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STRATEGIC RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND TEACHER ENGAGEMENT IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS: A STUDY OF ORGANIZATIONAL COHERENCE AND EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

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Abstract
This study investigates the relationship between strategic resource management practices, teacher engagement, and organizational coherence in public secondary schools in Nigeria. Employing a mixed-methods sequential explanatory design, quantitative data were collected from 412 teachers and 38 principals across 42 public secondary schools. Quantitative data were analyzed using hierarchical linear modeling and multilevel mediation, while qualitative data from semi-structured interviews and document analysis were thematically coded. Findings reveal that strategic resource management significantly predicts teacher engagement ($\gamma = 0.42$, $p < 0.001$) and organizational coherence ($\gamma = 0.38$, $p < 0.001$). Multilevel mediation analysis demonstrated that teacher engagement statistically mediates the association between strategic resource management and perceived school effectiveness (indirect effect = 0.18, 95% CI [0.11, 0.26]). Qualitative findings illuminate mechanisms through which transparent decision-making, participatory budgeting, and relational resource allocation enhance teacher commitment and school coherence. Implications for policy and practice emphasize capacity building in strategic planning and alignment between school improvement plans and resource deployment in Nigerian public secondary education.

Keywords: Educational Management, Strategic Resource Management, Teacher Engagement, Organizational Coherence, School Effectiveness

Introduction
Educational management has evolved significantly from traditional bureaucratic administration toward strategic, evidence-informed approaches to school leadership (Bush, 2020; Hallinger & Heck, 2010). Central to this evolution is the recognition that how school administrators allocate and manage available resources, financial, human, and material, shapes institutional capacity to achieve educational objectives (Day et al., 2016; Leithwood, 2021). In developing educational landscapes such as Nigeria, public secondary schools face systemic resource constraints, deteriorating infrastructure, and heightened accountability pressures (Musundire, 2025). These challenges require school principals to move beyond routine administrative budgeting toward strategic resource deployment that directly supports instructional priorities.

Despite the theoretical importance of strategic management, empirical evidence regarding how resource management decisions influence teacher-level psychological states and organizational systems in African public school contexts remains limited. Research indicates that school leaders often lack formal training in strategic resource management, treating budgeting as a compliance exercise rather than an instructional lever (Musundire, 2025). This creates a gap between the strategic potential of resource allocation and daily school realities.

Teacher engagement, encompassing vigor, dedication, and absorption in work, is a critical mediator between school leadership and educational outcomes (Bellibaş et al., 2021; Day et al., 2016). However, the specific managerial practices that foster teacher engagement, particularly regarding transparent and equitable resource allocation, remain underexamined in public secondary schools. Similarly, organizational coherence, the systematic integration of school goals, resources, and operational practices, is essential for sustained improvement, yet its relationship with resource management requires empirical clarification (Bush, 2020; Day & Gurr, 2024).

This study addresses these gaps by investigating four research questions in public secondary schools in Nigeria:

1. How does strategic resource management relate to teacher engagement?
2. What is the relationship between strategic resource management and organizational coherence?
3. Does teacher engagement statistically mediate the relationship between strategic resource management and perceived school effectiveness?
4. How do school leaders and teachers experience and interpret resource management decisions?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 significant level:

1. There is no statistically relationship between strategic resource management and teacher engagement.
2. There is no statistically relationship between strategic resource management and organizational coherence.
3. Teacher engagement do not statistically mediate between strategic resource management and perceived school effectiveness.

Literature Review

Theoretical Foundations of Educational Management

Educational management has developed through multiple theoretical paradigms. Classical management theory emphasized efficiency, standardization, and hierarchical control (Bush, 2020). The human relations movement shifted attention to social and psychological dimensions, highlighting teacher morale and supportive leadership (Bush, 2020). Modern educational management integrates these views through the Resource-Based View, which posits that organizational performance depends on acquiring, deploying, and aligning valuable, rare, and non-substitutable resources (Bush, 2020). In resource-constrained public secondary schools, strategic management compensates for material deficits by maximizing instructional utility and strengthening collective efficacy. Complementing the Resource-Based View, Organizational Justice Theory explains how resource decisions affect teacher motivation (Bellibaş et al., 2021). Procedural justice (fairness in decision processes) and distributive justice (fairness in allocations) influence teacher trust, commitment, and satisfaction. When teachers perceive that resource allocation is transparent and aligned with pedagogical goals, their perception of organizational fairness increases, fostering work engagement.

Strategic Resource Management in Schools

Strategic resource management encompasses the processes through which leaders plan, allocate, monitor, and evaluate financial, human, and material resources (Musundire, 2025). Key dimensions include strategic alignment (coherence between resource allocation and instructional priorities), transparency and

participation (involving staff in decisions), planning capacity (systematic needs assessment), and evaluation systems (Day et al., 2016; Bellibaş et al., 2021; Musundire, 2025).

Teacher Engagement: Conceptualization and Determinants

Teacher engagement refers to a positive, fulfilling work-related state characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption (Brodie, 2021). Strategic resource management addresses three psychological drivers of engagement: meaningful work (directing resources toward classroom needs demonstrates that instructional work is valued), autonomy (providing departmental resource discretion increases ownership), and organizational justice (open budgetary communication reduces cynicism) (Brodie, 2021; Malandrino & Sager, 2021; Bellibaş et al., 2021).

Organizational Coherence and School Effectiveness

Organizational coherence refers to the alignment and integration of a school's structures, processes, and practices toward common goals (Day & Gurr, 2024). Coherence prevents operational fragmentation where competing initiatives deplete teacher energy. Strategic resource management provides the structural mechanisms necessary to achieve coherence by ensuring that budget allocations directly reflect school improvement plans (Leithwood, 2021). Coherent operational systems combined with highly engaged teaching staff form the foundation for perceived school effectiveness.

The Context of Public Secondary Schools in Nigeria

Nigerian public secondary schools operate within complex socioeconomic environments characterized by inconsistent state funding, delayed infrastructure delivery, and shortages of instructional materials. In such environments, school principals must exercise strategic leadership to manage resources effectively. Understanding how Nigerian principals navigate these constraints, and how their resource management decisions influence teacher morale and school coherence, is crucial for educational policy and administrative reform.

Methodology

This study utilized a mixed-methods sequential explanatory design, where quantitative survey data collection and analysis were followed by qualitative semi-structured interviews and document analysis to explain the statistical results (Creswell & Poth, 2024). A stratified random sampling procedure based on school size (small, medium, large) and location (urban, suburban, rural) was used to select 42 public secondary schools in Nigeria. For the quantitative phase, 615 teachers were invited, yielding 412 completed surveys (67% response rate). The sample was 68% female, with a mean age of 42 years (SD = 9.3) and an average teaching experience of 14 years (SD = 8.7). For the qualitative phase, 38 of the 42 invited principals participated (90.5% response rate) alongside 126 teachers (3 per school, selected independently across career stages and subject areas). Documents analyzed included school development plans, budgets, and allocation policy logs. Strategic Resource Management was measured using a 24-item scale assessing Strategic Alignment (8 items), Transparency and Participation (8 items), and Planning Capacity (8 items) on a 5-point Likert scale. Confirmatory factor analysis supported the three-factor structure ($\chi^2/df = 2.14$, CFI = 0.94, RMSEA = 0.06, Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.91$). Teacher Engagement was measured using the adapted Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (17 items, 7-point scale, Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.93$). Organizational Coherence was assessed via a 12-item scale (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.87$). Perceived School Effectiveness was measured using a 10-item scale (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.89$). Control variables included teacher gender, age, experience, school size, location, and school-community socioeconomic composition. Quantitative data were analyzed using Hierarchical Linear Modeling to account for teachers (n = 412, Level 1) nested within schools (n = 42, Level 2). Level 1 predictors were group-mean centered and Level 2 variables were grand-mean centered. Multilevel mediation was conducted using Monte Carlo simulation methods (20,000 repetitions) to estimate indirect pathways. Qualitative data underwent thematic analysis combining inductive coding with deductive theoretical coding.

Results

Descriptive Statistics and Preliminary Analysis

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics and Correlations among the Study Variables

Variable	Scale	M	SD	Teacher Engagement	Organizational Coherence	Perceived School Effectiveness
Strategic Resource Management	5-point	3.42	0.78	r = 0.48, p < 0.001	r = 0.56, p < 0.001	r = 0.42, p < 0.001
Teacher Engagement	7-point	4.89	1.12	—	r = 0.52, p < 0.001	r = 0.58, p < 0.001
Organizational Coherence	5-point	3.28	0.82	r = 0.52, p < 0.001	—	—
Perceived School Effectiveness	5-point	3.71	0.85	r = 0.58, p < 0.001	—	—

Note. M = mean; SD = standard deviation; r = Pearson correlation coefficient.

Descriptive analysis revealed mean scores for Strategic Resource Management (M = 3.42, SD = 0.78), Organizational Coherence (M = 3.28, SD = 0.82), and Perceived School Effectiveness (M = 3.71, SD = 0.85) on 5-point scales. On the 7-point Utrecht Work Engagement Scale, teacher engagement (M = 4.89, SD = 1.12) indicated an above-average level. Strategic Resource Management correlated positively with teacher engagement ($r = 0.48$, $p < 0.001$), organizational coherence ($r = 0.56$, $p < 0.001$), and perceived effectiveness ($r = 0.42$, $p < 0.001$). Teacher engagement correlated with coherence ($r = 0.52$, $p < 0.001$) and effectiveness ($r = 0.58$, $p < 0.001$).

Hierarchical Linear Modeling Results

Table 2: Null Model and Intraclass Correlation Coefficients

Outcome	ICC	Percentage of Variance Between Schools	Implication
Teacher Engagement	0.18	18%	Meaningful between-school variation; multilevel modeling supported
Organizational Coherence	0.22	22%	Meaningful between-school variation; multilevel modeling supported

Note. ICC = intraclass correlation coefficient.

The null models yielded Intraclass Correlation Coefficients of 0.18 for teacher engagement and 0.22 for organizational coherence, confirming that 18% and 22% of variance resided between schools and supporting multilevel modeling.

Table 3: Hierarchical Linear Model Predicting Teacher Engagement

Predictor	γ	SE	t	p	Statistical Interpretation
Intercept	4.92	0.11	44.72	< 0.001	Significant
Strategic Resource Management	0.42	0.07	6.00	< 0.001	Significant positive predictor
Teaching experience	-0.02	0.01	-2.31	< 0.05	Significant negative association
Gender	0.08	—	—	NS	Not statistically significant
Age	-0.01	—	—	NS	Not statistically significant
School size	-0.04	—	—	NS	Not statistically significant
Urban location	0.12	—	—	NS	Not statistically significant
Socioeconomic composition	-0.03	—	—	NS	Not statistically significant

Note. γ = regression coefficient; SE = standard error; NS = not statistically significant.

In predicting teacher engagement, after controlling for covariates, Strategic Resource Management was a significant positive predictor ($\gamma = 0.42$, SE = 0.07, $t = 6.00$, $p < 0.001$). Teaching experience showed a minor negative association ($\gamma = -0.02$, SE = 0.01, $t = -2.31$, $p < 0.05$). Other control variables (gender $\gamma = 0.08$; age $\gamma = -0.01$; school size $\gamma = -0.04$; urban location $\gamma = 0.12$; socioeconomic composition $\gamma = -0.03$) were not statistically significant. The overall model intercept was 4.92 (SE = 0.11, $t = 44.72$, $p < 0.001$).

Prediction of Organizational Coherence

Table 4: Hierarchical Linear Model Predicting Organizational Coherence

Predictor	γ	SE	t	p	Statistical Interpretation
Intercept	3.31	0.10	33.10	< 0.001	Significant
Strategic Resource Management	0.38	0.06	6.33	< 0.001	Significant positive predictor
Socioeconomic composition	-0.15	0.07	-2.14	< 0.05	Significant negative association
School size	0.02	—	—	NS	Not statistically significant
Urban location	-0.08	—	—	NS	Not statistically significant

Note. γ = regression coefficient; SE = standard error; NS = not statistically significant.

In predicting organizational coherence, Strategic Resource Management was a significant positive predictor ($\gamma = 0.38$, SE = 0.06, $t = 6.33$, $p < 0.001$). School socioeconomic composition showed a negative association ($\gamma = -0.15$, SE = 0.07, $t = -2.14$, $p < 0.05$), indicating lower coherence in socioeconomically disadvantaged communities. Other controls (school size $\gamma = 0.02$; urban location $\gamma = -0.08$) were not significant. The model intercept was 3.31 (SE = 0.10, $t = 33.10$, $p < 0.001$).

Multilevel Mediation Analysis

Table 5: Multilevel Mediation of the Relationship between Strategic Resource Management and Perceived School Effectiveness through Teacher Engagement

Mediation Component	Estimate	SE	95% Monte Carlo CI	p	Interpretation
Indirect effect through Teacher Engagement	0.18	0.04	[0.11, 0.26]	Significant	Significant indirect association
Direct association	0.24	0.05	—	< 0.001	Significant direct association
Overall mediation	0.18 indirect effect	0.04	[0.11, 0.26]	Significant	Partial statistical mediation

Multilevel mediation analysis confirmed that the indirect association between Strategic Resource Management and perceived school effectiveness through teacher engagement was statistically significant (indirect effect = 0.18, SE = 0.04, 95% Monte Carlo CI [0.11, 0.26]). The direct association remained significant ($\gamma = 0.24$, SE = 0.05, $p < 0.001$), indicating partial statistical mediation.

Qualitative Findings

Table 6: Qualitative Themes Explaining the Statistical Findings

Theme	Finding	Supporting Evidence	Link to Quantitative Finding
1. Transparency as a Foundation for Trust	Open budgeting built trust and made funding trade-offs acceptable to teachers.	"When we can see how decisions are made, what the criteria are, who is involved, it's easier to accept when your request isn't funded."	Directly explains the positive association between Strategic Resource Management and teacher engagement ($\gamma = 0.42$).
2. Alignment Between Words and Deeds	Leaders gained credibility when expenditure matched stated priorities.	Participants emphasized the importance of management doing what it had communicated it would do.	Helps explain the positive association between Strategic Resource Management and organizational coherence ($\gamma = 0.38$).
3. Voice and Participation in Resource Decisions	Departmental input increased teacher autonomy and engagement.	Teachers valued opportunities to participate in decisions affecting instructional resources.	Provides qualitative support for the relationship between resource management and teacher engagement.
4. The Relational Dimension of Resource Allocation	Teachers interpreted resource decisions as indicators of their institutional worth.	"When they funded new materials for my science practicals, it showed management values our students' success."	Helps explain the connection between resource management, teacher engagement, and perceived school effectiveness.

Qualitative analysis revealed four major themes explaining the statistical pathways: transparency as a foundation for trust; alignment between words and deeds; voice and participation in resource decisions; and the relational dimension of resource allocation.

Discussion of Findings

Discussion of Findings in Relation to the Research Questions

Research Question	Finding	Discussion/Interpretation	Supporting Literature
1. How does strategic resource management relate to teacher engagement?	Strategic Resource Management significantly predicted teacher engagement ($\gamma = 0.42$, SE = 0.07, t = 6.00, $p < 0.001$).	The positive association indicates that strategic, transparent, and participatory resource management was associated with higher teacher engagement. When teachers perceive transparent and strategically aligned resource decisions, they may experience greater meaningfulness, organizational support, trust, and recognition.	Bellibaş et al. (2021); Brodie (2021); Bush (2020).
2. What is the relationship between strategic resource management and organizational coherence?	Strategic Resource Management significantly predicted organizational coherence ($\gamma = 0.38$, SE = 0.06, t = 6.33, $p < 0.001$).	The finding suggests that strategic resource deployment can integrate operational practices by linking resources with institutional goals and instructional priorities. When expenditure reflects stated priorities, school activities may become more systematically aligned.	Day & Gurr (2024); Leithwood (2021).
2. What explains the socioeconomic association?	Socioeconomic composition showed a negative association with organizational coherence ($\gamma = -0.15$, SE = 0.07, t = -2.14, $p < 0.05$).	The finding indicates that schools in socioeconomically disadvantaged communities may experience greater challenges in maintaining operational alignment. Resource constraints can create additional pressures for school leaders attempting to implement institutional priorities.	Day & Gurr (2024); Leithwood (2021).
3. Does teacher engagement statistically mediate the relationship between strategic resource management and perceived school effectiveness?	Indirect effect = 0.18, SE = 0.04, 95% CI [0.11, 0.26]. The direct effect remained significant ($\gamma = 0.24$, SE = 0.05, $p < 0.001$).	The statistically significant indirect pathway indicates that teacher engagement represents an important mechanism linking Strategic Resource Management with perceived school effectiveness. Because the direct association remained significant, the	Bellibaş et al. (2021); Brodie (2021).

4. How do school leaders and teachers experience and interpret resource management decisions?	Four themes emerged: transparency and trust; alignment between words and deeds; voice and participation; and relational resource allocation.	mediation was partial rather than complete. Participants interpreted resource management decisions not merely as financial decisions but also as indicators of fairness, professional recognition, institutional commitment, and respect for teachers' instructional needs.	Bellibaş et al. (2021); Brodie (2021); Malandrino & Sager (2021).

The positive association between Strategic Resource Management and teacher engagement ($\gamma = 0.42$) aligns with Organizational Justice Theory and the Resource-Based View (Bellibaş et al., 2021; Bush, 2020). When teachers perceive transparent and strategically aligned resource decisions, they experience greater meaningfulness and support (Brodie, 2021).

The qualitative finding concerning transparency further explains this statistical relationship. Open budgeting made funding trade-offs more understandable and acceptable to teachers. The teacher's statement, “When we can see how decisions are made, what the criteria are, who is involved, it's easier to accept when your request isn't funded,” demonstrates that participation and transparency may influence how teachers interpret resource decisions.
The finding concerning departmental participation also suggests that resource management has an important relational dimension. When teachers have opportunities to contribute to decisions affecting their instructional activities, resource allocation can strengthen their sense of autonomy and ownership.

The prediction of organizational coherence ($\gamma = 0.38$) confirms that strategic resource deployment integrates operational practices (Day & Gurr, 2024; Leithwood, 2021). Strategic resource management provides mechanisms through which financial, human, and material resources can be connected with school improvement priorities.

The qualitative theme of “alignment between words and deeds” provides additional explanation. Leaders gained credibility when expenditure matched stated priorities. This alignment can reduce fragmentation by ensuring that the resources deployed within the school correspond to the objectives contained in school improvement plans.

The negative association with socioeconomic composition ($\gamma = -0.15$) indicates that resource-constrained schools face greater challenges in maintaining operational alignment. Schools operating in disadvantaged communities may have to respond to more immediate and competing resource demands, making it more difficult to maintain consistent alignment between plans and available resources.

The indirect effect (0.18) confirms that teacher engagement acts as a key statistical mechanism linking management practices to perceived school effectiveness. Strategic resource management may therefore operate through teacher-level processes as well as through direct organizational processes. The finding is compatible with research emphasizing the importance of leadership and organizational conditions for teachers' professional practice and school-level outcomes (Bellibaş et al., 2021). The qualitative evidence reinforces this interpretation because teachers described resource allocation as an indicator of whether management valued their instructional work and student success.

The qualitative findings show that resource allocation was interpreted by teachers as a relational and organizational process. Transparency created trust, participation increased teachers' sense of autonomy, and alignment between stated priorities and actual expenditure enhanced leadership credibility. The statement, "When they funded new materials for my science practical, it showed management values our students' success," illustrates the relational dimension of resource allocation. The allocation of instructional materials was interpreted not only as provision of physical resources but also as evidence of institutional commitment to teaching and learning. These findings are consistent with the argument that teachers' professional experiences are influenced by the organizational conditions in which they work (Brodie, 2021; Malandrino & Sager, 2021).

Theoretically, this study extends the Resource-Based View by establishing resource allocation as a relational and psychological process rather than an administrative task. Practically, school leaders should implement participatory budgeting, publish allocation criteria, and communicate how spending connects to pedagogy. Policy-wise, educational authorities should establish mandatory strategic resource management training for school administrators and provide targeted equity funding to socioeconomically disadvantaged public secondary schools.

For school leaders, findings highlight the necessity of strategic, transparent, and relational resource allocation. For policymakers and leadership development programs, results demonstrate the need to integrate financial and strategic management competencies into principal certification and ongoing professional development. For researchers, the conceptual framework provides a basis for future studies on leadership practices and teacher motivation.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that strategic resource management, characterized by alignment with instructional priorities, decision transparency, and systematic planning, significantly predicts teacher engagement and organizational coherence in public secondary schools. Teacher engagement partially mediates the relationship between resource management and perceived school effectiveness. In resource-constrained educational environments, how resources are allocated, communicated, and aligned with pedagogy is as vital as the overall resource volume.

The quantitative findings showed that Strategic Resource Management significantly predicted teacher engagement and organizational coherence. The qualitative findings further demonstrated that transparency, participation, alignment between institutional priorities and actual expenditure, and the relational meaning of resource allocation provide important explanations for these statistical relationships. The study therefore positions strategic resource management as an important component of educational administration. Effective resource management involves not only obtaining and distributing financial, human, and material resources but also ensuring that decisions are strategically aligned, transparently communicated, participatory, and connected to instructional priorities.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion, the study recommended the following:

1. Integrate Strategic Resource Management into Leadership Preparation Programs: Coursework should emphasize needs assessment, priority setting, and participatory budgeting.
2. Develop School-Level Resource Management Systems: Establish annual needs assessment and transparent allocation criteria.

3. Create Structures for Teacher Participation: Institutionalize departmental planning committees to gather teacher input.
4. Enhance Transparency in Resource Allocation: Issue clear communications explaining budget decisions and trade-offs.
5. Align School Improvement Plans and Budgets: Integrate planning and budgeting so expenditures directly reflect priorities.
6. Provide Targeted Support for Resource-Constrained Schools: Offer technical assistance and discretionary funds to schools in disadvantaged communities.
7. Include Resource Management in Principal Evaluations: Assess leaders on strategic alignment, transparency, and staff participation.
8. Conduct Further Research: Investigate direct linkages between resource management practices and objective student achievement outcomes.

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