

PRINCIPALS' ADMINISTRATIVE STRATEGIES AND STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN NIGERIAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between the Principals' Administrative strategies and the students' academic performance in Nigerian secondary schools. The study adopted a descriptive research design of the survey and ex-post facto types. Multi stage and simple random sampling techniques were used to select 225 secondary school principals and 1,800 teachers in the three states selected for the study.

Two sets of instruments were used for the study. These are Principal's Administrative Strategies Questionnaire (PASQ) and Secondary School Student's Academic Performance Inventory (SSSAPI). The expert determine the appropriateness of the instrument in measuring what it was suppose to measure and ensured that the instrument contained the appropriate items that could actually elicit the intended responses on the principals' administrative strategies in order to meet the face and content validity to ensure the reliability of the instrument used, the test-retest method of reliability

was adopted. Data collected was analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistics. The findings from the data analysis showed that over 79% of the principals regularly used the identified administrative strategies. Again there was a significant relationship between Principals' Administrative Strategies and Students' academic performance ($r=0.536$ at $P < 0.05$). The study concluded that Principals Administrative strategies had significant impact on Students' academic performance. In essence, the principal should be committed to changing organizational culture from traditional patterns of hierarchical structure to participative management to improve the effectiveness of participatory decision in the school system

Keywords: Principals' Administrative Strategies, Students' Academic Performance, Team work, Monitoring of teachers, Performance appraisal, committee system, participatory decision making, delegation of duties, regular staff meeting and motivation of teachers.

Introduction

Education is the process by which students acquire the relevant knowledge, skills, and values to ensure proper intellectual and character development of individuals for self reliance and responsible citizenship. Consequently, the issue of students' academic performance in external examination such as the in West African School Certificate Examinations has become a matter of concern for the government, Parents and other stake holders in education (Ayeni & Akinfolarin, 2014).

The quest for improved academic performance of students necessitated the ability of principals to demonstrate or use certain administrative strategies to ensure a complete well-round education and production of quality students from the secondary school system. The government, parents, and other stake holders in education expect principals to work effectively for the enhancement of students' academic performance. Principals, as schools' chief executives, are charged with the daunting task of managing the school for effectiveness. Towards this end, Lydiah and Nasongo (2009), were of the view that students' academic performance depends on effective leadership.

Educators, government and the general public, overtime, have expressed concern over the causes of poor performance of students in West African School Certificate Examinations (Ayeni, 2010). In order to improve the academic performance, the government in recent times has renovated schools in almost the South Western States. Some states procured computer sets for students to improve their electronic learning techniques, yet the academic performance seems not to have improved as expected. The question bothering the heart of people as to the poor academic performance still lingers on.

There are lots of strategies that could be employed by principals in order to have a grip of the whole school and consequently move the school forward academically. These range from the monitoring of teachers' activities, use of committee system in schools, performance appraisal, participatory decision making, delegation of duties and regular staff meeting.

There appears to be poor monitoring of teachers' activities, with poor performance appraisal of teachers, which often result in poor instructional delivery in schools. For instance, Ayeni & Akinfolarin (2014) noted that to improve students' academic performance,

principals are required to improve the administrative strategies in schools. This can be done by setting a clear vision for the school, adequate job analysis and work plan, regular staff meeting, delegation of duties, effective monitoring of teachers, involvement of teachers in decision making and committee system.

Although principals have been providing leadership in the school system to some extent, but some administrative strategies that could lead to the achievement of school objectives perhaps have not been provided by many school principals.

The use of a set of administrative strategies by principals is informed by the fact that principals are to bring all round development into the school, in order to improve students' academic performance. They must be able to adopt some administrative strategies and also evaluate their teachers in order to ascertain the strengths and weakness of the instructional delivery system for better academic performance. However, gaps in the principals' Administrative strategies will no doubt cause set-back in teaching-learning process.

There is a growing concern of the society about the realization of secondary education objectives perhaps due to the observation that some principals could not

have been using some administrative strategies that could facilitate better performance of students in public examinations. Findings from literature (Ayeni 2010; Baldoni, 2003; Sushila 2004; Ayeni 2012; Lydiah and Nasongo 2009; Ayeni & Akinfolarin 2014) revealed that students' academic performance is being affected by many problems.

By implication, there is a greater challenge ahead of principals partly because of existing gaps and inadequacies in their leadership and supervisory duties . From the researchers point of view, principals should demonstrate certain strategies to move the school forward because of the numerous problems the schools are now facing which are too complex and too big for a principal to cope with. Baldoni, (2003) noted that we live in a rapidly changing world in which the pace of change is likely to increase. What we teach, what we learn and how we deliver and manage the process cannot be immuned from change. The percentage of students who obtained credit level passes in five subjects and above including English and Mathematics was about 25% in Nigeria (Quality Education Assurance Agency 2010). In 2011 May/June Senior School Certificate Examination conducted by West African Examination Council, only 30.99% of the 1,540,250 candidates

obtained Credit level passes and above in five subjects including English and Mathematics (Owadie, 2011). Again in 2012, May/June west African Senior School Certificate Examination 649,156 (38.81%) of the 1,672,224 candidates that sat for the examination obtained 5 credit level passes and above in subjects including English Language and Mathematics in the 36 states of the federation and Federal capital territory (Owadie, 2012). The poor performance of students in examination could be largely attributed to poor administrative strategies by principals. Thus the purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between principals' administrative strategies and students academic performance. The study found out the extent by which the principals have been using committee system, motivation, participatory decision making, regular staff meeting, delegation of duties, monitoring of teachers' activities and performance appraisal as administrative strategies in south-western state of Nigeria.

This research question was raised to guide the study.

- To what extent have the principals been using the identified administrative strategies?

This research hypothesis was formulated in the study.

- There is no significant relationship between principals' administrative strategies and students' academic performance in secondary schools in south western states of Nigeria.

Methodology

The study adopted the descriptive research design of the survey and ex-post facto types. The target population comprised of all the principals and teachers in public secondary schools in south western states of Nigeria. The respondents consisted of 225 principals and 1,800 teachers from 225 secondary schools. Multi stage and simple random sampling techniques were used to select the states, education zones, schools and teachers. Two research instruments were used for data collection. They are principals' Administrative Strategies Questionnaire (PASQ), and on Students' Academic Performance Titled Secondary School Students Academic performance Inventory (SSSAPI). The experts determined the appropriateness of the instruments in measuring what it was supposed to measure and ensured that the instrument contained the appropriate items that could elicit the intended responses on the principals' administrative strategies. Test-retest method of reliability was adopted in the study. PASQ yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.74. SSSAPI is

an inventory which was used to collect WAEC (SSCE) results from the sampled schools.

Results

In order to answer the research question, to what extent have the principal been using the identified administrative strategies. Frequency counts and percentage responses on the components

of principals’ administrative strategies were computed. The extent of principals’ adoption of each of the administrative strategies was determined by using percentage of responses. Decision on usage was based on the percentages as presented in table 1.

Table 1: The extent of utilization of principals’ administrative strategies

S/N	Administrative Strategies	Regularly	Rarely	Never	Decision
1	Monitoring of Teachers	1645 (91.4%)	94 (5.2%)	61 (3.4%)	Effectively Used
2	Motivation of Teachers	1421 (78.9%)	241 (13.4%)	138 (7.7%)	Effectively Used
3	Performance appraisal	1425 (79.1%)	232 (12.9%)	144 (8.0%)	Effectively Used
4	Committee system	1582 (87.8)	132 (7.3%)	86 (4.9%)	Effectively Used
5	Participatory Decision Making	1544 (85.8%)	151 (8.4%)	105 (5.8%)	Effectively Used
6	Delegation of duties	1605 (89.1%)	109 (6.1%)	86 (4.8%)	Effectively Used
7	Regular staff meeting	1623 (90.2%)	108 (6.0%)	69 (3.9%)	Effectively Used

Table 1 shows that most of the respondents (over 79%) adjudged that the school principals regularly use the identified administrative strategies.

In order to test the hypotheses, there is no significance relationship between principals’ administrative strategies and students’ academic performance in secondary schools in Southwestern states of Nigeria. Scores on

principals’ administrative strategies and weighted average scores on students’ academic performance for 225 sampled schools were computed and subjected to statistical analysis involving Pearson product moment correlation statistics at 0.05 level of significance. The result is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Principal’s administrative strategies and students’ academic performance

Variable	N	X	SD	r-cal	r-tab
Principals’ Administrative Strategies	225	152.28	18.25		
Students’ Academic Performance	225	1.98	0.87	0.536 *	0.195

*P<0.05 (significant result)

Table 2 shows that r-cal (0.536) is greater than r-tab (0.195) at 0.05 level of significant positive relationship between principals’ administrative strategies and students’ academic performance.

Discussion of the Findings

The study revealed that principals regularly use the identified administrative strategies. The significant relationship found in this study between principals’ administrative strategies and students’ academic performance is an indication that the type of skills, techniques demonstrated by a principal in a school plays an important role in the academic performance of students in such schools. This is in consonance with the findings of earlier researchers such as Ayeni, 2010; Baldoni, 2003; Lydiah and Nasongo, 2009; Ayeni & Akinfolarin (2014).

Conclusion and Recommendation

significance. Thus the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that there is

The study concluded that the principals required effective networking and collaboration to enhance the quality of instructional process for better academic performance of students in public secondary schools.

In view of the implication of the findings from this study, it was recommended that the principals should be committed to changing organizational culture from the traditional patterns of hierarchical structure to participatory management to improve the effectiveness of participatory decision in the school system. This can only be achieved by adopting the skill of participatory decision making as a key administrative strategy in achieving the objectives of the school system.

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