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**SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS' WORKING
EXPERIENCE AND STUDENTS' ACADEMIC
PERFORMANCE IN SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS
IN BAUCHI, DUTSE AND GOMBE STATES**

DR. BARAKATU ABDULLAHI



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DR. BARAKATU ABDULLAHI

Educational Administration and Planning Unit, Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, Federal University Kashere, Nigeria

Corresponding Author's Email: barakatuay@gmail.com

Abstract

Purpose: This study investigated the School administrators' working experience and students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Bauchi, Dutse and Gombe states of Nigeria.

Methodology: The study adopted the descriptive research designed of the correlation type. Thirty (30) senior secondary schools administrators were selected and used as the respondents to this study, ten school administrators from each state. The instruments used to collect relevant data were school administrators' working experience check list and a self-designed questionnaire developed by the researcher, it was titled School Administrators' Working Experience and Students' Academic Performance (SAWESAP). The questionnaire was validated by two experts, one in the area of educational administration and planning, one in the measurement and evaluation both from Faculty of Education, Federal University, Kashere, Gombe State. Their suggestions and recommendations were incorporated into the final version and the reliability coefficient index of 0.73 was obtained after test-re-test with two weeks interval. Data collected were analysed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). One hypothesis was formulated and tested. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (r) Coefficient analysis procedure was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 significant levels.

Findings: The results of the analysis showed that, there was significant positive correlation between school administrators' working experiences and students' academic performance.

Unique Contribution to Practice and Policy: Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that, school administrators' experience will be considered when it comes to placement and promotion of school administrators that would enable them perform maximally in managing and handling human and material resources.

Keywords: *School, Administrators, Working, Experience and Students' Academic performance*

Introduction

The school administrators are the heads of schools, they manage, supervise, and facilitate the daily operations of the entire school activities. Dhuaey and Smith (2014), O'Malley, Long and King (2015) suggest that, experience of the principal is indirectly associated with the performance of the teachers and students. Effective school administrators care for students' success by immersing themselves in all aspects of the school system, school administrators monitor daily activities as well as emerging issues. Most school administrators have some experience of teaching and other working experience as many moved up from assistant principal and some other administrative responsibilities. School administrators are to provide strategic direction in the school system, they develop students achievement, encourages parents involvement, revise policies and procedures, administer the budget, evaluate staff and oversee human and materials resources (Dhuaey et al., 2014).

School administrators' working experience plays a vital roles for both teachers and other school employees to work together and execute their duties efficiently and optimally enhances students' academic performance. Mulyani (2012) states that the school administrators' working experience has a positive and significant influence on the quality of learning of students. The performance of school administrators as measured by the quality of students' learning outcome has significant influence on the high and low quality of school learning (Andrians, Kesumawati, & Kristiawan, 2018). This means that the level of quality of students' academic performance is explained by the level of school administrators' experience.

School Administrators' Working Experience and Students' Academic Performance

A study conducted by Samantha and Jill (2010) on experienced leadership examined the meaning of experienced teacher leadership from teachers' perspectives. It examined teachers' practice and talked about legitimate sources of power and influence in the context of an urban high school reform. It was an interpretive study of leadership situated in one small high school within a large urban high school (comprised six small school communities) in a Midwestern city. Monthly observations and three in-depth-interviews were conducted with each participant and relevant document were collected and analysed during the 2017 - 2018 school year. Participants included all seven teachers in the focus school, the school principal and district level leader which formed a total of 512 participants. The findings revealed that, school administrators' working experience positively affects students' performances. The study brings to the foreground the meaning(s) of experienced leadership from teachers' perspectives and how these meanings reward or eclipse actual leadership practice and the role of experienced leader in nurturing democratic school activities and students' academic performance. This study is related to the present study as they both examined the influence of school administrators' experience on students' academic performance. It should be noted that this study was conducted in Midwestern city and the current study was conducted in Bauchi, Dutse and Gombe states in northern Nigeria.

A study conducted by Debra (2010) on whether experience matters for school administrator, opined that lots of studies have tried to pinpoint the characteristics that make for an effective teacher, but not so many have tried to do the same for school administrators. The study was guided by three research questions, thus: is a more experienced principal better at job than say a new one? What about experience as an assistant principal or teacher? Does a degree from an Ivy League

college signal that a principal will really know how to run a school? The study tried to determine which qualities of school administrators seem to be most closely linked to good outcomes (students' performance). Findings showed that school administrators get better at their jobs with every year experience and particularly so in first few years on the job. Experience as an assistant principal also seemed to lead to better school outcomes. Recommendation was made among others that, school administrators would not be randomly assigned to schools, rather the more experienced school administrators, for instance, may be called in to head the school with the worst performance track records. Both studies examined the relationship between experience of school administrators and students' academic performance, but in different geographical locations. The former was conducted in Ivy League College, United States and the present study was conducted in Bauchi, Dutse and Gombe states in northern part of Nigeria.

A study conducted by David, Cortez and Judy (2010) presented results of a research that explored the role of the principal in a Community of Practice (COP) whose goal was to improve English language learners (ELL) performance in science. Secondary school administrators and teachers from four campuses participated in a year- long science Professional Development Program (PDP). Given measurable and significant English Language Learners (ELL) gains on state mandated science tests, the following questions guided the study: what role did school administrators play within their community of practice (COP) and their respective Professional Development Program (PDP) to promote English language learners (ELL) success in science? Using an explanatory design methodology, the study followed up on quantitative results by interviewing principal leaders at all participating schools throughout the year-long professional development programme.

A constructivist grounded theory analysis of the interviews revealed two theoretical categories that had an impact on defining effective school leadership roles: Adequate knowledge and experience in active involvement of the school administrators in the professional development program, and 2 school administrators' experience in supporting and validating the work of their teacher. The two findings acknowledged the experience of school administrators toward developing effective principal leadership roles had strong relationship to the academic success of English language learners in Science. This study is related to the present study in the sense that they both used descriptive survey method to obtain data on the same variables that relate experience of school administrators and students' academic performance. The two studies differ in terms of the geographical location. The former is in United States and the current study was conducted in Bauchi, Dutse and Gombe states in northern part of Nigeria.

Study conducted by Nakpodia (2010) attempted to find out if there was any significant relationship between principal's work experience and principal's performance in Delta Central Senatorial District Secondary School, Nigeria. The research raised two hypotheses to guide the study. The instruments utilized was a questionnaire designed as principal's work experience and principal performance (PWEPP). The instrument was validated and reliable, 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 collections were analysed by Pearson (r) statistics to find out the means responses of the relationship between School administrators' experience and principal's performance for students' academic performance. From the findings, the hypotheses were rejected thereby recommending that School administrators work experience should be considered when appointing school administrators. It should be noted that

this study was conducted in southern part of Nigeria. The extent of its applicability to Bauchi State, northern part of Nigeria is not clearly determined. Both studies used descriptive survey design and utilised the questionnaire instruments to obtain data and both data were analysed by the use of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) statistics. The current study shifted the geographical location to Bauchi, Dutse and Gombe states in northern part of Nigeria.

Mangin (2017) conducted a study on facilities, elementary teachers' support for instructional leadership. The study asked how School administrators' knowledge and experience help in their interaction with teacher support for the effective leadership. And how might district communication structures influence School administrators' support? Data collected in 2013 – 2014 came from five districts? Four of which were low socio-economic status districts? Interviews with fifteen (15) School administrators and twelve (12) Maths teacher leaders and six (6) supervisors focused on the nature and scope of the leaders' work and the role of the school administrators with regard to the leadership experience. Findings provided evidence of a link between school administrators' years of experience, knowledge of the position, their interaction with teacher and their support for effective leadership. Suggestions made were that districts should build school administrators' knowledge of leadership and foster principal leadership interaction and experience as a way to promote students' academic performance. This study is in harmony with the present study thereby examined the influence of School administrators' experience on students' academic performance, but the current study shifted the geographical location to Bauchi, Dutse and Gombe states of northern Nigeria.

Objective of the Study

The following specific objective was formulated in order to guide the conduct of this study, thus;

1. To find out the relationship between school administrators' working experiences and students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Bauchi, Dutse and Gombe states.

Research Question

The following research question was set to guide the conduct of this study, thus;

1. What is the relationship between school administrators' working experiences and students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Bauchi, Dutse and Gombe states?

Research Hypothesis

In order to guide the conduct of this study, one research hypothesis was formulated, as follows:

Ho₁: School administrators' working experiences has no significant relationship on students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Bauchi, Dutse and Gombe states.

Data Presentation

Table 1 indicated school administrators' working experiences in senior secondary schools in Bauchi, Dutse and Gombe states.

Table 1: School Administrators' Working Experiences

S/N	School Administrators' Working Experience	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Total No. (%)
1.	Above 10 years of teaching experience	24	86 %	30 (100 %)
2.	5 – 10 years of teaching experience	2	7 %	30 (100 %)
3.	Below 5 years of teaching experience	2	27 %	30 (100 %)
4.	Above 10 years of administrative experience	7	23 %	30 (100 %)
5.	5 – 10 years of administrative experience	8	27 %	30 (100 %)
6.	Below 5 years of administrative experience	15	50 %	30 (100 %)
7.	Experience as Vice Principal	30	100 %	30 (100 %)
8.	Experience as Head of Department	12	40 %	30 (100 %)
9.	Experience as Committee Chairman	4	13 %	30 (100 %)
10.	Experience as Home/other Master	13	44 %	30 (100 %)
11.	Experience as Exam Officer	4	13 %	30 (100 %)

Source: Fieldwork: 2020

Table 1 showed that 86% of senior secondary school administrators in Bauchi, Dutse and Gombe states had above ten years of teaching experience, 7% were in the range of 5 - 10 years of teaching experience and 7% had below 5 years teaching experience. This data showed that the teaching experience with regard to being school administrator is adequate.

The same table indicated that majority of school administrators (50%) had less than 5 years of administrative experience, which showed that, they were not long in the administrative offices. Meanwhile, 27% of the senior secondary school administrators had administrative experience between the range of 5 - 10 years and 23% of them had administrative experience of 10 years and above.

However, the data revealed that 100% of the senior secondary school administrators had experience as vice school administrators before becoming School administrators, 44% of them had administrative experience as house/other masters, 40% had experience as Head of Departments, 13% acquired administrative experience as committee chairmen and 15% were examination officers as well. This data however, showed that majority of the senior secondary school administrators had acquired reasonable administrative experiences.

Hypothesis One

Ho₁: School administrators' working experiences has no significant relationship on students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Bauchi, Dutse and Gombe states.

This hypothesis was tested and presented in table 2.

Table 2: Relationship between School Administrators' Working Experience and Students' Academic Performance Senior Secondary School in Bauchi, Dutse and Gombe States.

Variables	No	\bar{X}	SD	Df	Cal-r	p-value	Decision
School administrators' experience	30	1.32	.87	29	.78	.44	Ho ₃ rejected
Students' performance	30	2.99	.73				

Source: Fieldwork: 2019

Results from table 2 revealed that calculated (r) value of .78 was greater than the p-value of .44 at 0.05 level of significant. Therefore, the hypothesis which stated that school administrators years of working and administrative experiences has no significant impact on students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Bauchi, Dutse and Gombe States state was rejected. By implication the findings indicated that school administrators' working experience positively affects students' academic performances.

Discussions of the Findings

Table 2 revealed that, school administrators' working experiences was significantly and highly correlated with students' academic performance. This meant that the hypothesis which stated that there was no significant relationship between school administrators' working experiences and students' academic performance was rejected. This means that the school administrators' working experience is very much relevant to academic performance of students. It also signified that, where the school administrators' experience is lacking the academic performance of students could be correspondingly falling. As the saying goes experience is the best teacher, this signified the fact that, the more experience the school administrators the more productive they could be. Academic activities could be seriously improved by experienced School administrators and it can positively impact students' academic performance. Adequate experience acquired by the school administrators is a necessity and it can positively translate to students' academic performance. Majority of participants' to this study (78%) agreed that, years of working experience of school administrators positively relates to students' academic performance. However, the current study is in collaboration with the views of Mulyani (2012) who stated that, the school administrators' working experience has a positive and significant influence on the quality of learning of students. The current study is in line with the views of Andrians, Kesumawati, & Kristiawan, (2018) they opined that the level of quality of students' academic performance is explained by the level of school administrators' experience.

A study conducted by Samantha and Jill (2010) also buttress the finding of this research as they find out that school administrators' working experience positively affects students' performances. The literature reviewed also indicated that the findings of this study agreed with the finding of Debra (2010) who found out that, school administrators get better at their jobs with every year experience and particularly so in first few years on the job. Experience as an assistant principal also seemed to lead to better school outcomes. This study agreed with the findings of David, Cortez and Judy (2010) as well of that of Nakpodia (2010) their findings acknowledged the experience of

school administrators toward developing effective principal leadership roles had strong relationship to the academic success. They recommended that school administrators' working experience should be considered when appointing school administrators. However, the current research was conducted in Bauchi, Dutse and Gombe states in northern part of Nigeria. While the former was conducted in different geographical areas within and outside Nigeria.

Conclusions

The study concluded that, school administrators' working experience has positive impact on students' academic performance. Among the reasons for poor students' academic performance are perhaps the school administrators' inexperience of both teaching and administrative duties. Some school administrators deliberately neglects their experiences and therefore not performing the administrative functions effectively and ensure students' academic performance.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research and the subsequent conclusion drawn from this study, the following recommendations were presented:

1. School administrators' experience should be considered when it comes to placement and promotion of school administrators that would enable them perform maximally in managing and handling human and material resources.
2. School administrators should be encouraged to undergone different stages of administrative positions and obtain adequate working experience that would enable them keep in place appropriate leadership functions and improve efficiency in managing human and materials resources that will promote students' academic performance.
3. Government should in as much as possible consider school previous working experience when it comes to selections and appointments of school administrators so as to get all the necessary knowledge and skills of leader ship procedures that will definitely enhances students' academic performance.

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