

Perception on the Influence of Administrators' Characteristics on Students' Academic Performance in Senior Secondary Schools in Katagum Local Government Area of Bauchi State

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Abstract

This study adopted correlational research design to investigate the perception of principals and teachers on the influence of administrators' characteristics on students' academic performance in senior secondary school in Katagum Local Government Area, Bauchi state. The sample included 80 principals and teachers; a principal and three teachers were selected from each of the 20 sampled schools using simple random sampling technique. The instruments used to collect data were self-designed questionnaire titled Administrators' Characteristics and Student's Academic Performance Questionnaire (ACSAPQ), and National Examination Council (NECO) results. The instruments were validated by two experts in the Department of Educational Foundations, Federal University, Kashere. The instrument was pilot tested through test re-test method within an interval of two weeks and the reliability coefficient of 0.72 was obtained. The data collected were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (r) analysis. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of

significance. The results of the analysis showed that administrators' characteristics are significantly related to students' academic performance. Based on the findings, it was recommended that government should encourage school principals to acquire additional qualification, specifically master's degree, to enable them keep in place appropriate leadership structure that will enhance students' academic performance.

Keywords: perception, administrator, characteristics, students, academic, performance

Introduction

The success of every organization, to a large extent, depends on the calibre of heads of such organization who provide leadership and guidance towards the achievement of organizational goals. However, some attach the increasing failure of students in public examinations to the appointment of principals that do not have the requisite qualification, experience and maturity for handling the enormous responsibility expected from school principals. Therefore, the focus of this study was to investigate principals' characteristics in terms of qualification, area of specialization and experience, as the determinants of students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Katagum Local Government Area of Bauchi State.

Adesina (1990) and Edem (1998) acknowledged that study and training help to enhance principals' knowledge and skills. Akinsolu (2010) examined principals' qualification and its relation to students' academic performance; findings from the study showed that principals' qualification was significantly related to students' academic performance. A study conducted by Bruce and Bruce (2008) indicated that principals with stronger academic background produce better students' outcomes. The article hypothesizes that school principals with certain attributes are likely to favour teachers with similar attributes to their own. The study uses the schools and staffing surveys from 1992-1994 at Kansas to test whether school principals who attended more selective universities are more or less likely to hire teachers who attend more selective undergraduate institutions. Findings suggest that principals' undergraduate background matters when it comes to their recruitment, selection and perhaps retention of teachers with strong academic undergraduate backgrounds.

Nkobi (2010) conducted a descriptive survey research using questionnaire to assess the effectiveness of qualitative leadership displayed by secondary school management project in Botswana. Leadership with specialization, leadership skills, and coordination of instructional activities were key variables that guided the study. Respondents 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 area of specialization, 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; and this leads to low students' academic performance.

A study conducted by Anit (2008) examined whether an experienced leader had an overwhelming advantage over the contrasting style of directive leadership in a school organization and achieve effectiveness. Data were obtained through a survey and collected from 140 teams selected from 140 different secondary schools in northern Israel. The result of the structural equation model indicated a positive relation between directive leadership and organizational commitment as well as a positive relation between directive leadership and school-staff team in role performance. The results indicated a positive relationship between experience leadership and teachers' empowerment; and positive relationship between experience leadership and school staff team innovation. These could lead to high teachers' performance and positive students' academic performance.

A study conducted by Nakpodia (2010) examined whether significant relationship exists between principals' work experience and principals' performance in Delta Central Senatorial District Secondary School, Nigeria. The research raised two hypotheses to guide the study. The instruments utilized were a questionnaire designed as principals' work experience and principals' performance (PWEPP). The instrument was validated by experts and it was reliable, as checked through Kuder Richardson's Reliability Test Method, with the value $r=0.45$ and $r=0.48$ respectively, an indication of positive moderate relationship and reliability test. Data collected were analysed by Pearson (r) statistics to find out the mean responses of the relationship between principals' experience and principals' performance for students' academic performance. From the findings, the hypotheses were rejected thereby recommending that principals' work experience should be considered when appointing school principals.

Samantha and Jill (2010) opined that experienced principals nurture democratic school activities and promote students' academic performance. Debra (2010), Kenneth, Pattern and Lantzi (2007) opined that experience matters, for school Principals get better at their jobs with every passing year experience. It should be noted however that the reviewed studies were conducted in some other places elsewhere while the current study shifted the geographical focus to Katagum Local Government Area of Bauchi State, Nigeria. A correlational design is used to examine the extent to which principals' qualification, area of specialization and experience relate to students' academic

performance, with particular reference to senior secondary schools in Katagum Local Government Area of Bauchi State.

This study considers principals' qualification to mean the educational certificate held by the principals which implies his level of education. Principals' area of specialization refers to the discipline or academic area in which the certificate is held; on the other hand, principals' experience refers to the number of years spent by the principals on the job.

Objectives of the study

The objectives of this study are to find out the:

1. relationship between principals' qualifications and students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Katagum Local Government Area of Bauchi State.
2. relationship between principals' specialization and students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Katagum Local Government Area of Bauchi State.
3. relationship between principals' experience and students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Katagum Local Government Area of Bauchi State.

Hypotheses

In order to guide the conduct of this study, three null hypotheses were formulated.

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between principals' qualification and students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Katagum Local Government Area of Bauchi State.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between principals' area of specialization and students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Katagum Local Government Area of Bauchi State.

Ho3: there is no significant relationship between principals' experience and students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Katagum Local Government Area of Bauchi State.

Methodology

The research design adopted for this study is descriptive survey design of correlation type. According to Ofo (2001), descriptive survey method generally involves collection of data from a defined population to describe the present condition of the population using the variables under study. Based on this, descriptive survey is being used to assess correlation between principals' characteristics and academic

performance of senior secondary school students in Katagum Local Government Area of Bauchi State.

The population of this study comprises of 40 Government senior secondary schools in Katagum zone. The schools are categorized into boarding, day, single sex for either boys or girls and mixed schools. The population of this study also comprises of 40 senior secondary school principals and 1,879 teachers. The school principals differ remarkably in their characteristics in terms of qualification, area of specialization and experience. Out of the 40 senior secondary schools in Katagum Local Government Area of Bauchi State 20 were selected and determined based on purposive sampling technique; this is to ensure that all categories of schools are represented in the study. There are 20 principals; all the principals were deliberately sampled due to their small number and simple random sampling techniques was used to select three teachers from each of the twenty selected schools. Therefore the total number comprises of 20 principals and 60 teachers that makes the total of 80 respondents.

The instruments of this study consist of National Examination Council (NECO) Results Documentary Analysis, and a self-designed questionnaire, tagged Principals' Characteristics and Students' Academic Performance Questionnaire (PCSAPQ). The Questionnaires contained columns for the school code, qualifications of the school heads, their areas of specialization, years of teaching experience and years of administrative experience. This generated first hand data on the school principals in senior secondary schools in Bauchi State.

The Principals' Characteristics and Students' Academic Performance Questionnaires (PCSAPQ) contained four sections, section "A" obtains information on principals' demographic data, section "B" asks ten questions on students' academic performance, section "C" asks ten questions on principals' characteristics and section "D" asks ten questions on years of teaching and administrative experience. The questions were based on a four point likert scale scored as follows:

Strongly Agree = 4 Points
Agree = 3 Points
Disagree = 2 Points
Strongly Disagree = 1 Point.

The PCSAPQ was validated by experts in Educational Management in the Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, Federal University, Kashere, Nigeria; and it had a reliability index of 0.72 after a test re-test exercise, which was conducted in 10 schools out of 20 schools which were not part of the selected schools

for the study. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to test the three hypotheses generated for the study.

Presentation of results

Students' academic performance was taken as the dependent variable, while principals' qualification, area of specialization and experience were independent variables. Results are presented in tables 1 to 4.

Table 1: Students' academic performance in NECO Examination from 2012 to 2017

Year	Number presented	Number of 5 credits	Success rate (%)	Number failed	Failure rate (%)
2012	8930	1311	15 %	7619	85 %
2013	10970	3759	34 %	7211	66 %
2014	13391	3983	30 %	9408	70 %
2015	15101	10042	67 %	5059	33 %
2016	11305	373	3 %	10932	97 %
2017	12512	186	1 %	12326	99 %
Total	72209	19654	27 %	52555	73 %
Average	12035	3276	27 %	8759	73 %

Source: Field work, 2019

Table 1 indicates that senior secondary schools students' academic performance in the National Examinations Council's examination (NECO) in Katagum Local Government Area of Bauchi State recorded the highest rate of success in the year 2015 when 15,101 students were presented for NECO Examination and 10,042 of them passed with five credits and above; which represents 67% success rate. The poorest performance of students was recorded in the year 2017 when the failure rate was 99%. Within the six years under study, 72,209 candidates were presented for the NECO examination. Out of this number 19654 scored up to five credits and above, while remaining 52555 failed to score up to five credits which means they were in the range of four credits and below. The average success rate was therefore poor, as it stood at 27%. The poor academic performance of students could be explained from many angles; this study however focuses on the principals' characteristics as the determinant of academic performance of senior secondary schools students in Katagum Local Government Area of Bauchi State.

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between principals' qualification and students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Katagum Local Government Area, Bauchi State.

This hypothesis was tested and presented in table 2.

Table 2: Relationship between principals’ qualification and students’ academic performance

Variables	N	\bar{x}	SD	Cal-r	Cri-r	Decision
Qualification	80	7.13	1.36			
performance	80	12.2	1.98	.221	.195	Reject Ho

Results in table 2 show that the calculated (r) value of .221 is greater than the critical (r) value of .195 at 0.05 level of significance. The hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between principals’ qualification and students’ academic performance in senior secondary schools in Katagum Local Government Area of Bauchi State is rejected.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between Principals’ area of specialization and students’ academic performance in senior secondary schools in Katagum Local Government Area of Bauchi State.

This hypothesis was tested and presented in table 3.

Table 3: Relationship between principals’ specialization and students’ academic performance

Variables	N	\bar{x}	SD	r-Cal	r-Crit	Decision
Specialization	80	4.69	.957			
performance	80	12.2	1.98	.095	.195	Accept Ho

Table 3 showed that the calculated (r) value of .095 was less than the critical (r) value of .199 at 0.05 level of significance. The hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between principal’s area of specialization and students’ academic performance in senior secondary schools in Katagum Local Government Area of Bauchi State is accepted.

Ho3: There is no significant relationship between principals’ experience and students’ academic performance in senior secondary schools in Katagum Local Government Area in Bauchi State.

This hypothesis was tested and presented in table 4.

Table 4: Relationship between principals' experience and students' academic performance

Variables	N	\bar{x}	SD	r-Cal	r-Crit	Decision
Experience	80	6.12	.971			
performance	80	12.2	1.98	.176	.195	Accept Ho

Table 4 showed that calculated (r) value of .176 was less than the critical (r) value of .195 at 0.05 level of significance. The hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between principals' experience and students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Katagum Local Government Area of Bauchi State is accepted.

Discussion of the findings

Findings from the study showed that qualification of school principals was significantly related to academic performance of students. Majority of the participants (59%) are of the opinion that qualification of school principals is necessary and it enhances academic performance of students. School principals in Katagum Local Government Area of Bauchi State utilized their educational qualifications towards enhancing students' academic performance. However, most secondary school principals in Katagum Local Government Area of Bauchi State obtained first degree, 83% of them, 3% have masters' degree while 4% were HND holders but the students' academic performance is not good enough. School principals need additional qualification as first degree is not enough for school principals to enable them handle school programmes and enhance students' academic performance. This result is however in agreement with the opinions of Adesina (1990), Edem (1998), and findings of Bruce and Bruce (2008) and Akinsolu (2010), that qualification of school principals was significantly correlated to students' academic performance.

Findings from the study revealed that the area of specialization of school principals was not significantly related to students' academic performance. Majority of respondents to this study (78%) believed that area of specialization of school principals was not related to students' academic performance. This means that area of specialization of school administration is not necessary and it does not determine students' academic performance in most of the situations. This finding disagrees with the findings of previous studies like that of Nkobi (2010), which revealed that there was strong correlation between principals' area of specialization and students' academic performance.

Findings from the study revealed that experience of school principals was not significantly related to students' academic performance. Majority of respondents in

this study (68%) believed that experience of school principals does not affect students' academic performance. The result is in disagreement with Anit (2008) and Nakpodia (2010) who came up with findings that there was significant correlation between principals' experience and academic performance of students.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study and the discussion that followed, it was discovered that, there is significant relationship between principals' qualification and students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Katagum local government area of Bauchi State. Principals' area of specialization and experience do not have significant relationship with students' academic performance.

Recommendations

Following the findings of this study, it is recommended that:

1. Government should encourage school principals to acquire additional qualification, specifically master's degree, to enable them keep in place appropriate leadership structure that will enhance students' academic performance.
2. Government should ensure that principals obtained degrees in educational administration and planning so as to avoid shouldering the responsibility on officers who might be committing blunders and retarding the progress of the school, particularly in terms of students' academic performance.
3. Government should consider teaching and administrative experience of teachers when appointing school principals.

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