

Full Length Research Paper

Assessment of instructional and administrative strategies applied by principals to improve academic performance

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The study is based on the assessment of instructional and administrative strategies applied by principals to improve academic performance of students in schools. This simply means that the individual talents of everyone in school needs to be maximized for the effective benefit of the school, students, parents, and the society at large. It is therefore obvious that principals should apply numerous administrative strategies that suit the individual secondary school to enhance educational development in the nation. The instrument used for the study is a self-designed research questionnaire.

Key words: Academic performance, strategies, educational development.

INTRODUCTION

The administrative strategies adopted by principals in schools would have a far reaching impact on the students' academic performance as they are regarded as raw materials in the school system. Principals are the major actors in an administrative process in the school setting and are often expected to provide the enabling environment, equipment and facilities for effective teaching and learning. Principals should be able to encourage individual teachers to be innovative. They should also be able to establish measureable key performance indicators for each innovative project in the learning situation. They should always continuously communicate with the staff on the benefits of improvement in the school system. They should be able to help the students to overcome fear of failure because it is important to create favourable school climate that fosters academic success. These positive school environment are characterized by strong

administrative leadership strategies, high expectation for students' achievement, challenging appropriate curricular and instruction, an orderly environment, ongoing systematic evaluation of students' progress, and shared decision making among general education of teachers, administrators and parents (Ortiz, 2001).

As the principal occupies a very significant position in the school system, for him to be effective, he needs among others: drive, energy, vision, personality and management in conflict resolution technique. This means that such a person has to create an environment in which members can cooperate with one another. However, work groups usually have a tendency to compete for limited resources, power and status, to the extent of disrupting the cooperative efforts. Besides internal conflict, management also faces conflict from external forces. These may include government, trade unions and economic

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conditions (VanWyk, 1989).

It is therefore necessary that principals should apply various administrative strategies that suit the individual secondary schools to enhance educational development in the nation. Griffin (1994) states that a principal's public and professional reputation will depend more on the standard of stability in his school than on any other single factor. Therefore, since the principal is the architect of the success or failure of any school depending on the administrative strategy adopted, it is imperative to assess the instructional and administrative strategies applied by principals to improve academic performance in secondary schools in Delta State.

Research question

To guide the study, the following research questions were raised:

1. What is the difference between skilled and unskilled principals in the adoption of administrative strategies as applied to improve students' performance?
2. Would there be any difference in the administrative and instructional strategies adopted by the school principal?

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Mohlabe (2011) opined that leadership effectiveness is not an easy thing to accomplish; without great strategies, great results will never be the desired result. The author identified some strategies which include vision consciousness, valuing people, building a strong team leaders, knowing and embracing your values, listening effectively, communicating effectively, being a catalyst of change, being a good motivator, not being afraid to take hard decisions and develop your leadership. The office of the principal requires not only experience but educational qualification. Consequently, for a principal to be able to influence the school system such a person should be experienced and possess educational training. Okereka (2008) states that most principals have the qualification of Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) and Masters Degree (M.Ed) in Administration, Curriculum, Guidance and Counseling, etc. Others have degree certificates and diploma in education. These categories of principals' administrative strategies are regarded as professionally skilled. Nakpodia (2006) principals' administrative strategies are classified into seven and the most desirable among them is the democratic administrative strategy.

According to the author, a professionally skilled principal is one that possesses the pedagogical training in the field of education with emphasis on child psychology, moving from simple to complex while planning the curriculum, as

well as administrative knowledge. The non-professional principals lack the rudiments in the field of education.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The study was a descriptive survey. This design allowed a systemic collection of data on the assessment of instructional and administrative strategies applied by principals to improve academic performance in public secondary schools in Delta State.

Sample and sampling procedure

The target population was all the students, teachers and principals in public secondary schools in Delta State in Nigeria. A sample of two thousand, nine hundred and forty (2,940) was drawn from the target population by simple random sampling. That is, 30% of school personnel were used for the study.

Research instrument

A self-designed structured questionnaire was used to get information from the respondents. The first part of the question was to sort information of the respondents' demographic attributes, while the second section sorts to determine the assessment of instructional and administrative strategies applied by principals to improve academic performance. The factors considered were teachers' professional level as a factor for principal's improvement on academic performance; even the administrative strategies were also considered. Simple percentage and analysis of variance were used to analyze data.

Research question one

What is the difference between skilled and unskilled principals in the adoption of administrative strategies as applied to improve student's performance?

The research question was to ascertain the difference between skilled and unskilled principals in the adoption of administrative strategies as applied to improve student's performance. The data analyzing the question are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 shows that the principals with Masters of Education Degree in Educational Administration had a mean score of 3.69. This was closely followed by principals who are holders of Bachelor of Education degree with other options having a mean score of 3.65.

Other components such as Bachelor of Arts (B.A) with the Post Graduate Diploma in Education and Year of experience in the profession have a mean score of 3.50 and 3.43, respectively.

The qualification of principals in the schools for effectiveness in the appropriate use of administrative strategies is graphically presented in Figure 1.

Research Question two

Would there be any difference in the administrative strategies adopted by a school principal?

The research question was to ascertain if there is any difference in the administrative strategies adopted by a school principal. The data analyzing the question are presented in Table 2.

Table 1. The qualification of principals for adoption of appropriate administrative strategies.

S/N	Variables	Principals	Teachers	Student	Mean
	No of Respondents	287	1362	1291	
Principal's Qualifications					
1	B.Ed, (Option?)	3.54	3.60	3.80	3.65
2	M.Ed (Admin.)	3.60	3.66	3.82	3.69
3	B.A PGDE	3.52	3.57	3.45	3.50
4	Years of Experience	3.52	3.35	3.42	3.43
	Mean	3.55	3.55	3.62	3.57

Source: Adapted from the field Data.

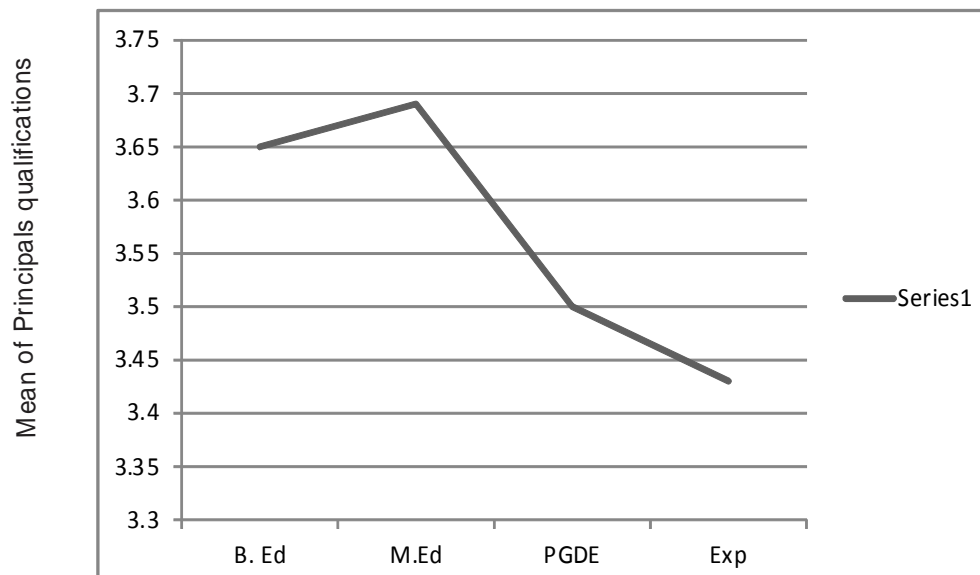


Figure 1. The qualification of principals.

Table 2 shows that the use of autocratic administrative strategy by principals had a mean score of 3.41 while the democratic administrative strategy used by principals had a mean score of 3.82. The components, Laissez-faire and Pseudo-democratic administrative strategies had a mean score of 3.50 and 3.43 respectively while the nomothetic, idiographic and transactional administrative strategies had a mean of 3.30, 2.66 and 2.39 respectively. The analysis is further carried out graphically as shown in Figure 2.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

In Nigeria, the posting of principals as school administrator depends on a number of factors such as years of experience, seniority and acquisition of educational qualifications such as the Bachelor of Education and specialization in another subject area (B.Ed) or a single

honour with a post graduate degree in education (PGDE). This is in agreement with Okereka (2008) who stated that most principals have the qualifications of Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) and Masters Degree (M.Ed) in Administrative, Curriculum, Guidance and Counseling. He regarded these principals as professionally skilled. The strategy adopted by a school principal goes a long way to determine the success or failure of the school. This was corroborated by Nakpodia (2006) who sees the democratic administrative strategy as widely considered the most desirable because the principal emphasis is on listening, accepting, trusting, creating, motivating, advising and encouraging. Mohlabe (2011) also agreed as the author listed some leadership strategies which are: vision consciousness, valuing people, building strong team leaders, knowing and embracing your values, listening effectively and communicating effectively.

Table 2. The adoption of appropriate administrative strategies in schools by principals.

S/N	Variables	Principals	Teachers	Student	Mean
	No of Respondents	287	1362	1291	
Principal's Qualifications					
1	Autocratic	3.34	3.40	3.50	3.41
2	Democratic	3.60	3.66	3.82	3.82
3	Laissez-faire	3.52	3.57	3.45	3.50
4	Pseudo-democratic	3.52	3.35	3.42	3.43
5	Nomothetic	3.12	3.38	3.39	3.30
6	Idiographic	2.52	2.13	2.34	2.66
7	Transactional	2.43	2.35	2.40	2.39
	Mean	22.05	21.84	22.32	22.51
		3.15	3.12	3.19	3.22

Source: Adapted from the field data.

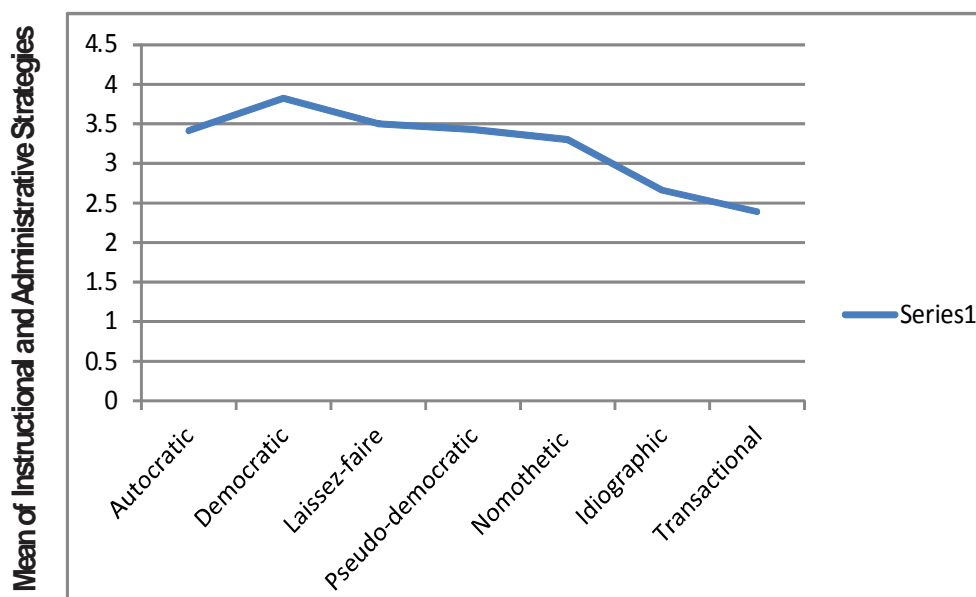


Figure 2. Instructional and administrative strategies of principals.

RECOMMENDATION

The following recommendations have been made based on conclusions drawn in the research:

1. The principals should ensure that the goals of the national policy on education are achieved through adequate supervision of instructions in the school, carrying the teachers and students along.
2. The principals should explore the instructional and administrative strategy that is most suitable for the school as the situation may demand as there may be no one

good strategy for all time, and the improvement of educational performance of students.

Conclusion

It is obvious that various instructional and administrative strategies may be desired in various circumstances, locations and settings. The principal as the helm's man should be creative enough to utilize the strategy which may create a conducive learning atmosphere for the school.

Conflict of Interests

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

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