

Principals' Qualifications and Students' Learning Outcomes in Senior Secondary Schools in Bauchi State

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Abstract

The study adopted the descriptive research design to investigate principals' qualification and students' learning outcomes in senior secondary schools in Bauchi State. Thirty (30) principals, twenty seven (27) vice principals (administration) and seventeen (17) vice principals (academic) as well as three hundred and fifty nine (359) teachers were chosen using stratified simple random sampling technique, that gives a total of 433 respondents as sample for this study. The instrument used in the study was self-designed questionnaire titled Principals' Qualifications and Students' Learning Outcomes Questionnaire (PQSLOQ). The instrument was validated by 2 experts in the Department of Educational Foundations, Educational Administration and Planning Unit, Federal University Kashere, Gombe state and a reliability coefficient of 0.83 was obtained by test-retest method. Two research questions and one hypothesis guided the study. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Analysis Procedure was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 significant level. The results showed that there was no significant relationship of principals' qualification and students' learning outcomes. Based on the findings, it was recommended that school principals' qualification should be considered when it comes to principals' appointments and promotion, to enhance effective leadership and promote students' learning outcomes.

Keywords: Principals, Qualifications, Students, Learning, Outcomes, Secondary, Schools

Introduction

Secondary education has two basic components: the junior component which is both pre-vocational and academic, and the senior school component which is more comprehensive with a core curriculum designed to broaden students' knowledge and outlook. The Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (SSCE) is prepared and administered by the West African Examination Council (WAEC), an organization that has operated secondary schools' examinations in some West African countries since 1954. In 1999, the Nigerian government established the National Examination Council (NECO) in addition to WAEC.

School principals are expected to manage the physical facilities as well as the human and financial resources of schools. It is their responsibility to effectively utilize these resources to achieve the desired aims and objectives of school. Aderonmu and Ehiamentor (1985) opined that principals are expected to effect necessary changes in school so as to make them more effective. School principals have been described as leaders, executive, heads, supervisors, managers, school climate developers, change facilitators, chief accounting officers and the like. Therefore, they need the required qualifications that will enable them deliver the goals and objectives of their schools.

Principal's qualification refers to the level of academic achievement of an individual beginning from the level of teacher training to the level of in-service training and higher level of degree or degrees. On the other hand, students' academic performance refers to the ability and capacity of the students to achieve an educational aim. School principal's qualification is seen as a very significant factor in the educational environment; principal's quality appears to play an important role in students' learning outcomes. Principals are in fact widely viewed as instructional leaders who are responsible for facilitating instruction and students' learning outcomes (Glickman, Gardon & Ross-Gordon, 2014). Grissom and Loeb (2011) buttress that principals' qualification affects the organizational management of school; the principal is responsible for tasks like managing day-to-day operations necessary to keep school running smoothly, and this indirectly affects students' learning outcomes

From time immemorial, the challenges facing public secondary schools in Nigeria generally have been those of poor infrastructure, inadequate staffing, inadequate funding, poor quality assurance, lack of facilities, equipment and essential reading materials, poor staff/students ratio and other organizational and management issues pertaining to school principals, manpower requirement and curriculum development. Ogunsaju (2004) states that students' academic performance in all Nigerian secondary schools have fallen considerably below societal expectations. Blumende (2001) reported that the decline in the quality of education cannot be ignored by anyone who is aware of its significant role as an instrument of societal transformation and development.

A study by Jonathan, Philip and Henry (2010) examined the influence of school principals' qualification on teaching and learning. Using teachers' survey and students' outcomes data from mid-sized urban south eastern school districts in the United States in 2006 – 2007, the study employed Multi-level, Structural Equation Modelling to examine the structural relationship between students' learning and principals' qualification and change in teachers' instructional practice. The findings confirmed previous empirical work and provided new contributions to research on the chain of hypothesized relationships between principals' qualification which was significantly associated with teachers' instructional practices and students' outcome. The result

indicated the importance of principals' qualification for students' learning because of their indirect influence on teachers' practices through the fostering of collaboration and communication around instruction.

Another study conducted by Douglas and Liza (2010) on the politics and practice of alternative principal certification examined the alternative routes to principal certification in California's intern program in the past decade. A significant and growing percentage of all new principals close to 30% in California entered principalship through alternative paths and are considered highly qualified under "No Child Left Behind" programme. The research examined programme design and market strategies resulting from subsidy provided to public and private intern programmes in California. This research was a conceptual analysis of qualitative data from two case studies. Findings indicated that priority went to principals who obtained credential training as they influenced students' learning outcomes than those built on traditional training and opportunities; it was recommended among others that, selection of principals should be based on training.

A study conducted by Nkobi (2010) was a descriptive one using questionnaire to assess the effectiveness of qualitative leadership displayed by secondary school management project in Botswana. Leadership qualification, leadership skills, coordination of instructional activities, management of curriculum and quality of learners were key variables that guided the study. Participants were 240 secondary school teachers including school heads and 575 learners, totalling 815. Data collected were analysed descriptively through the use of the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) programme, using frequencies and percentages. The results revealed that lack of leadership skills, lack of creativeness and innovativeness for management of curriculum change lead to inability and lack of freedom for self-expression and inadequate acquisition of the necessary skills at varying degrees between rural and urban schools, these lead to low students' outcome.

A study conducted by Branch (2009) uses data from Texas and consider both across and within school estimates of principals' qualification. The results indicated that, there was a substantial variation in principals' effectiveness with a standard deviation increase in principals' qualification. Another study conducted by Dhuey and Smith (2018) uses North Carolina data to estimate within school principals fixed effects. They find substantial variation in effectiveness and a large portion appears to be related to "match" effects that is principals perform better in some schools headed by principals with higher qualification than others.

Eberts and Stone (1988) conducted a study and used a national sample of elementary school pupils and find out that instructional leadership with high qualification are positively related to pupils' learning outcomes. Brewer (1993) opined that principals'

selection based on qualification and goals setting are important predictors of students' academic performance. Grissom, Loeb and Master (2013) added that principals who obtained higher qualification tend to have better students' learning outcomes.

A study conducted by Grissom and Loeb (2011) uses assessment of principals' qualification as perceived by principals, vice principals and teachers to estimate association with students' achievement and find out that, principals' additional qualifications are associated with improved students learning outcomes. Miller (2013) opined that schools are declining performance prior to hiring a principal with low qualification. This indicates that the level of degree attainment of school principals is associated with students' learning outcome.

Research Questions

In order to guide the conduct of this research, the following research questions were raised:

1. What is the perception on students' learning outcomes in senior secondary schools in Bauchi state?
2. What is the relationship between principals' qualification and students' learning outcome in senior secondary schools in Bauchi state?

Research Hypothesis

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between principals' qualification and students' learning outcome in senior secondary schools in Bauchi state.

Research Methodology

The study adopted correlational research design. This research design was preferred because the main attempt was to describe and correlate data and analyse opinions collected after the events had already occurred. The population of this study comprises of all eighty five (85) Senior Secondary Schools in Bauchi State that are under the ownership of Bauchi State Government. The population of this study also comprises all eighty five (85) Senior Secondary School principals, eighty (80) vice principals administration, seventy four (74) vice principals academic and eight hundred and ninety eight (898) teachers.

Secondary school principals, vice principals and teachers were so chosen because they had the required knowledge and experience to provide reliable information about the relevance of school principals' qualification on students' learning outcome. There are eighty five (85) senior secondary schools in Bauchi State; out of this number, thirty (30) were selected using the simple random sampling technique. This was to ensure that all categories of schools were represented in the study. There are thirty (30) principals and forty four 44 vice principals in the selected schools. All the principals and vice principals were deliberately sampled due to their small number. There are eight hundred and ninety

eight (898) teachers in the selected schools; out of this number three hundred and fifty nine (359) were selected using simple random sampling technique. Therefore the sample for this study comprised a total of 433 respondents, including principals, vice principals and teachers.

The instrument for this study was self-designed questionnaire titled Principals' Qualification and Students' Learning Outcome Questionnaire (PQSLOQ). The Questionnaire contained two sections with questions on students' learning outcomes and principals' qualification in senior secondary schools. The questions were based on a four point likert scale. The PQSLOQ was submitted to two experts in Department of Educational Foundations, Educational Administration and Planning Unit that determined the face validity; their observations and corrections were effected in the original to upgrade the standard and accuracy of the PQSLOQ.

The reliability of the PQSLOQ was established by testing in a pilot study; the study was conducted in 20 schools out of 55 that were not part of the selected schools for the study. Test re-test method was applied with an interval of two weeks in order to establish the reliability of the instruments over time. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used in correlating the set of scores of the test-re-test exercise. A reliability index of 0.83 was obtained at .05 level of significance, which indicated that the instrument was reliable. A total of 433 copies of PQSLOQ was distributed to the sample used for the study and the same was retrieved at 100% return rate. The data collected was analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation.

Presentation of Results

Table 1 indicated principals' qualifications in Senior Secondary Schools in Bauchi State.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of Principals' Qualification

S/N	Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	Ph.D. in Education or with Education	0	0
2.	M.Ed, or M.A/M.Sc with Education	1	3
3.	B.Ed, or B.Sc(ED) or B.A (Ed)	25	84
4.	PGDE, NCE, ACE, TCII	3	10
5.	HND, ND	1	3
	Total	30	100

It is indicated in table 1 that majority of the senior secondary school principals in Bauchi State (84%) had Bachelor's degree in Education or with Education e.g. B. Ed., B. Sc. (Ed.), B.A. (Ed.); 10% of the principals had PGDE, NCE, ACE and TC Certificate. It is also indicated that 3% of principals had M. Ed., M.A., M. Sc. with Education, while 3% had HND, ND without any teaching qualification.

Research Question 1: What is the perception on students' learning outcomes in senior secondary schools in Bauchi state?

In order to answer this research question one, responses of items 1 – 5 are presented in table 2.

Table 2: Respondents' Opinions about Students' Learning Outcomes

S/N	Description	Agreed	Disagreed
1.	Students' learning out comes in NECO is satisfactory	201 (46%)	232 (54%)
2.	Students possess practical skills	175 (40%)	258 (60%)
3.	Relevance of principals' qualification on students' learning	94 (11%)	384 (89%)
4.	Principals' utilization of resources is good	43 (10%)	390 (90%)
5.	Principals' maintenance of resources is commendable	42 (10%)	391 (90%)

In Table 2 item 1, it is indicated that 232 (54%) disagreed with the item that students' learning outcome in NECO examinations in senior secondary schools in Bauchi State was satisfactory, while 201 (46%) agreed with the view that students' learning outcomes in NECO was satisfactory. Similarly, item 2 revealed that 258 (60%) disagreed with the practical skills possessed by the students while a total of 174 (40%) agreed to the practical skills possessed by the students. In addition, item 3 that dealt with relevance of principals' qualification on students learning, a total of 384 (89%) disagreed with the notion of principals' qualification on students learning while 94 (11%) of the respondents agreed with the fact that principals' qualification has positive impact on students' learning. More so, majority of the respondents in item 4 which are 390 (90%) disagreed that school principals ensured good utilization of school resources while 43(10%) agreed with the view that school principals ensured good utilization of school resources. Consequently, it is clearly indicated in item 5 that 391 (90%) of the respondents disagreed with the statement that said school principals ensured proper maintenance of school facilities or equipment while 42 (10%) agreed with the notion that school principals ensured proper maintenance of school facilities for better students learning outcomes.

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between principals' qualification and students' learning outcome in senior secondary schools in Bauchi state?

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between principals' qualification and students' learning outcome in senior secondary schools in Bauchi state

This hypothesis was tested as presented on table 3.

Table 3: Relationship between Principals' Qualification and Students' learning outcomes

Variables	N	\bar{x}	SD	df	Cal-r	p-value	Decision
Qualification	433	1.70	.57	431	.95	.44	Ho1 accepted
Learning outcomes	433	2.99	.73				

Table 3 indicated that at the p- value of .44 was greater than alpha of 0.05. Therefore the hypothesis which stated that principals' qualification has no significant relationship with students' learning outcomes in senior secondary schools in Bauchi State was accepted.

Discussions of the Finding

This research study focused on the principals' qualifications and Students' learning outcomes in Senior Secondary Schools in Bauchi State. In research question 1, item 1 depicts that Students' learning outcomes in NECO is not satisfactory; item 2 focused on the practical skills possessed by the Students. Findings revealed that students do not possess practical skills that would help them to acquire necessary skills as well as the positive learning outcomes. In the same position, Nkobi (2004) asserts that lack of leadership skills, lack of creativeness and innovativeness lead to inability and lack of freedom of self-expression and inadequate acquisition of the necessary skills at varying degrees between rural and urban schools. These lead to low students' learning outcomes. In an attempt to assess relevance of principals' qualification on students' learning, findings of research question one, item no 3 reveals that majority of the respondents depict that principal's qualification has nothing to do with students' learning outcomes. This assertion agreed with Philip and Henry (2010), whose findings indicated the importance of principals' qualifications for students' learning has nothing to do the positive learning outcomes of students because of their indirect influence on teachers practice. Findings from item 4 which depict that majority of the respondents did not affirm to proper utilization of the schools facilities by the principals which in one way or the other affect students learning outcomes. Finally item 5 narrated that school's principals do not ensure routine and adequate maintenance of schools resources; this

implies that majority of the principals in the study area did not pay attention to proper maintenance of school resources which lead to the damage of the school facilities.

Finding from research question two and testing of hypothesis two indicates that there is no significant relationship between principals' qualification and students' learning outcome. This implies that principals' qualification was no longer a pre-requisite to students' learning outcomes. This disagreed with Ogunsaju (2004) who states that students' academic performance in all Nigerian secondary schools have fallen considerably below societal expectations and this has its effect on principals' qualification. It also disagreed with Douglas and Liza (2010) who found that qualification of school principals was significantly related to students' learning outcomes.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that principals' qualification has no significant relationship with students' learning outcomes in senior secondary schools in Bauchi state. Equally, it was found that principals' qualification is no longer a yardstick for positive students learning outcomes. Similarly, students do not possess practical skills that would equip them for better jobs in life. It was concluded that school principals lack administrative skills of proper maintenance and utilization of schools resources.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were proffered:

1. Policymakers should consider higher qualification of school principals when it comes to appointment and promotion to enable them to apply appropriate leadership skills that will promote students' learning outcomes.
2. Government should encourage school principals to obtain higher qualification through the provision of in-service training, more especially degrees in relevant areas in education, specifically educational administration and planning, so as to get the necessary knowledge and skills of leadership procedures that will further be relevant towards students' learning outcomes.

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