

ETHICAL STANDARDS IN SCHOOL SUPERVISION FOR SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN OBU DU LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA

Ategwu, P. Ogar¹ and Donatus P. Ochai²

¹Saint Augustine University of Tanzania

²Veritas University Abuja

Correspondence email: patrickategwu@gmail.com

Doi: <https://doi.org/10.69713/uoaaj2026v04i01.06>

Abstract

This study explores the role of ethical standards in school supervision for sustainable national development in secondary schools in Obudu Local Government Area, Cross River State, Nigeria. The research was guided by two main objectives. The study employed a quantitative research approach to investigate the ethical sensitivity and professional competence of school supervisors and their role in promoting sustainable national development in secondary schools. A descriptive survey research design was adopted to systematically collect and analyze numerical data from a sample of 57 teachers in secondary schools in Obudu Local Government Area, selected from the population of 413 teachers across 28 public secondary schools through simple random sampling. Data were collected using structured, closed-ended questionnaires designed to capture participants' views on ethical standards in school supervision for sustainable national development (ESSSSNDQ). Validity of the instruments was ensured through expert review and alignment with research objectives, while reliability was established using the test-retest method. Data analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics via SPSS version 27, with findings presented in tables, graphs, and narrative summaries. The study concludes that school supervision grounded in strong ethical standards and professional competence is a key driver of educational quality and sustainable development. It recommends, among others, that the government should create a national framework for ethical and respectful supervision.

Keywords: Ethical Standards, School Supervision, Sustainable National Development.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The school is a social institution entrusted with the responsibility of transmitting the norms and values of society from generation to generation, through education. Ethics, on the one hand, is concerned with values, so ethical practice has to do with the realization of those values charged by the society, organizational institution, or group, as the case may be (Ekeh, 2019). The

significance of ethical standards in school supervision is attributed to the quality of school principals' activity, so that they can deal with the issues of administration. Ategwu (2022) requires the school principal to carry out all of his administrative and educational duties effectively; he requires the assistance of educational supervisors from various specialties (Jamal, 2023). Consequently, educational supervision in all its various

domains has emerged as one of the most vital means through which leadership can indeed affect an improvement in school administration. Ategwu et al. (2024) posit that for supervision, which is indispensable to school administration, to become effective and productive, there should be an ethical consensus among supervisors, such as principals and teachers. Nonetheless, supervision is a form of assistance to teachers designed to improve instruction. Ekpo & Ategwu (2022) define supervision as an administrative duty that targets teachers to enable them perform their duties with great vibrancy, as it directs the educational growth of the child.

Education in the UK is acknowledged as an important contributor to sustainable development and social justice. United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) emphasizes the need for inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning. An issue at the heart of these efforts was competent, ethical educational leadership, with a particular focus on school supervision. This impacts institutional measures, academic effect, and the confidence stakeholders have in it (UNESCO, 2024). An ethical leader in school management is enshrined across developed countries within policy frameworks, which focus on accountability, transparency, and the moral imperative of education leaders to achieve inclusive schooling.

On the other hand, in most African education systems, serious problems of bad governance, poor leadership, and ethical corruption in managing and governing schools persist. Legates et al (2009) also mention specified progress in terms of access to education, but note the quality of leadership and supervision as a significant challenge in sub-Saharan Africa. UNESCO and the African Union reports show incidents of corruption, nepotism,

wastage of resources, and unprofessional behaviour by school heads. These are detrimental to schools' effectiveness, depress teachers' enthusiasm, and frustrate students' performance, therefore limiting the contributions of the educational sector towards long-term national development. In this respect, the function of moral rules in school supervision has been focused on more and more. Moral sensitivity, integrity, fairness, and professional competence among school supervisors are now considered to be fundamental characteristics of educational revolution. On the African continent, schooling policies (e.g., Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 16-25), and so on) have prioritized ethics-infused leadership development as a focal point for systemic change and sustainable growth (AU 2016). Therefore, school supervision aids sustainable national development, which deserves to examine regional concerns such as Nigeria, which is rapidly expanding.

Education is a catalyst for national development. With specific reference to Nigeria, education is universally acknowledged as the bedrock of sustainable national development and an antidote to poverty, as well as a vital tool for social, economic, and cultural advancement. In Tanzania, the Education and Training Policy (ETP) has forwarded a quality education that offers equity, inclusiveness, and is responsive to national development goals. In this context, "strong school supervision is required so that schools and educational institutions not only run smoothly but also efficiently as well as being guided by values of integrity, accountability, and competency in leadership" (Bush et al., 2022). School administration is not only an administrative task but is a leadership role, which affects both the moral atmosphere and academic affairs of the school.

Supervisors model and ethics, over which they expect all teachers and students to live by: justice, fairness, and professionalism. In this aspect, ethical sensibility and professional skill are two aspects of school management. It is related to empathy, respect for the rights of others, moral judgment, and the ability to deal with complex interpersonal and institutional predicaments (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2016). Supervisors with high ethical sensitivity will help and support a school that is based on trust, inclusiveness, and ethics, responsibly. Professional competence, on the other hand, refers to what is to be known and practiced in terms of knowledge, skills, and attitudes in accordance with proficient school administration and instructional leadership. Effective supervisors can steer curriculum execution, staff development, and resource management, and are tasked with ensuring that schools are up to educational and moral standards (Okendu, 2012).

Although the value of these two traits is acknowledged, many secondary schools in Obudu have faced problems associated with a lack of supervision, corrupt practices, and minimal leadership capability. These challenges distract from the objectives of Nigeria's education reforms and retard movement towards sustainable national development (UNESCO, 2021). It is thus warranted to empirically study the role of ethical sensitivity and professional competence that school supervisor has on sustainable development for schools at the secondary level. As a result, this study aimed to generate insights that can inform policy, enhance training programs for school leaders, and ultimately strengthen the education system's contribution to national development goals.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the continued effort of the Nigerian Government in carrying out reforms in the

education sector geared towards implementing the Education Policy (EP) and SDG, secondary schools still encounter leadership challenges, which have become potential barriers to meaningful attainment of sustainable national development. Foremost among these challenges are unethical practices, weak accountability mechanisms, and an overall reduction in the quality of school supervision. This includes issues of biased allocation of teachers, poor communication lines, non-transference, making school decision and abuse of school materials. These issues express a more general problem. Most school administrators are neither prepared nor sensitive enough to recognize and respond prudently to moral dilemmas in the schools. In the absence of this, oversight becomes either reactive or discriminatory, or autocratic, as you end up with organizations that are anathema to fairness, inclusivity, and justice.

In addition to this, the fact that school supervisors are often lacking in professional competence does not help. Those are potentially ineffective administrators who are void of the core competencies needed for instructional leadership, staff development, resource management, and policy implementation at their schools. These impacts on the quality of education and the dissolution of schools as a potential centre for sustainable development in communities. Ethical consciousness and professional capability are widely considered to be the critical ingredients of successful educational leadership. In the absence of such a diagnosis, efforts at educational leadership reform will continue to be piecemeal and ultimately ineffective. Drawing from this premise, this study will fill the gap in knowledge by examining how ethical sensitivity and professional competence of school supervisors influenced sustainable national development through secondary schools in Obudu Local Government Area. It is

anticipated that the results of this study will guide policies as well as training packages aimed at improving ethical leadership and the effectiveness of managers in Nigeria.

General objective

To assess the role of ethical standards in school supervision for sustainable national development in secondary schools in Obudu Local Government Area, Cross River State, Nigeria.

Specific Objectives

- i. To assess the contribution of school supervisors' ethical sensitivity to the promotion of sustainable national development in secondary schools.
- ii. To examine the impact of school supervisors' professional competence on the promotion of sustainable national development in secondary schools

Research question

RQ₁: How does school supervisors' ethical sensitivity contribute to the promotion of sustainable national development in secondary schools?

RQ₂: In what ways does school supervisors' professional competence contribute to the promotion of sustainable national development in secondary schools?

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Transformational Leadership Theory by James MacGregor (1985)

The transformational leadership theory was developed by James McGregor Burns in 1978, and he considered a transformational leader as one who inspires their congregation, so that the interests of the followers can come to par with their leaders. In 1985, Bernard M. Bass extended the theory by naming four empirical components, including idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration

(Bass, 1985). These three elements highlight a leadership that is visionary, ethical, and developmental, which are critical attributes of school supervisors desiring to drive sustainable national development. SID/School management moral values Sustainable Development Leadership Freedom Openness Moral values Behaviours Good quality education persons/general population Growth Education.

Strengths of the theory

Transformational Leadership Theory (TLT) has significant merit for creating high levels of motivation, commitment, and moral such as ethical, from the followers. Transformational leaders in the school are those who motivate teachers to pursue ongoing professional learning and enrichment, adopt new ideas, and support espoused values that serve learners and society (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005). The theory advocates a moral vocation and an emancipatory style of leadership - essential qualities that contribute to shaping a school culture which can be supportive of national meta-goals such as equity, environmental sustainability, and social cohesion.

Weaknesses of the theory

Despite being a powerful theory, the Transformational Leadership Theory is not free from shortcomings. It generally relies too much on a personal appeal and vision of the leader, which is not necessarily available or sustainable everywhere. Furthermore, the theory does not have clear mechanisms of accountability and may sometimes ignore the structural limitations, such as scarcity in resources or red-tape bureaucracy (Northouse, 2016). Within countries like Nigeria that experience potential logistical and capacity difficulties with educational supervision, offering only transformative slogans while ignoring systemic constraints may be a limiting form of practical action.

Relevance to the Study

Furthermore, the significance of Transformational Leadership Theory to research into ethical standards in school supervision as a means for sustainable national development cannot be overstressed. Transformational supervisors with the traits of morality, vision, and individualized consideration may motivate teachers to take up practices that are supportive of quality education, environmental consciousness, gender equity, and nationhood. With the application of this theory, the study can examine how moral leadership in school supervision has to do with developmental gains within secondary schools in Obudu Local Government Area, Cross River State.

EMPIRICAL LITERATURE REVIEW

The Contribution of School Supervisors' Ethical Sensitivity to the Promotion of Sustainable National Development in Secondary Schools

In the United Kingdom, Pfeil et al. (2017) investigated ethics and values education in schools and kindergartens through a policy analysis and qualitative research approach. Their research also underlined the significance of ethical sensitivity in school management, as they claimed that "the moral consciousness in educational institutions constitutes the cornerstone from where ethically responsible and sensible reflective action is being built" (2003: 260). Schools can, by adopting ethical principles in their leadership and classroom teaching, help to develop character not just in students but in relation to other objectives of sustainable development. This relationship underscores the manner in which promoting ethical sensitivity among teachers, professionals, and leaders can be a means to such ends as long-term social cohesion and sustainability.

In Indonesia, Jucker and Mathar (2015) studied Schooling for Sustainable Development, utilizing Case studies and policy review. The research investigates the supportive role of moral leadership at schools for sustainable development. The results disclose that it is the incorporation of education for sustainability within school policies that fosters the ethical sensitivity of school supervisors to sustainable national development in secondary schools. In Ethiopia, a study on practices and challenges of school-based supervision in secondary schools of South West Showa was done by Serbessa (2022), a Case study and qualitative research whose findings indicate that ethical leadership among school managers promotes educational sustainability by ensuring responsible decision-making and sustained policy implementation. But the impact of it is checked by problems, including a lack of resources and training.

In Nigeria, Orupabo (2021) carried out research on Effective School Supervision for Sustainable Educational Development with the use of a literature review and qualitative analysis. The findings revealed that value-orientation in school supervision promotes equity, inclusiveness, and accountability, which are fundamental to sustainable educational development. Nevertheless, it was found that the potential of ethical supervision is frequently constrained by obstacles such as inadequate professional formation and the structural impediments in schools, making a case for targeted investment in supervisory capacity, training, and ethical leadership development.

The Impact of School Supervisors' Professional Competence on The Promotion of Sustainable National Development in Secondary Schools

In the US, Yue and Ji (2020) used content analysis of international literature to examine teacher professional competencies as they relate to education for sustainable development

(ESD). They were keen to point out that school leaders can be instrumental in developing these competencies through talent management approaches, including mentoring and feedback, fostering a cooperative climate of learning. The results show that principals showing evidence of high professional competence in sustainability training contribute substantially to the further development of teacher competencies, such as systems thinking, problem solving, and interdisciplinary education- all key to the realization of long-term national targets on curriculum relating to sustainability. Unfortunately, the study was predominantly theoretical and used recycled data, so it is less generalizable to different national or secondary school environments.

Barth et al. (2020), in Great Britain, investigated how school leaders' professional roles contribute to the sustainability transformation of schools. They suggest that competent school supervisors act as architects of learning environments, agents of change, mobilizing internal and external actors, coaches for professional development, and storytellers about sustainability values. These varied roles, when appropriately performed, will go a long way in inculcating the sustainability culture among staff and students, which will further consolidate national development policies. Despite the utility of these models, there is a notable dearth of empirical validation through large-scale data at secondary school levels.

Redman and Wiek (2023) identified a range of sustainability competency frameworks in India, including: action competence, green skills, and transformative learning ability. Although the analysis was not confined to school supervisors, it underscored the impact of leadership in determining how role performances are enacted within schools and developed. Supervisors who consider and utilize these frameworks can work to integrate the curricula with national

sustainability goals through teacher- and student-initiated actions. But the study is general and unclear, which does not clearly provide evidence of how supervisor competencies have a direct impact on national development at the secondary school level.

Saine and Santoso (2021) carried out quantitative research in Gambia examining the influence of teacher competencies, academic supervision, and principal leadership on teachers' output in public senior secondary schools. They found a significantly strong relationship that existed between the professional competence of principals and teacher performance, which are indirectly linked to sustainable education outcomes. While the results of the study did not measure direct sustainability impact, it clearly demonstrates that competent supervision improves teacher quality, a necessary mechanism to contribute (in turn) to national development through education.

In Kenya, the professional capabilities of school supervisors are critical in promoting sustainable national development by ensuring that education objectives at secondary schools can be effectively achieved. With effective oversight from their supervisors and managers, teachers are provided with a high level of pedagogical guidance grounded in the national vision for education, with an inclusive and equitable goal that is closely aligned to Kenya's Vision 2030 goals (Republic of Kenya, 2019) as well as the CBC reforms. Waweru and Orodho (2014) established that teacher professional competencies have a great positive influence on the achievement of students in KCPE. In addition, supervisors with strong relationships, facilitating and monitoring skills also support schools to mainstream crosscutting issues of the environment, citizenship, and gender ESD focal areas in school systems. Consistent with this, Gudo, Olel, and Oanda (2011) noted that the

capacity of educational leaders, such as school supervisors, is a powerful predictor of quality education and overall educational outcomes. However, long-standing issues such as scarce ongoing training, lack of resources, and systemic weaknesses still stifle the efficacy of school inspection. Addressing these by focused training, local leadership, and strong accountability systems is fundamental in order to optimize the contribution of school supervision for Kenya's sustainable development quest.

In Tanzania, the professional competence of school inspectors is crucial to in-servicing sustainable national development through secondary education. Qualified supervisors play a substantial role in providing direction for curriculum implementation, promoting professional development among teachers, and ensuring school compliance with national education objectives such as access to quality education, environmental protection, and social equity (URT 2016). Saine and Santoso (2021), research suggests that corps members' performance increases as the qualities of instructional and managerial supervisors are more pronounced, consequently leading way promotes student learning outcomes. While the current study was in The Gambia, its results bear relevance to Tanzania, where a similar educational system operates. Additionally, Barth et al. (2020) state that school leaders are the change agents and role models who have the necessary skills to advance schools to sustainability. In a country where education should be dealing with the problems of poverty, environmental destruction, and inequity (Kelly 2008), professional supervision then becomes a strategic means to embed sustainability action inside schools. Nevertheless, inadequacy of in-charges' training, resource constraints, and lack of strong mechanisms for accountability persist as barriers to enhancing the effectiveness of inspectors/school supervisors (Sumra &

Katabaro, 2014). To realize the secondary education policy goal of converting senior high schools into actors in sustainable national development, there is an urgent need for capacity building and policy support to bolster professional competence.

Research Gap

Methodological gap: Previous literature review and research approach, on which this study aims to fill the methodological gap, where this study will use a mixed research approach under a convergent parallel design, whereby the researcher means including the elements of qualitative and quantitative research, which would help to properly understand the key questions arising in studies.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research used the quantitative approach, focused on numerical data collection and analysis, which offers quantified and measurable outcomes (Rauteda, 2025). Moreover, the quantitative research was chosen as an approach, due to the fact that it can give objective and numerical data information applicable to analyze patterns, relationships, and trends systematically by the researcher. It supports generalization of results through the use of a large sample size, uses structured methods such as surveys and experiments for consistency, and promotes accuracy by controlling personal bias. The descriptive survey research design was employed in this study. It describes the features of a population or phenomenon being studied. This method is much "more concerned with the 'what' of research than the 'why' (Manjunatha, 2019).

The population of the study comprises 413 teachers from 28 public secondary schools in Obudu Local Government Area, Cross River State, Nigeria. A total of 57 teachers were randomly selected as the sample of the study.

To obtain the required data for the study, direct questions were structured by the researcher: tagged Ethical Standard in School Supervision and Sustainable National Development (ESSSSNDQ). The researcher and research assistant explained the items on the instruments to the respondents in more detail. The closed-ended written questionnaires were given to the participants to fill. The instrument was relevant because it enabled the researcher to gather much data from many respondents easily.

Teachers received the prepared survey from the investigators, and after finishing, all responses were collected for analysis. This can also guarantee the face and content validity in this study. For content validity, the investigators developed questions that met 100% of the items needed for what the objectives specifically studied. The researchers presented the instruments to Research Experts in Measurement and Evaluation and Educational Management, University of Calabar, respectively, for their advice and recommendations on how best the instruments could be adjusted based on the interest of the

study. Test-retest is a method used to determine the reliability of the research tool, in which an instrument is administered once and then repeated. For that reason, the method of test-retest was applied during this research in order to check the stability measure over time. The researchers carried out a test-retest at a one-week interval to verify the reliability of the instruments used in data collection. The statistical techniques for analysis of the data were descriptive statistics with the aid of SPSS version 16 software.

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

School Supervisors' Ethical Sensitivity on Sustainable National Development

This was the first objective of the study. Under this objective, various statements were presented to respondents to determine the extent to which ethical sensitivity among school supervisors contributes to sustainable national development in secondary schools. The responses are presented below.

Table 1: School Supervisors' Ethical Sensitivity on Sustainable National Development

| Statement | SD | | D | | N | | A | | SA | |
|---|----|------|---|------|---|----|---|----|----|----|
| | f | % | f | % | f | % | f | % | f | % |
| School supervisors treat all staff fairly and equally. | 7 | 13.5 | 5 | 9.6 | 3 | 30 | 5 | 50 | 2 | 20 |
| Supervisors respect teachers' rights and dignity during supervision. | 4 | 7.7 | 6 | 11.5 | 5 | 10 | 7 | 70 | 2 | 20 |
| Ethical conduct is a strong feature in how supervisors handle school matters. | 3 | 5.8 | 5 | 9.6 | 4 | 10 | 4 | 40 | 4 | 40 |
| Supervisors lead by example when it comes to integrity and responsibility. | 2 | 3.8 | 4 | 7.7 | 6 | 20 | 4 | 40 | 4 | 40 |
| Ethical sensitivity in supervision positively influences teaching and learning. | 1 | 1.9 | 3 | 5.8 | 5 | 10 | 7 | 70 | 1 | 10 |
| Supervisors address ethical issues in schools promptly and fairly. | 2 | 3.8 | 4 | 7.7 | 6 | 20 | 4 | 40 | 1 | 10 |

Source: Researchers (2025)

School supervisors treat all staff fairly and equally

Most responses (71.2%) agreed or strongly agreed that school managers treated all employees in a fair and equitable manner. This implies fairness is considered as a salient characteristic of ethical supervision, which in turn enhances staff morale and equality and institutional trust, which are important Fulcrums on the wheel of sustainable national development. A small minority (23.1%) disagreed/strongly disagreed, which may suggest heterogeneity of supervisory practices in different schools.

Supervisors respect teachers' rights and dignity during supervision

A total 71.2% of the respondents responded that "supervisors take into consideration teachers' human rights and dignity," indicating ethical considerations during the supervision process. Returning to the item, overruled a decision made by this staff member, 19.2% disagreed, indicating that some supervisors may not have been respecting staff autonomy or were authoritarians. The results imply a generally positive appraisal of supervisors' respect for professional boundaries, and thereby a supportive learning climate that is important for long-term growth.

Ethical conduct is a strong feature in how supervisors handle school matters

The replies show that 76.9% of individuals agreed or strongly agreed to a statement suggesting ethical conduct is prevalent in managing decision-making. Only 15.4% disagreed, and 7.7% were neutral. These findings further support arguments that ethical leadership fosters trust, transparency, and better school governance, all critical in the attainment of long-term national development agendas.

Supervisors lead by example when it comes to integrity and responsibility

The majority of the respondents (77%) agreed and strongly agreed that supervisors serve as role models for integrity and responsibility. This discovery draws attention to the necessity of ethical leadership to set an example for school culture as well as staff behaviour. That was true, disagreed. Only 11.5 percent did, and 11.5 percent were neutralists. These findings indicate that the majority of school principals in Nigeria are professional, and lead to a positive impact on the management and administration of schools which in turn sets a basis for society development.

Ethical sensitivity in supervision positively influences teaching and learning

The high percentage (82.7%) that agreed on the importance of ethical sensitivity for enhancing the teaching-learning context reveals the weight assigned to values, namely, fairness, support, and responsibility in improving learning outcomes. The small number who disagreed (7.7%) or were neutral (9.6%) may indicate idiosyncratic cases or lack of knowledge. The data support the relationship between moral supervision and academic achievement, which will contribute to achieving national standards for education.

Supervisors address ethical issues in schools promptly and fairly

A total of 7.7% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that managers deal with ethical problems fairly and speedily. The response reflects confidence in supervisors facilitating constructive responses to conflict, misconduct, and other such ethical issues. Other participants (11.5% disagree, 11.5% neutral) might reflect concerns about inconsistency or bias in addressing ethical issues. The general positive acceptance, however, proves that the timely appropriate attitude in responding ethically, as it were, to create trust and an encouraging

learning environment to enhance sustainable development has found its willing subjects.

This objective assessed the extent to which school supervisors' professional competence influences sustainable national development. Participants responded to six key statements, and their views are summarized below:

School Supervisors' Professional Competence on the Promotion of Sustainable National Development in Secondary Schools

Table 2: School Supervisors' Professional Competence on the Promotion of Sustainable National Development in Secondary Schools

| Statement | SD | | D | | N | | A | | SA | |
|--|----|-----|---|-----|---|------|----|------|----|------|
| | f | % | f | % | f | % | f | % | f | % |
| Supervisors demonstrate a deep understanding of educational policies and goals | 3 | 5.8 | 4 | 7.7 | 6 | 11.5 | 22 | 42.3 | 17 | 32.7 |
| Supervisors provide constructive feedback that helps improve teaching | 2 | 3.8 | 3 | 5.8 | 4 | 7.7 | 26 | 50.0 | 17 | 32.7 |
| Supervisors are capable of identifying and solving academic or administrative challenges | 1 | 1.9 | 3 | 5.8 | 5 | 9.6 | 28 | 53.8 | 15 | 28.9 |
| They support teachers in implementing national education initiatives effectively | 2 | 3.8 | 4 | 7.7 | 5 | 9.6 | 27 | 51.9 | 14 | 26.9 |
| Professional knowledge of supervisors enhances student academic outcomes | 1 | 1.9 | 2 | 3.8 | 6 | 11.5 | 25 | 48.1 | 18 | 34.7 |
| Competent supervisors contribute positively to the school's overall development | 0 | 0.0 | 3 | 5.8 | 4 | 7.7 | 26 | 50.0 | 19 | 36.5 |

Source, researchers (2025)

Supervisors demonstrate a deep understanding of educational policies and goals

Supervisors have a clear sense of educational policies and goals, as 75% agree or strongly agree. This leads us to conclude that principals have a good understanding of national education systems, an important indicator of what it means to lead schools well. But a minority of 13.5% disagreed or strongly disagreed, with 11.5% neither agreed nor disagreed. This could be due to differences in exposure to supervisors or ambiguity in policy interpretation among schools.

Supervisors provide constructive feedback that helps improve teaching

A large proportion (82.7%) agreed or strongly agreed that supervisors provide them with constructive feedback. This emphasizes the importance of continuous facilitation as well as formative assessment from the side of supervisors to improve teaching. Few disagreed here (only 9.6%), and relatively few were neutral (7.7%), reflecting a generally favorable view with not many qualifications.

Supervisors are capable of identifying and solving academic or administrative challenges

Over 82% of them agreed with the statement that supervisors can solve problems within the

academic and administrative areas. This indicates a very strong belief in themselves with a can-do attitude and leadership abilities. A mere 17.3% expressed neutral, or disagreed, and hence most of the teachers depend on heads for proper governance of schools, as well as the conflict dimension.

They support teachers in implementing national education initiatives effectively

A large majority of the participants (78.8%) acknowledged that the assistance provided by superintendents for teachers had with respect to national education orders. This highlights the role of supervision in moving policy into the classroom. The other 21.2%, neutral/disagree, might indicate communication or resource issues at a school level.

Professional knowledge of supervisors enhances student academic outcomes

Many respondents (82.8%) felt that the subject matter and pedagogical expertise of the supervisors have the influence on the performance of students. This serves to confirm that expertise among school leaders is associated with successful education. A small part of them (17.2%) did not agree or were neutral, perhaps because of other factors such as the teacher's motivation or school infrastructure.

Competent supervisors contribute positively to the school's overall development

A resounding 86.5% agreed or strongly agreed that capable supervisors make a difference in school advancement. This indicates a direct connection between good supervision and general educational enhancement, such as infrastructure, discipline, and school ethos. It is interesting to note that none of the participants strongly disagreed with this statement, indicating a high level of perceived importance of supervisor effectiveness in promoting sustainable progress within schools.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

From the results of the study, it emerges that ethical sensitivity among school heads contributes significantly to sustainable national development in secondary schools. A majority of the respondents reported that school supervisors, in general, treat all staff fairly and without discrimination, respect teachers' rights and dignity during supervision, and have strong ethical behaviors with regard to school interference. The majority of participants also affirmed that integrity and accountability are role-modeled by supervisors and positively impact the teaching/learning climate. In addition, participants reported that supervisors are generally responsive to ethical concerns in the schools. These results indicate that moral awareness is an effective element in supporting and fostering a respectful, inclusive, and professional school environment, which is a requirement for educational advancement and national progress. These findings coincide with the previous literature that has highlighted the importance of ethical sensitivity in school leadership for ESD. For instance, Pfeil et al. (2017) in the UK explicated the role of ethical leadership in education that adopted the approach for sustainable social cohesion and responsible citizenship. First, Jucker and Mathar (2015) showed that incorporating ethical leadership in school policies in Indonesia positions supervisors effectively to facilitate sustainable national development. In Ethiopia, Serbessa (2022) discovered that ethical leadership promotes educational sustainability through responsible decision-making and long-range policy adoption despite the imbalance of resources.

Regarding professional competence, participants strongly believed that supervisors possess a clear understanding of educational policies and objectives, which provide helpful feedback and assistance for solving academic

and administrative problems. Most respondents also agreed that school leaders are supportive of teachers in the implementation of national educational initiatives, and are perceived to have professional knowledge, which positively affects students' academic achievements. Also, capable supervisors were identified as significant catalysts for school-wide development. Such findings emphasize the significance of professionalism and knowledge for school leadership in promoting sustainable educational outcomes compatible with national aims. Our findings with regard to the relevance of professional competencies for supervisors resonate with what has been echoed in international literature regarding strengthening national development. For instance, Yue and Ji (2020) report how skillful leaders develop teacher capacity in key sustainability skills, thinking systemically about complex sustainability issues, and teaching across disciplines, which are critical to realizing longer-term sustainability goals. Similarly, Barth et al. (2020) metaphorically caricatured professionally competent school heads as architects and change agents who harness resources and generate resourceful mindsets among teachers and learners in advancing national development aspirations.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

On the basis of the above findings, it is suggested that ethical sensitivity and professional proficiency among school supervisors play a crucial role in promoting sustainable national development in education. Supervision of an ethical nature promotes equity, respect, and integrity among school members and affects staff morale and overall school atmosphere. At the same time, professional competence allows a supervisor to make a wise decision, guide teachers, and synchronize school running with the country's

educational policies in general. These joint characteristics contribute to quality in teaching and learning, student success, and the positive role schools can play in long-term support for national development.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made

- i. The government should create a national framework for ethical and respectful supervision.
- ii. The Ministry of Education ought to create a formalized code of ethics designed specifically for school leaders. This 'system' would support what is acceptable behaviour, how decisions were made, and leadership principles in a school to be sufficiently ethical.

REFERENCES

- Al-Anzi, S. F. (2021). The role of educational supervisors in achieving the sustainable professional development of secondary teachers in the Tabuk Education District from the point of view of educational leaders. *The International Journal of Educational and Psychological Research*, 8, 136-396.
- Ameir, O. J., & Mushi, P. S. D. (2024). *The role of professional development in implementing Sustainable Development Goal 4 in A-Level secondary schools*.
- Ategwu, P. O. (2022). Educational supervision is a 21st-century veritable tool for a sustainable school environment in an era of insecurity. *International Journal of Vocational Studies and Library Science*, 2(2), 47-57.
- Ategwu, P. O., Kenn-Aklah, F. U. & Fanan, A. G. (2023). Principals' direct supervision and teachers' effectiveness in public secondary schools in Ikom Education Zone,

- Cross River State. *African Journal of Studies in Education*, 18(1).
- Ategwu, P.O, Adie, J. A, & Ukume, G. (2024). Supervisors Classroom Visitation and Teachers job performance in Secondary Schools in Obudu Local Government Area, Cross River State, Nigeria *Journal of Educational Administration and Planning* 24(1)
- Barth, M., Rieckmann, M., & Thomas, I. (2020). Teaching and learning for sustainability: What competences are needed? *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education*, 21(1), 9-27. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJSHE-02-2019-0075>
- Barth, M., Rieckmann, M., & Thomas, I. (2020). Teaching and learning for sustainability: What competences are needed? *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education*, 21(1), 9–27. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJSHE-02-2019-0075>.
- Ekeh, G. (2019). Making ethical practices in school relevant to society: A critical factor for sustainable education in Nigeria: Researchgist.
- Ekpo, A. M. & Ategwu, P. O. (2022). School variables and administrative performances of supervisors in public secondary schools in Otukpo L.G.A., Benue State. *Nigerian Journal of Educational Management*, 6(2).
- Gudo, C. O., Olel, M. A., & Oanda, I. O. (2011). Role of institutional managers in quality assurance: Reflections on Kenya's university education. *Australian Journal of Business and Management Research*, 1(2), 113–124.
- Jamal, B. (2023). The role of educational supervisors in developing school administration in government schools, Yatta. *Global Journal of Engineering and Technology Advances*, 17(2), 106-119.
- Jucker, R., & Mathar, R. (2015). *Schooling for Sustainable Development in Europe: Concepts, Policies and Educational Experiences at the End of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development*. Springer.
- Komba, W. L. M., & Nkumbi, E. (2008). Teacher professional development in Tanzania: Perceptions and practices. *Journal of International Cooperation in Education*, 11(3), 67-83.
- Okendu, J. N. (2012). The influence of instructional process and supervision on academic performance in secondary schools of Rivers State, Nigeria. *Academic Research International*, 3(1), 147–151.
- Orupabo, F. T. (2021). Effective school supervision for sustainable educational development in Nigeria. *Teacher Perspective*, 16(1), 1-15.
- Orupabo, F. T. (2021). *Effective school supervision for sustainable educational development in Nigeria*.
- Pfeil, T., Underwood, H., Čurko, B., Feiner, F., Pokorny, S., Sola, P. G., Linares, E., Arenas, B., Kragić, M., & Strahovnik, V. (2017). *Ethics and Values Education in Schools and Kindergartens*. European Commission, Erasmus+ Programme.
- Rauteda, K. R. (2025). Quantitative Research in Education: Philosophy, Uses and Limitations. *Deleted Journal*, 2(1), 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.56916/jmr.d.v2i1.993>
- Redman, A., & Wiek, A. (2023). Development of sustainability competencies in secondary school education: A global scoping review. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 399, 136900. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2023.136900>
- Republic of Kenya. (2019). *Competency-Based Curriculum Implementation Guidelines*. Nairobi: Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development.
- Saine, P. M., & Santoso, H. B. (2021). The impact of teacher competencies, academic supervision, and principal leadership on

- teacher performance: A study in senior secondary schools in The Gambia. *International Journal of Instruction*, 14(3), 79–94.
- Saine, P. M., & Santoso, H. B. (2021). The impact of teacher competencies, academic supervision, and principal leadership on teacher performance: A study in senior secondary schools in The Gambia. *International Journal of Instruction*, 14(3), 79-94.
- Serbessa, M. (2022). *Practices and challenges of school-based supervision in secondary schools of South West Showa*.
- Shapiro, J. P., & Stefkovich, J. A. (2016). *Ethical leadership and decision making in education: Applying theoretical perspectives to complex dilemmas* (4th ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Starratt, R. J. (2004). *Ethical leadership*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Sumra, S., & Kataro, J. K. (2014). *Education foundations for the future: Developments in the Tanzanian education sector*. Dar es Salaam: HakiElimu.
- Trade Union Committee for Education. (2012). *School Leadership in Europe: Issues, Opportunities, and Challenges*. Brussels: ETUCE.
- UNESCO. (2021). *Reimagining our futures together: A new social contract for education*. Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization.
- United Republic of Tanzania (URT). (2016). *Education Sector Development Plan (2016/17 –2020/21): Tanzania Mainland*. Ministry of Education, Science and Technology.
- United Republic of Tanzania (URT). (2021). *Tanzania Development Vision 2025 – Education Sector Progress Report*. Dodoma: Ministry of Education, Science and Technology.
- Waweru, S. N., & Orodho, J. A. (2014). Management practices and students' academic performance in national examinations in public secondary schools in Kiambu County, Kenya. *International Journal of Scientific Research*, 5(2), 472–479.
- Yue, C., & Ji, Z. (2020). Teacher professional competencies in education for sustainable development: A literature review and implications. *Sustainability*, 12(15), 6146. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12156146>.