Full Length Research Paper

Impact of selected modes of instructional supervision activities on students’ academic performance in senior secondary schools in Ondo state, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examined the impact of instructional supervision on secondary school students’ academic performance in English Language. Descriptive method was adopted in which a questionnaire titled Instructional Supervision and Students’ Academic Performance Questionnaire (ISSAPQ) was administered to obtain data from sixty teachers from the three senatorial districts in the state, while the performance of the students in English Language was obtained from the 2008 Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination(SSCE) result of the sixty randomly sampled schools. Simple random techniques were used accordingly to select the sampled teachers. Pearson product moment correlation was used to answer the question. The null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 significant level. The study showed that there were significant impacts of checking of students’ notes, class visitations, checking of teachers’ punctuality and attendance and moderation of examination questions and marking scheme on students’ academic performance in English Language in Senior Secondary Schools in Ondo State. Recommendations for checking of students notes by school principals were made.

Keywords Words: supervision; descriptive study; class visitation; teachers’ punctuality; Nigeria; students’ performance.

INTRODUCTION

The importance of education as a veritable tool for the socio-economic and political development of a nation is re-iterated in the National Policy on Education (1981) in which the federal government of Nigeria referred to education as an instrument par excellence for effecting national development. Of all the major tasks of a school administrator, none is as sensitive and challenging as the one relating to the supervision of students, school personnel, instructional programmes, school plants and statutory records. Instructional supervision occupies a unique place in the entire education system and it becomes absolutely expedient to give it prominent attention. Nowadays, the parents and guardians are becoming more curious about the kind of education given to their children and wards. Quite often, they show their concern by demanding that the school should teach better than in the past. If quality education is to be given in schools and to improve the standard of education generally, then instructional supervision must be accorded high priority.

In the school system, it is the responsibility of the school administrator to develop and maintain staff competence. In the school setting the instructional supervision activities by the head of the department (HOD) include the following: checking of lesson notes, checking of scheme of work, checking of teachers’ punctuality, checking of teachers regularity in class, checking of students’ notes, moderation of examination question papers and moderation of making schemes. To carry out these tasks, the HOD must design supervising techniques and also encourage the staff to exercise their talents when necessary so that in the end, instruction and
instructional procedures can be improved. According to Fisher (2011), supervision includes all efforts of school officials directed to provide leadership to the teachers and other educational workers in the improvement of instruction. Supervision involves the stimulation of professional growth and development of teachers, selection and revision of educational objectives, materials of instruction, methods of teaching and evaluation of instruction. In any organization, careful planning and effective supervision cannot be over estimated. The poor rate at which senior secondary students are performing in the final Senior Secondary School Certificate Examinations needs urgent attention. The percentage of failure in this examination appears to be on the increase and if nothing is done, this percentage increase may be the trend for some time to come. In Nigeria, all secondary schools, irrespective of their location and ownership, are expected to function in compliance with the achievement of the national education objectives, and consequently aspire to brilliant performance in the final examination. This determines the quality of secondary schools output. But what is being experienced today leaves much to be desired. Because of the enormity of this problem in Ondo State, the stakeholders in education are curious to know more about the cause or associated factors for this problem.

One of the major causes of the poor academic performance can be ineffective instructional supervision. For effectiveness, instructional supervision is necessary at all levels of education, but most needed at the secondary level. This is because many career divisions are taken at this level of education. Akinola (2010) observed that secondary schools students' academic performance in external examinations conducted by the West Africa Examination Council (WAEC) and National Examination Council (NECO), have been low, and this is to the dissatisfaction of the general public. It was appalling that out of 1351557 candidates who sat for May/June 2010 West African Senior School Certificate Examination,(WAEC), only 337071 candidates representing 24.94 percent obtained credits in English Language, Mathematics and three other subjects (Nigerian Compass Tuesday 7th September, 2010). In the last twenty years, much attention has been paid to educational leadership and its impact upon students' performance. However, research findings show that the effects are indirect, and often difficult to measure precisely (Hallinger and Heck 1998, Leithwood and Jantzi 2000). One can find literature defending the position that school principals matter. Research into school effectiveness, indicate that the effective principal comes to the fore as an instructional leader who affects school climate and students’ performance (Levine and Lezotte 1990, Sammons, Hillman and Mortimore 1995). A subsequent meta study by Marzano, Waters and McNulty (2005) also summarized rigorous research on the influence of school leader on student performance.

The study led the authors to conclude that a highly effective school leader can have a dramatic influence on the overall academic performance of students. Their report cites several leadership responsibilities that are accompanied by associated practices that describe exactly what a principal must do to promote students' performance. These studies, as well as many others, provide clear evidence regarding the importance of specific skills, abilities and behaviours that leaders must exhibit in order to be effective.

Fullan (2007) in a comprehensive report on how school principals acquire and deploy their fiscal and human resources wrote that principals report spending a great deal of time managing facilities, supervising staff, dealing with discipline and security, and student learning. They devote less time to professional development and curriculum supervision. Bloom et al (2003) demonstrated that principals who receive coaching not only are more engaged in instructional leadership, they actually are spending more time on instructional issues and are addressing those issues more than principals who did not receive any coaching.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between instructional supervision and students’ academic performance in senior secondary schools in Ondo State of Nigeria. Specifically the study aimed at establishing the relationship between checking of students notes, class visitations by principals, checking of teachers’ punctuality and attendances and moderation of examination questions and marking scheme on students academic performance in English Language.

Research Question

Is there any relationship between instructional supervision and students’ academic performance in English Language in the senior secondary school certificate examination?

Hypotheses

Based on the above research question the following hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 significant level.

1. There is no significant relationship between checking of students’ notes and students’ academic performance in English Language in the senior secondary school certificate examination.

2. There is no significant relationship between class visitations by principals and students academic performance in English Language in the secondary...
school certificate examination.
3. There is no significant relationship between checking of teachers' punctuality and attendance and students' academic performance in English Language in the senior secondary school certificate examination.
4. There is no significant relationship between moderation of examination questions and marking scheme and students' academic performance in English Language in the senior secondary school certificate examination.

**METHODOLOGY**

The study adopted a descriptive survey method. This design was considered suitable for the study because it gives the researcher the opportunity of obtaining the opinion of the sampled population to infer the opinion of the entire population.

The population for this study consisted of all the English Language teachers in the public senior secondary schools and their students in Ondo State, Nigeria as at 2007/2008 academic session. At the time of this study, Ondo State had eighteen (18) Local Government Areas with 300 public senior secondary schools, which spread across the senatorial districts of the state. The sample for the study was 60 secondary schools and 60 teachers. Simple random sampling technique was used to select four Local Governments from each of the three senatorial districts. Then, simple random sampling technique was also made to select five schools from each of the twelve local government areas. Purposive sampling technique was used to select one English Language teacher from each of the sixty schools.

The data for this study was collected through primary sources. A questionnaire titled Institutional Supervision and Students' Academic Performance Questionnaire (ISSAPQ) was used for the study. The questionnaire was developed by the researcher. The questionnaire was in two sections. Section A was on the general information from the Head of Department of senior secondary schools. Section B of the questionnaire was designed for teachers who taught the subject (English Language) during the 2007/2008 academic sessions. They were asked to rate the various supervision activities in their schools using a five point Likert-type scale. The instructional supervision items include: principal's supervision in class, checking of lesson notes, checking of diaries, checking of scheme of work, checking of teachers' punctuality, checking of teachers' regularity, checking of students' notes, moderation of examination question papers and moderation of marking scheme. The instrument was validated by two experts in test and measurement to ascertain its face and content validity for use in data collection. The reliability coefficient was established by comparing the response of the pilot sample (five respondents) in two administrations of the instrument, within two (2) weeks. A correlation coefficient (r) of 0.83 was obtained. The instrument was judged reliable enough to be used in the study.

**Data Collection**

The questionnaire for this study was administered personally to the teachers of the sampled senior secondary schools. The completed questionnaires that were ready were collected on the spot, while others were collected a few days later. Sixty respondents completed the questionnaire properly. This amounted to hundred percent (100%) return rate. The scores of students in English Language was obtained from each school.

**Data Analysis and Results**

Data analysis for this study was done with reference to the research question and hypotheses already formulated. Pearson Product Moment correlation was used to answer the question and test the hypotheses:

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant relationship between checking of students' notes and students' academic performance in English Language in Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination.

From Table 1, r-calculated value of 0.601 is greater than the r-table value of 0.323; the null hypothesis is therefore rejected. Hence, there is a significant relationship between checking of student notes and students' academic performance in senior secondary schools certificate examination.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant relationship between class visitations by principals and students' academic performance in English Language in Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination.

Since the r-calculated value of 0.512 is greater than r-table value of 0.323, the null hypothesis was rejected. Hence, there was a significant relationship between class visitations by principal and students' academic performance in English language in the senior secondary schools certificate examination.

**Hypothesis 3:** There is no significant relationship between checking of students' punctuality and attendance by principal and students' academic performance in English Language in Senior Secondary School in Ondo State.

From Table 4, r-calculated value 0.542 is greater than r-table value of 0.323. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence, there is a significant relationship
Table 1. Checking of students notes and students’ academic performance in Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (SSCE) English Language

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Variables</th>
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<td>0.601</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students’ Academic Performance</td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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Critical Value at 0.05 significant level.

Table 2. Class visitations principals and students’ academic performance in English language

<table>
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<td>Students’ Academic Performance in English Language</td>
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Critical Value at 0.05 significant level.

Table 3. Checking of teachers punctuality and attendance and students’ academic performance in English language

<table>
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<tr>
<td>Students’ Academic Performance in English Language</td>
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</table>

Critical Value at 0.05 significant level.

Table 4. Moderation of examination questions and marking scheme and students’ academic performance in English language.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Variables</th>
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<td>Students’ Academic Performance in English Language</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Critical Value at 0.05 significant level.

between checking of teachers’ punctuality and attendance by principal and students’ academic performance in senior secondary schools certificate examination.

There is no significant relationship between moderation of examination questions and marking scheme and students’ academic performance in English language in Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination.

Since the r-calculated value of 0.408 is greater than the r-table value of 0.323 as shown in Table 4, the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence, there is a significant relationship between moderation of examination questions and marking scheme and students’ academic performance in senior secondary schools certificate examination.

Discussion of Findings

The study investigated the impact of instructional supervision on the students’ academic performance in Senior Secondary Schools in Ondo State, Nigeria. Four
hypotheses were tested. The results showed that there were significant impacts of checking of students note on students’ academic performance in English Language in Senior Secondary Schools Certificate Examination. This agreed with the findings of Hallinger and Heck (1998) that there was a significant impact of checking of students notes on students’ academic performance in English Language in U.S. elementary schools. The study further agreed with the finding of Williams (2003) that there was significant impact of checking of students notes on students’ academic performance in English Language in Secondary Schools in New York City. The finding is contrary to Firestone and Riehl (2005) that checking of students’ notes does not produce a direct effect on students’ performance in English Language but is a mediating influence on teachers, curriculum, instruction, community, and school organisation.

The study also revealed that there was a significant impact of class visitations by principals on students’ academic performance in English Language in Senior Secondary Schools in Ondo State. This supports the finding of Harbison and Hanushek (1992), that there was a significant impact of class visitations by principals on students’ academic performance in English Language in Secondary Schools in America.

The study equally revealed that there was a significant impact of checking of teachers punctuality and attendances on students’ academic performance in English Language in senior secondary schools in Ondo State.

Furthermore, the findings revealed that there was a significant impact of moderation of examination questions and marking scheme on students’ academic performance in Biology in senior secondary schools in Ondo State. The findings of Weiss and Pasley (2006), Bruce and Beverly (2002), agreed with this study that there was a significant impact of moderation of examination questions and marking scheme on students’ academic performance in Biology in New York City secondary school.

Finally, the study revealed that there were significant impacts of checking of student notes, class visitations by principals, checking of teachers punctuality and attendances and moderation of examination questions and marking scheme on students’ academic performance in English Language in senior secondary school examination in Ondo State of Nigeria. This finding agreed with Gaziel (2007) that students performance in matriculation in Israel, depends on how school principals invest their energy in their instructional roles, maintain visibility, monitor students’ performance, and coordinate curriculum, promote academic teachers’ professional development.

Schools can strengthen the quality and impact of instructional supervision and excellence in teaching and high levels of students’ performance in Ondo State in particular and in Nigeria. as a whole by:

1. aligning policies, resources (time, fiscal and human), and other system wide support to ensure implementation of planned educational programs;
2. expanding their current professional development practices to include a wide range of collaborative, team-based, authentic learning processes that occur both within and outside the school day, which focus on content and instruction;
3. sustaining professional development over time to ensure acquisition, application, analysis and integration of research-based instructional practices; and
4. ensuring schools and ministry of education support for teacher learning within a culture of continuous improvement and shared responsibility for students’ performance.

References


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Weiss I, Pasley J (2006) Scaling up instructional improvement through teacher professional development insights from the local systemic change initiative (CPRE policy Brief RB-44) Philadelphia, PA: