.

Conclusion

Conclusively, educational leadership plays a pivotal role in transforming teaching and learning, particularly in public schools in Nigeria. As these two nations face challenges such as resource limitations, teacher shortages, and disparities in access to quality education, emerging leadership practices have shown the potential to drive meaningful change. Innovative strategies such as technology integration, community engagement, professional development for teachers, and data-driven decision-making have reshaped the educational landscape in both countries. Leaders who embrace collaboration, inclusivity, and adaptability are better positioned to address systemic issues while fostering environments where students and educators can thrive. Furthermore, partnerships between governments, private organizations, and international stakeholders have enhanced resource mobilization

and policy implementation, strengthening the capacity of public schools to deliver quality education. These practices underscore the importance of visionary leadership in addressing the diverse challenges facing education systems in Nigeria. Ultimately, the transformation of teaching and learning in public schools relies on a sustained commitment to leadership practices that prioritize equity, innovation, and student-centered approaches. By scaling these emerging practices and fostering cross-regional collaboration, both countries can create more resilient and inclusive education systems, setting a model for other developing nations striving to achieve similar progress.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study recommended that

1. Ministries of education in both countries to scale up documented best practices on innovative leadership practices
2. Teachers Service Commission to mount robust training of school leaders on innovative leadership strategies
3. School leaders to adopt more collaborative partnerships with diverse stakeholders to enhance innovative leadership strategies
4. The government, the teachers, and parents should work as a team to improve the education system and to improve school facilities in Nigeria and Kenya.

Conflict of Interests

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Data Availability Statement

The authors confirm that the data supporting the findings of this study are available within the article [and/or] its supplementary materials. Complete data and analysis are available upon request.

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