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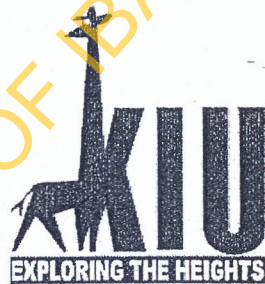
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PRINCIPALS' LEADERSHIP STYLE AND SUPERVISION AS CORRELATES OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN JUNIOR SCHOOL CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION (JSCE) IN OYO STATE, NIGERIA.

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Abstract

The concept of leadership style has been considered a relevant tool in business management as good leadership style drives the success of an organization. It is only recently that the concept has been embraced in the education sector as a way of examining the behavior of principals vis-à-vis the success of the school they oversee. The school system is however been increasingly confronted with many complex problems, such as the seemingly or perceived falling standards of academic achievement, increasing rates of indiscipline, examination malpractices, cultism and so on. These and other problems pose great challenges to school leadership and the resultant supervision of school, which keep the system constantly on track for the maintenance of standards. This study, thus investigated the extent to which principals' leadership style and the resultant quality of supervision determine academic success in JSCE in Oyo state, Nigeria. It also investigated the extent to which the principals' demographic factors, such as age, gender, academic qualification and years of experience contribute to the students' academic achievement at the JSCE. Survey design was used in the study. The JSSIII students during the years 2008-2010 constituted the population for the study. A sample of twelve schools whose principals had been there for at least three years, from each of the six educational zones in the state was purposively selected. A principal's questionnaire that measures the leadership style and quality of supervision was administered and JSCE results in English Language and Mathematics in those three years were obtained from the selected schools. Data were analysed by using mean, standard deviation, Pearson moment correlation and multiple regression. Results showed that principal's years of experience was positively related to students' success in JSCE, in both English language and Mathematics. The supervision by the principal was found to be predictive of students' success in JSCE in Mathematics only. In

conclusion, there is bound to be improvement in academic achievement of students at the JSCE if quality supervision is enhanced and the principal is highly knowledgeable and experienced. The various levels of Government should therefore ensure that quality supervision is enhanced in schools and qualified principals are at the helm of affairs.

Key Words: *Leadership Style, Supervision, Academic Success and Junior School Certificate Examination (JSCE).*

Introduction

The school system is increasingly confronted with many complex problems. There is a general outcry that standards of education are falling and morals are diminishing. Some blame the pupils for this apparent decline in education and moral values, a thoughtful few think that they are due to the nature of challenge in all directions. Majority blame the teachers for the woes in the school. They are not as devoted and dedicated to the cause of education as their predecessors. Teachers as a group blame parents and the children. They also blame the government for unattractive condition of service and for poor physical facilities in the school (FME,2007).

The aforementioned problems and many more offer too many opportunities to exert leadership. The school principal or the administrator is viewed to be the leader of the school and must be very effective in his operations. It therefore follows that an effective school leader translates the educational policies, laws and regulations into practical operational policies. To be able to perform his duties very well, a good leader needs to choose the right kind of leadership style as well as keep constant check or supervision on the activities of the school, in order to put educational policies on the right track (Enessator and Nduka, 1998).

With the right leadership style and thorough supervision of activities in the school, students can therefore be nurtured to attain positive self-concept, study-habit and the dignity of hard work. They will also be well guided in the choice of their future career. This is not all, the staff (teaching and non-teaching) will also enjoy cordial relationship with the head and this will motivate them to put in their best in whatever duties assigned to them. The impact of this in the

society is that we will be able to turn-out sound and well-grounded youths that will excel in both academic and moral standards.

There are however four main leadership style that a leader could use in relation to his subordinates in a working environment. These are the autocratic, democratic, laissez-faire and task-oriented/people-oriented style. These leadership styles singly or in combination may work best in certain situation, hence the issue of which is the best will depend on the goal, the situation and the people involved and the experience of the principal.

What then are the main factors associated with effective schools? In his study on four schools in the United States, Weber (cited in Clark et al 1989) found eight factors present in successful or effective schools. Among these factors were strong administrative leadership, high expectation for student achievement, positive school atmosphere and regular evaluation of student progress.

More recently, Bulach and Berry (2001) presented data using "The instructional improvement survey", that measures four culture and seven climate factors. Leadership behaviour is measured in the following two culture and two climate factors"; group atmosphere, group cooperation, instructional leadership and discipline. Their findings indicated that females and more experienced teachers were more positive about leadership behaviour than males and teachers with less than ten years experience. In related research with the same instrument, Bulach and Peddle (2001) found a positive relationship between leadership behaviour associated with instruction and the overall culture and climate of the school.

A more recent study by Gruenert (2005) involving 81 schools in Indiana used a culture survey to investigate the relationship of a school's culture with student achievement. The survey has the following six factors:

- (1) collaborative leadership
- (2) teacher collaboration
- (3) professional development
- (4) unity of purpose
- (5) collegial support and
- (6) learning partnership

Supervision is the process of ensuring that operators of schools do their work strictly for the promotion of teaching and learning.

These operators include mainly the principal, vice-principals, heads of departments, class teachers and other personnel engaged in the day-to-day running of schools. Thus, school supervision is concerned with the process of qualitative improvement of school curriculum and instruction. School inspection however involves individual or team of officers who are usually trained. These officers visit schools and observe the mode of instruction in each and every subject taught in the school. Inspectors help to advise and stimulate teachers and students for the purpose of enhancing the quality of instruction.

The school principal therefore conducts internal supervision daily, weekly or at random in order to prepare the school for any other forms of inspection. The external supervision or inspection is done by the quality control departments in the state or at the federal level. All these forms of supervision/inspection is done in order to keep the school system on track and to enhance academic achievement of the students.

Ehrenberg and Brewer (1994) highlight seven important factors an effective school must exhibit. These include: Instructional leadership, clear and focused mission, safe and orderly environment climate of high expectation, frequent monitoring of student progress, positive home-school relations and opportunity to learn and student time on-task. Rockoff (2004) also opined that supervision and coaching are critical elements of professional growth and development within the school system.

Airansian (1991) discussed on five major processes through which supervision can be used to improve instructional delivery. These include prerequisites, function, tasks, unification and products. Prerequisites are referring to basic requirements a principal must have before he/she can be used to improve the learning skills of the students. Unification is the role of supervision to marry educational goals with the teacher's own needs and the final product of all these efforts is an improvement in the student's achievement (Airansian 1991, Butin 2004).

The success of any school in meeting its goals depends on its chief administration otherwise known as the principal, acting particularly his supervisory functions (Akpa and Abama 2000), for educational supervision is the thrust of all established schools. Hence, the importance of supervision in today's educational system cannot be over emphasized. How best then can the principal act in

his capacity to improve the teaching and learning conditions within the school as well as improve the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the system?

The history and purpose of supervision showed among others that the exercise has methodologically shifted from the traditional inspection and its inadequacies to the modern (complex) supervision that is collegial, systematic, discursive, democratic and informed by research and analysis to prescribing procedures that seek improvement. The complexity of this exercise certainly suggests active participation of a number of school personnel in which the principal must take a leading role.

In contrast to large literature on teacher quality (Rivkin, Hanushek and Kain (2005), Staiger (2008); Buddin and Zamarro (2009), a few studies have addressed whether principals impact school performance and if they do, which principal's characteristics determine principal's effectiveness. In agreement with this view, Damon et al (2009) opined that the literature on principal's characteristics is sparse in part, because of difficulties faced in defining and measuring principal's effectiveness and in part due to paucity of high-quality data on which convincing empirical strategies can be based.

Damon et al (2009) studied how the characteristics of school principals relate to school performance, as measured by students' standardized examination scores in English language and Mathematics. They found little evidence of any relationship between school performance and principals' education. However, they find a positive relationship between principals' experience and school performance, particularly for Mathematics test scores.

To corroborate Damon et al (2009), Obadara (2005) in his study titled "perceived full-range leadership", teacher factors and the academic performance of secondary schools in Ogun State, Nigeria also found out that principal's experience contributed significantly to schools academic performance.

In an investigation of leadership behaviour from four continents for instance, Rosener (1990), cited in Obadara (2005) distinguished male and female leaders according to their age and communal qualities. In their self-reports, male leaders tended to describe their job performance as a series of 'transactions' in which subordinates were rewarded or penalized according to their performance or lack of. Female leaders on the other hand advocates

participation, power sharing and self-worth enhancement. Also, Eagly and Johnson (1990) observed a tendency for women to adopt a more democratic or participative style while men adopt a more autocratic or directive style.

Bass, Avolio and Atwater (1996) suggested that women are more likely to temper criticism with positive feedback and are more likely to be described as charismatic. This is consistent with Rosener (1990) who asserted that females may therefore be expected to perceive factors associated with charisma such as feelings of esteem, affection, admiration, respect and trust than their male counterparts.

Statement of Problem

The school system is increasingly confronted with many complex problems. These problems include students' lackadaisical attitude to studies, teachers' insolence, inadequate infrastructural facilities, vices like cultism and examination malpractices among others. These therefore call for the right type of leadership style and supervision of school activities in order to keep the system on track.

This study investigated the influence of principals' leadership style and supervision on students' academic achievement in Junior School Certificate Examination (JSCE) in Oyo State, Nigeria. It also investigated the influence of the principal's characteristics such as age, gender, educational qualification and experience on students' achievement in JSCE.

Research Questions

The study provided answers to the following research questions:

- (1) (a) What is the relationship between the principal's leadership style and achievement in JSCE in English language?
- (b) What is the relationship between the principal's leadership style and achievement in JSCE in Mathematics?
- (2) (a) What is the relationship between supervision and achievement in JSCE in English Language?
- (b) What is the relationship between supervision and achievement in JSCE in Mathematics?

- (3) What is the relationship between principal's demographic characteristics (age, gender, qualification and experience) and achievement
- (a) in English Language?
 - (b) in Mathematics?
- (4) What is the composite effect of Principal's leadership style, supervision and Principal's demographic characteristics on achievement in JSCE:
- (a) in English Language?
 - (b) in Mathematics?

Methodology

The study adopted the survey research design to investigate the influence of leadership style and supervision of the principal on student academic performance in JSCE in the last three years (2008-2010). The population for the study was the Junior Secondary School 3 students (JSS3). Purposive sampling was used to select two schools each from the six educational zones in Oyo State. The enrolment of students for JSCE in the schools, in each year ranges from 131 to 206 and the total number of students investigated was 5,528. Twelve principals were used in the study.

The research instrument used was the school principal's questionnaire with a reliability coefficient of $r=0.702$ and which was personally administered by the researcher. Two trained research assistants also helped in collating the JSCE results.

Data collected were analysed using the mean, standard deviation, Pearson moment correlation coefficient and multiple regression.

Results

Research Question 1:

What is the relationship between the principal's leadership style and achievement in JSCE:

- (a) in English language?
- (b) in Mathematics ?

Table 1: Relationship between Principal's Style and Achievement in JSCE in English language and Mathematics

		English	Mathematics
Principal's leadership style (P<.05)	Pearson correlation sig. (2 tailed)	-.154 .633	-.572 .052
	N	12	12

Table 1 revealed that there is a correlation coefficient of -.154 and -.572 (P<.05) between leadership style and achievement in English language and Mathematics at the JSCE respectively. This implies that there is a negative correlation between the leadership and achievement in Mathematics and English Language.

Research Question 2

What is the relationship between supervision and achievement in JSCE:

2. (a) in English language?
- (b) in Mathematics?

Table 2: Relationship between Supervision and Achievement in JSCE in English Language and Mathematics.

		English	Mathematics
Supervision	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	-.402 .195	-.058 .859
	N	12	12

Table 2 revealed a correlation coefficient of -.402 (P<.05) and -.58 (P<.05) between supervision and achievement in English and Mathematics at the JSCE respectively. This implies that there is negative correlation between supervision and achievement in the JSCE.

Research question 3:

What is the relationship between principal's demographic characteristics (age, gender, qualification and experience, and achievement in JSCE:

3. (a) in English language?
- (b) in Mathematics?

Table 3(a): Relative effects of Demographic Characteristics on Achievement in JSCE in English Language

S/N	Model	Unstandardized Coefficients B	Standardized Coefficients Std Error	Beta	T	Sig.
1.	Constant	16.208	8.023		2.020	.099
2.	Gender	-3.386E-03	.080	-.007	-.042	.968
3.	Age	-1.390	1.058	-.229	1.314	.246
4.	Educational	.172	.420	.089	.410	.698
5.	Years of experience	.795	.171	-.852	4.638	.006
6.	Leadership	-9.355E03	.041	-.037	-.228	.828
7.	Supervision	-.874	.680	-.226	1.286	.255

*Significant of .05 level of significance

Table 3(a) revealed that the year of experience was significant at .05 level of significance with Beta value .852 at t= 4.638. This implies that the contribution of years of experience is 85%.

Table 3(b): Relative Effect of Demographic Characteristics on Achievement in JSCE in Mathematics

S/N	Model	Unstandardized Coefficients B	Standardized Coefficients Std Error	Beta	T	Sig.
1.	(Constant)	13.795	9.148		1.508	.192
2.	Gender	-9.635E-02	.091	-.173	1.059	.338
3.	Age	-.294	1.207	-.042	-.244	.817
4.	Educational Qualification	-.287	.479	-.128	-.598	.576
5.	Years of	.826	.195	.766	4.225	.008*

	Experience					
6.	Leadership	1.384E-03	.047	.005	.030	.978
7.	Supervision	-1.980	.775	-.443	-	.051*
					2.553	

*Significant of .05 level of significance

Table 3(b) revealed that the years of experience and supervision was significant at .05 level of significance with Beta values .766 and -.443, and t values 4.225 and -2.553 respectively. This implies that years of experience and supervision contributed 76% and -44% respectively to achievement in Mathematics at the JSCE.

Research Question 4:

What is the composite effect of Principal's leadership style, supervision and principal's demographic characteristics on achievement in JSCE:

- 4(a) in English Language?
 (b) in Mathematics?

Table 4(a): Composite Effect of Predictor Variables on Achievement in English Language

Model Summary

Model	R	R. Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.943a	.890	.758	.8604

ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1. Regression	29.965	6	4.994	6.746	.027
Residual	3.702	5	.740		
Total	33.667	11			

*Significant at .05 level of significance

Table 4(a) revealed that the joint contribution of all predictor variables on English Language is significant with F ratio = 6.746. This implies that the combination of all predictor variables

accounted for 89% of the variance in student achievement in English Language as shown by the coefficient of determination of $R^2 = .890$.

Table 4(b): Composite Effect of Predictor Variables on Achievement in Mathematics

MODEL SUMMARY

Model	R	R. Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.945	.893	.764	.9811

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1. Regression	40.104	6	6.684	6.944	.025
Residual	4.813	5	.963		
Total	44.917	11			

Table 4(b) revealed that the joint contribution of all predictor variables on Mathematics is significant with F ratio -6.944. This implies that the combination of all predictor variables accounted for 89% of the variance in student achievement in Mathematics as shown by the coefficient of determination of $R^2 = .893$.

Discussion of Findings

The findings revealed that there was no high correlation between leadership style and achievement in both English Language and Mathematics. It also revealed that there was no high correlation between supervision and achievement in English Language and Mathematics. But the study revealed that years of experience of the Principal contributed greatly to achievement in both English Language and Mathematics and was significant. The supervision by the principal which also contributed greatly to achievement in Mathematics, was significant.

Furthermore, the study discovered that the predictor variables - supervision, leadership style, age, gender, years of experience and educational qualification jointly contributed to achievement in both English Language and Mathematics and was significant.

Finally, the study revealed that almost all the principals were of the same age and qualification, what really made the difference was the years of experience of the school administrators.

Conclusion

It could be concluded that though the leadership style and supervisory role of the principal could have an impact on achievement at the JSCE level, the years of experience really made the difference.

Recommendations

Based on the above, the following are recommended:

- * The Teaching Service Commission (TESCOM) of Oyo State should not relent on their efforts in sending highly qualified teachers to head the schools.
- * The years of experience as teacher should also be considered in allocating principals to schools.
- * The supervisory checks by the quality control department should also be improved upon.

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