

Principals' Instructional Supervision and the Academic Performance of Secondary School Students in Oshimili North Local Government Area of Delta State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study looked at principal instructional supervision and its impact on the academic performance of public secondary school students. The study adopted the descriptive research design. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. A sample size of 400 teachers (150 males and 250 females) were obtained from a population of about 30 public secondary schools in Oshimili North LGA of Delta State with the use of structural random sampling technique. The instrument used for the study was a self-structure 10-item questionnaire. The instrument was validated by experts. The reliability of the instrument was determined by using test-retest method. The reliability co-efficient of 0.87 was obtained indicating that the instrument was very reliable. The mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions and the criterion level was 2.50 while the Z-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed among others, that principals' classroom visitation and curriculum implementation strategies have impact on public secondary school students academic performance in Oshimili North LGA of Delta State. Also, it was recommended among others that there should be regular training of principals on classroom visitation, curriculum implementations and other instructional supervision techniques.

Keywords: Instructional Supervision, Classroom Visitation, Curriculum Implementation, Secondary School.

Introduction

Education is aimed at imparting knowledge and skills and inculcating human values which help in personal and professional growth. Education constitutes the essential pre-requisite for achieving national goals of inclusive development and equitable justice to the society at large. It is in the light of the foregoing that the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) asserted that education in Nigeria is an instrument "Per Excellence" for effective national development. Accordingly, education shall continue to be highly rated in the national development plans- because education is the most important instrument of change; any fundamental change in the intellectual and social outlook of any society has to be preceded by an education revolution. In effect, to realize the goals and objectives of Nigerian education, effective monitoring, supervision and quality control must be brought to force. The purview of education includes knowledge, skill and understanding which an individual acquires from attending the school. Hence, the need for supervision of instruction and learning experiences would be imperative.

In the school system, instructional supervision by principals is one of the greatest tools that provide teachers with the enabling ability to perform their tasks successfully. The principal is the chief executive of the school, who provides instructional leadership by coordinating curricular, co-curricular programmes and also responsible for the general administration of schools. As instructional leaders, principals are responsible for the supervision, monitoring, assessment, evaluation and dissemination of current information on management and academic techniques leading to effective teaching and learning process. Supervision of instruction is the ability of principals and private evaluators to adequately monitor the activities of the teachers and students through checking the teacher's actual teachings, classroom management and the use of instructional material (Nkwoh, 2013). Ayeni (2012) succinctly puts in that most principals accorded desired attention to monitoring the teachers' attendance, preparation of lesson notes and adequacy of school diaries, which improve their teaching performance in schools. School principals are in a better position to provide constant and adequate feedback to the teachers to ensure periodic review and improvement of teaching and learning process.

Instructional supervision occupies an important place in the entire education system and it becomes absolutely expedient to give it prominent attention. In Nigeria, instructional supervision is regarded as the process of enhancing the professional growth of the teachers, the curriculum and improving the techniques of teaching in the classroom through democratic interactions between the teacher and the supervisor (Okendu, 2012). It helps in the identification of strength and weaknesses of teachers, follow-up activities that should be directed at the improvement of identified area of teacher's weaknesses and give recognition to the teachers and create a cordial working atmosphere based in good human relations. Bush and Oduro (2006), asserted that ineffective instructional supervision leads to poor performance among learners. They therefore, recommend regular classroom visitations to enhance higher students' achievement level.

According to Gachoya (2008), classroom visitation is an important visit to the classroom by a principal when teaching/learning process is going on in the presence or absence of a teacher. It is intended at ensuring that teaching/learning process goes on well at all times, and supervisions can have an insight into quality benchmarks and performance. Teachers prepare and structure their lessons better when instruction in the school is regularly supervised and this have a direct positive bearing on the students' academic performance (Chapman, 2011). Another way of instructional supervision is through supervision of curriculum implementation. This process requires the supervisor to take note of the teacher's knowledge of the subject being taught, evidence of adequate planning and preparation for the lesson, lesson presentation, teacher's personality and the extent students participation or interaction with the teachers. These form the bases for providing instructional advice on how to improve the quality of classroom instruction.

Secondary school principals seem to spend more of their official hours on the administrative functions to the detriments of effective supervision of programmes of the school (Mana 2012). Irregular supervision of teachers could adversely affect their job performance and

thus the academic performance of students. Effective instruction supervision helps a lot in improving academic performance of students. This is because supervision of instruction centres on enhancing teaching and learning through proper guidance and planning and devising ways of improving teachers professionally and thereby assisting them to release their creative abilities so that through them the instructional process is improved and well articulated (Okendu, 2012). Therefore, this study centres on principal instructional supervision for improving the academic performance of secondary students in Oshimili North LGA of Delta State, Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopted the psychological theory of supervision which was explored in education by Sule (2013). According to this theory, organization stands as body where it has other parts of the body that work together and it has a head that delegate duties to other parts of the organization. The head serves as an overseer who supervises the function of each part of the organization. This theory is in line with this study in which the principal stands as the instructional supervisor who delegates and supervises the performance of teachers in the school system.

According to this psychological theory, the growth and management of an organization is carried out by the use of the three advocated philosophers namely, essentialism, experimentalism and existentialism. The supervisor will determine and direct the parts of the organization according to these three philosophers. A school exists in the form of an organization because it is composed of many other groups like the tutorial staff, administrators and non-tutorial staff who work together as different systems in the school for achieving the goal of the school. The principal coordinates the activities as he performs his instructional supervision tasks. Therefore, this theory is related to this study as it supports the coordination of system in the school through instructional supervision for achieving the stated objectives.

Review of Related Literature

According to Marecho (2012), supervision is a coinage that was derived from two Latin words: 'super' and 'video', super means 'over' or 'above' while 'video' means 'to see'. Therefore, taken together, super-video simply means to see from above or to oversee. According to Saurock, (2016) education supervision (principal) carries the same general concept and is applied to both academic and administrative tasks. Administrative functions of supervision include providing physical facilities to the teachers, checking the safety and security of the school plant, maintaining proper service conditions and redressing governance of teachers in time, checking the accounts and records of the school and maintaining proper distribution of work load. The academic tasks, include monitoring of instruction, providing guidance to teachers for improving teaching evaluation and assessment of pupils' achievement. The purpose of this supervision is to see that teachers maintain and improve their classroom instruction; the principal play the overseeing

function by offering advisory and consultancy services in the areas of subject specialization and giving policy direction and guidance which also helps to improve teachers' performance. The principal who is the head of the school ensures that classes are held, students work are marked, teachers prepare their diaries and lesson plan, punctuality of teachers and students, monitoring and fair appraisal of all teachers performance.

The principal of today is not only a disciplinarian and record keeper but also an instructional supervisor. It is only the principal who has the authority to make administrative change necessary to improve teaching and learning situations (Nyamwamu, 2010). In recognition of this, Sushila (2004) asserted that the principal's role in a school is critical in determining academic performance. The principal who is an instructional supervisor must have knowledge of the processes so that he/she can be of help to the teachers. This is echoed by Millens and Hertinger (2012) who posited that the practical and theoretical knowledge coupled with the varied experience enable the principal command respect and help the school organization to improve. This implies that the process of instructional supervision is paramount in the school context for it helps in maintaining quality.

Supervisor's presence in the work place is important to ensure that workers are kept on their toes (Mullins 2010). This assertion is in line with Obanya (2005) who posited that in West Africa schools performance will improve if the principal got in touch with what goes on in the classroom. In order to understand the concept of classroom visitation, Gachoya (2008) adduced that a classroom visitation is an impromptu visit to the classroom by a principal when teaching /learning is going on. It is targeted at ensuring that teaching/learning process is going on as planned. Fischer (2011) stated that through regular classroom visits, the supervisor can have an insight into quality benchmarks and performance.

Again, curriculum is a school's plan for all the learning experiences the learner is expected to engage in under the guidance of the school. Curriculum can be defined as the set-out knowledge, skills and attitude which the learner is expected to be exposed in the schools. The classroom teachers are the key actors in curriculum delivery because they select and set up the learning opportunities which are meant to enable the learners acquire desired knowledge, skills and values articulated in the curriculum. However, the fact remains that a well designed curriculum to feature appropriate experience is not a guarantee that corresponding appropriate experiences will result. This is when the principal comes in to supervise and assist the teachers in the curriculum delivery to avoid deviations and errors. Principals assign teachers and charge them with teaching students in the assigned classroom of various classes. They help the teachers to state and define lesson objectives, specify instructional alternatives, and select among alternatives, to enhance instructional effectiveness. In doing this, the teacher is provided with a variety of resources to enhance students learning.

Statement of the Problem

The basic goal of secondary education in Nigeria is to develop the individual's mental capacity and character for higher education and useful living within the society (FRN, 2013). In spite of the societal demand for teacher performance in education and the need for thorough supervision in schools, there is a growing concern about the realization of secondary education objectives due to doubts that many principles give little or no attention to supervision of instructional activities in the secondary school. Teachers are left to do whatever they like. Some of the teachers in public secondary schools even engage in full time university programme to acquire higher degree on the expense of their jobs. Some even connive with their principals and subject heads to abandon the classroom lessons while they do their private businesses. All these culminated in poor academic performance on the part of the students. Consequently, there has been a steady decline in teachers instructional task performance and students' academic performance in Oshimili North LGA of Delta State.

This development motivated the researcher(s) to carry out a study to investigate the relationship between principals' instructional supervision and the academic performance of public secondary school students in Oshimili North LGA of Delta State, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The general aim of this study was to investigate the extent to which supervision of instruction influence the academic performance of public secondary school students in Oshimili North LGA of Delta State.

Specification, the purposes of the study were to;

1. Examine principals' classroom visitation for improving academic performance of public secondary school students in Oshimili North LGA.
2. Ascertain principals' curriculum implementation for improving academic performance of public secondary school students in Oshimili North LGA.

Research Question

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the ways principals carry out classroom visitation to improve the academic performance of public secondary school students in Oshimili North LGA of Delta State?
2. How does principals carry-out curriculum implementation exercise to improve academic performance of public secondary school students in Oshimili North LGA of Delta State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses guided the study;

1. There is no significant difference between male and female teachers on the ways principals carry-out classroom visitation to improve the academic performance of public secondary school students in Oshimili North LGA of Delta State.
2. There is no significant difference between male and female teachers on the ways principals carry-out curriculum implementation exercise to improve academic performance of public secondary school students in Oshimili North LGA of Delta State.

Significance of the Study

The research work will be very significant to the teachers, because it will help in building their human capacity in instructional delivery. The school principals will benefit immensely from this research because it will help them to know what they are expected to do during supervision of the school, how to do it and what they needed to put in place for effective instructional supervision in their school, equally the students will benefit from the work because since they are recipients of the services of the tutorial staff of their various schools, their services will now be of the highest quality and will help to improve their performances. It will also assist policy makers and government agencies particularly towards evolving policies and legislations that could improve teacher's performances. Researchers willing to carry-out similar studies in this area will find this research study worthwhile.

Methodology

The research design for this study is a descriptive survey in which questionnaire were distributed to respondents to obtain information on their opinions towards school supervision and academic performance of students. The population of the study included all the 30 public secondary schools in the area of study with about 1000 teachers. The sample of the study consisted of 400 teachers (250 females and 150 males).

The instrument used for data collection was a self designed questionnaire titled 'Analysis of Principals Instructional Supervision Practices for Improved Academic Performance Questionnaire (APISPIAPO). The questionnaire was divided into two parts- A & B. part 'A' sought information on the respondents while part 'B' contains 10 items separated into two (2) research questions. The modified Likert point scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagreed (SD) with scaling values of 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively were used for the study.

The instrument was validated by experts in the field of Educational Management and Measurement and Evaluation. The reliability of the instrument was obtained by analyzing the data collected through test-re-test of about 50 teachers outside the original sample of the study. The Cronbach Alpha formula was used for the analysis and a reliability coefficient of 0.87 was obtained. This indicated high internal consistency of the instrument.

The researcher(s) administered the questionnaire with the help of two research assistants. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions with the criterion

mean of 2.50 for decision making while the Z-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results and Discussions

Research question 1: what are the ways principals carry-out classroom visitation to improve the academic performance of public secondary school students in Oshimili North LGA of Delta State?

Table 1: Mean rating of ways principal's visitation is carried out to improve academic performance of public secondary school students.

S/N	Items	Male teachers: No: 150			Female teachers: No. 250		
		X	SD	Rmk	X	SD	Rmk
1.	Checking students notebook during class activities	3.06	0.25	Agree	3.32	0.21	Agree
2.	Visiting teachers in classroom during teaching	3.14	0.26	Agree	3.16	0.20	Agree
3.	Ensuring that teachers carry all students in the class along	3.14	0.26	Agree	3.32	0.21	Agree
4.	Observing teaching and learning activities regularly	3.32	0.27	Agree	3.34	0.21	Agree
5.	Having post classroom visitation discussion with teacher	3.13	0.26	Agree	3.44	0.21	Agree
	Grand mean and STD	3.16	0.26		3.32	0.21	

Table 1 reveals the mean rating and standard deviation of male and female teachers on the ways principals visitation is being carried out to improve academic performance of public secondary school students. Both the male and female teachers agreed on all the items with mean scores greater than the criterion mean of 2.50. Therefore, the grand mean of 3.16 and 3.32 for male and female teachers respectively show that the respondents accepted that these items constitute the ways principals practice classroom visitation to improve the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Oshimili North LGA of Delta state.

Research question 2: How does principals carry out curriculum implementation exercise to improve academic performance of secondary school students in Oshimili North LGA of Delta State?

Table 2: Mean ratings and standard deviation of male and female teachers on ways principals curriculum implementation is carried out to improve academic performance of students.

S/N	Items	Male teachers: No: 150			Female teachers: No. 250		
		X	SD	Rmk	X	SD	Rmk
6.	Ensuring that teachers attend class regularly and teach their lessons.	3.31	0.21	Agree	3.17	0.26	Agree
7.	Ensuring that teachers give assignment to students, mark and return books to them.	3.12	0.20	Agree	3.53	0.29	Agree
8.	Ensuring that teachers organize extra lessons to cover the syllabus	2.58	0.16	Agree	3.38	0.27	Agree
9.	Ensure that teachers write and follow their lesson notes when teaching	3.40	0.22	Agree	3.11	0.25	Agree
10.	Ensure that teachers improvise teaching and learning materials for effective curriculum delivery.	3.42	0.22	Agree	3.07	0.25	Agree
	Grand mean & STD	3.17	0.20		3.23	0.26	

Table 2 shows the mean ratings and standard deviation of male and female teachers on ways principals curriculum implementation is being carried-out to improve the academic performance of students in public secondary school. Both the male and female teachers agreed on all the items with mean scores greater than the benchmark of 2.50. The grand mean of 3.17 and 3.23 for male and female teachers respectively imply that the respondents agreed that these items constitute ways principals carryout curriculum implementation to improve the academic performance of public secondary school students in Oshimili North LGA of Delta State.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between male and female teachers on the ways principals carry-out classroom visitation to improve the academic performance of public secondary school students in Oshimili North LGA of Delta State.

Table 3: Z-test of difference between male and female teachers on the ways Principals carry-out classroom visitation to improve academic performance of students.

Group	No	X	SD	Zcal	Z-Critical	Decision
Male teachers	150	3.16	0.26	0.13	1.96	accepted
Female teachers	250	3.32	0.21			

Significant at 0.05

Table 3 revealed the mean ratings and standard deviation of male and female teachers on the ways principals carryout classroom visitation to ensure the improvement of academic performance of public secondary school students in Oshimili North LGA of Delta State. The result denotes that the Z-calculated value of 0.13 is lower than the table value of 1.96. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between male and female teachers on the ways principals carry out classroom visitation to improve academic performance of public secondary school students in Oshimili North LGA of Delta state, is hereby accepted.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference between male and female on the ways principals carry out curriculum implementation exercise to improve the academic performance of public secondary school students in Oshimili North LGA of Delta State.

Table 4: Z-test of difference between male and female teachers on ways principals carry out curriculum implementation exercise to improve the academic performance of students.

Group	No	X	SD	Zcal	Z-Critical	Decision
Male teachers	150	3.17	0.20	0.40	1.96	accepted
Female teachers	250	3.23	0.26			

Significant at 0.05

Table 4 shows the Z-test analysis of the significant difference between male and female teachers on ways principals carry out curriculum implementation exercise to ensure the improvement of the academic performance of public secondary school students in Oshimili North LGA of Delta State. The result reveals that the Z-calculated value of 0.40 is lower than the critical value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance. Thus, we accept the null hypothesis that stated that there is no significant difference between male and female teachers on ways principals carry out curriculum implementation exercise to improve the academic performance of public secondary school students in Oshimili North LGA of Delta State.

Discussion of Findings

This study indicated that male and female teachers do not differ on the ways principals carry out instructional supervision in the area of classroom visitation. The respondents accepted that visiting teachers in the classroom, checking students' notebooks during classroom activities ensuring that teachers carry students along in the classroom, observing teaching and learning activities regularly, and having post classroom visitation discussion with teachers are ways principals use classroom visitation to supervise instructional activities of teachers. These activities would improve the academic performance of students. This is in line with Obanya (2015) who posited that in West African schools, performance would improve if the principals get in touch with what goes on in the classroom. Also, Fischer (2011) stated that through regular classroom visits, the supervisor can have an insight into

quality benchmarks and performance. In fact, regular classroom visitation is targeted at ensuring that teaching/learning process is going on as planned.

Again, the study revealed that male and female teachers do not differ on the way principals carryout instructional supervision in the area of curriculum implementation. The respondents accepted that principals in implementing curriculum in the school system, ensure that teachers attend classes regularly and teach their lessons, give assignment to students, mark and return them to the students, organize extra lessons to cover the syllables, teachers write and teach with their lesson notes and improvise teaching and learning materials for effective curriculum delivery. These activities would improve the academic performance of students. This in agreement with Chapman (2011) who posited that teachers prepare and structure their lessons better when instruction in the school is regularly supervised and this have a direct bearing on the students' academic performances. In short, curriculum implementation involves day to day activities which school management and classroom teachers must undertake in the pursuit of the objective of any given curriculum (Obanya, 2008). Only effective curriculum implementation ensures the realization of the objectives for which the curriculum was designed to achieve. The challenges that principals face in the task of institution's governance, resources inputs, curriculum delivery and student learning require effective collaboration and good oriented synergy between the school and the regular stakeholders in the environment (Ayeni 2012).

Conclusion

The study focused on principals' instructional supervision and the academic performance of students. It found out that the supervisory techniques adopted by the principals (classroom visitation and curriculum implementation) are significantly related to the academic performance of public secondary school students. As such principals who neglect their supervisory roles would hardly achieve maximum goals of education. It was equally discovered that apart from instructional activities, every other aspect of the school activity should regularly be supervised to avoid mismanagement of school facilities. This implies that the school principal as the internal supervisor must be very active to his responsibility of school supervision.

Recommendations

In line with the findings of this study, the following recommendations are hereby made:

1. Principals should be given better training on the best ways to carryout classroom visitation in their various schools.
2. Effort should be intensified by both the government and school administrators to improve curriculum implementation through careful supervision of the exercise.
3. Provision of adequate funds and facilities to ensure timely and effective supervision of instruction.

4. Creation of avenue that will allow for the training and re-training of teachers on effective supervision techniques to ensure improved performance of instructional delivery by teachers in secondary.

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