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School Instructional Leadership and Students' Academic Achievement in Selected Primary Schools in Sokoto

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Abstract

The study examined the relationship between school instructional leadership and students' academic achievement in selected primary schools of Sokoto state. The study was guided by three research questions and objectives. Descriptive survey design was used. The Instructional Leadership Questionnaire versions for head teachers, teachers and school prefects were used in collecting responses from the 248 samples comprising head teachers, teachers and school prefects from the selected primary schools in Sokoto state. Data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics specifically involving mean, standard deviation, and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. The findings of the study established relationships between school instructional leadership and students' academic achievement with head teachers' instructional leadership; revealed a weak and positive relationship (r=.323) (sig.=.000<.05), teachers' instructional leadership; revealed a moderate and positive relationship (r=.532) (sig.=.000<.05) and school prefects' instructional leadership; revealed a weak and positive relationship (r=.311) (sig.=.031<.05). This implies that school instructional leadership i.e head teachers' instructional leadership, teachers' instructional leadership and school prefects' instructional leadership has significant relationship on students' academic achievement. The study recommended that, head teachers should thoroughly supervise teachers' performance by checking the students' lesson notes to confirm if the teachers are actually doing their job. Teachers on the other hand should utilize teaching strategies that call for hands-on experience, collaboration and problem solving, finally, Schools prefects should be involve in instructional leadership of the school. This can be done by giving them active roles to play, such as monitoring students' behaviour, monitoring teachers who do not often come to class and also their method of teaching.

Keywords: Instructional leadership, head teacher, teacher, prefect, Sokoto State

Introduction

Education in Nigeria has continued being important in propelling the country's development going by the prominence it is being given by the government. The head teachers, teachers and school prefects' role in the primary school instructional leadership remain crucial if the government has to meet its goals. The head teacher is however undoubtedly the central person in all the leadership and team work exhibited in any

school. That therefore makes it relevant to appraise any school academic achievement based on the instructional leadership of the head teachers, teachers and -school prefects.

In the context of this study, the role of the head teacher as instructional leader is reflected by the level of supervision to the teachers by the head teacher, level of motivation of staff in the school and level of cooperation by other stakeholders in teaching and learning process. Teachers' role as instructional leaders is reflected by the level of presentation of completed schemes of work, records of work covered and attendance records examined by the head teacher. And the school prefects' role as instructional leaders is reflected by the level of activeness of the prefects and class monitors in mobilizing, supervising and enhancing learning through coordinating fellow students both within and outside the classroom.

Instructional leadership is defined as a core aspect of effective school leadership, which has an intentional focus and demonstrated impact on continuous improvement in quality teaching and learning (Spotlight paper, 2022). Instructional leadership is a form of school leadership that places teaching and learning at the forefront of school decision making (Gumus et al. 2018, p. 29). School leadership has a significant impact in fostering student achievement. The impact of leadership is greatest where it is focused on improving teaching and learning and is amplified when responsibilities for leading teaching and learning are widely distributed across the school (AITSL 2018; Robinson et al. 2009, p. 40; Waters et al. 2003, p. 3).

Academic achievement represents performance outcomes that indicate the extent to which a person has accomplished specific goals that were the focus of activities in instructional environments, specifically in school, college, and university. School systems mostly define cognitive goals that either apply across multiple subject areas (e.g., critical thinking) or include the acquisition of knowledge and understanding in a specific intellectual domain (e.g., numeracy, literacy, science, history) Steinmayr et al (2015). They further opined that, academic achievement should be considered to be a multifaceted construct that comprises different domains of learning. Because the field of academic achievement is very wide-ranging and covers a broad variety of educational outcomes, the definition of academic achievement depends on the indicators used to measure it. Among the many criteria that indicate academic achievement, there are very general indicators such as procedural and declarative knowledge acquired in an educational system, more curricular-based criteria such as grades or performance on an educational achievement test, and cumulative indicators of academic achievement such as educational degrees and certificates.

Heck in Madawaki (2015) who conducted his research in United State of America found that school governance, instructional organization, and school climate affected student achievement. The head teacher's leadership variables influenced school governance, instructional organization, and school climate, which in turn directly affected student achievement.

In the African context, A Kenyan study by Musungu and Nasongo (2020) on the instructional leadership role of secondary school headteachers revealed that they supervised teachers' work by inspecting records such as schemes of work, lesson books, records of work covered, class attendance records, and clock in/clock out book.

A studied by Cherutoi, Okutu and Chumba (2024) on contribution of principals' instructional leadership on learners' academic achievement in public secondary schools in Baringo County, Kenya. The target population was 6901 Form Four students, 1266 teachers, and 140 principals, during the 2017-2020 school years, 6(six) Sub-County Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (SCQASOs) and 1(one) County Director of Education (CDE). Their study adopted descriptive survey research design. Stratified random

sampling technique was applied to sample 30% of each of the categories of the study populations. The sample consisted of 2,070 students, 380 teachers, 42 school principals, six SCQASOs and CDE.

The research instruments were questionnaires and semi-structured interview guides. The quantitative statistics used included frequencies, means, percentages and standard deviations and the results presented using tables and charts. Qualitative data were thematically clustered in relation to the objectives of the study. The study found that principals were not up to date in their mandate since they gave less emphasis on some key issues such as: class-visits, inspection and approval of teachers' lesson plans, inspection and approval of teachers' lesson notes and inspection and approval of students' lesson notes. The study recommended that principals should be thorough in their instructional leadership responsibility by ensuring that teachers are up to date in their preparation and delivery of content. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the body of knowledge on how to improve instructional leadership in educational institutions.

The Theory

Walberg's Theory of Educational Productivity suggests that academic achievement is influenced by a combination of psychological, instructional, and environmental factors. Thus, the theory has been found applicable to the study. The theory identifies nine factors that significantly impact student learning and achievement, which are explained as follows:

1. Student Ability (Aptitude): Includes prior achievement, intelligence, and motivation.
2. Instruction: Quality and quantity of teaching the student receives. Time on Task: The amount of time the student actively engages in learning.
3. Time on Task: The amount of time the student actively engages in learning.
4. Home Environment: Parental involvement, encouragement, and learning resources at home.
5. Classroom Environment: Includes the teacher-student relationship, classroom management, and learning climate.
6. Peer Group: The influence of classmates and friends on the student's values and behavior.
7. Television Viewing: Excessive or non-educational TV can negatively affect achievement.
8. Age or Developmental Level: The readiness and maturity level of the student.
9. Affective Climate: The emotional tone of the school or classroom.

Statement of the Problem

An ideal school leadership is that which is capable of ensuring the smooth operation of the affairs of the school, controlling and directing the affairs of the school, provision of instructional materials, ensuring quality teachers, remuneration and the motivation of teachers, improving discipline and serving as an exemplary model as well as providing supervisory services to ensure the overall students' academic achievement. Despite the policy of the Nigerian government that catered for the provision of quality education, the performance of primary schools in Sokoto has remained very poor due to poor instructional leadership.

It is observed that despite significant gains in expanding access to primary schooling, actual literacy and numeracy outcomes remain significantly deficient across the state. Although children are now enrolled in

school in unprecedented numbers, they are not learning core skills expected at their age and grade level. Specifically, the assessments found that: only one out of every ten children assessed in primary 3 was able to read primary 2 level story and correctly solve primary 2 numeracy questions up to division level, where, government schools representing 1.1% and 1.9% for private schools. Secondly, there were Local government differences in literacy and numeracy for example, two out of every ten children in metropolitan school could read a primary 2 level story compared to less than one out of ten children in outside local government who could do so. Furthermore, pupils academic achievement has been alarmingly low in primary schools of some schools in Sokoto state over the years. It is against this background, the researcher felt to undertake this research on the relationship between instructional leadership and academic achievement of selected primary school students in Sokoto state.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To examine the influence of head teachers' instructional leadership on students' academic achievement of primary schools in Sokoto state.
2. To study the influence of teachers' instructional leadership on students' academic achievement of primary schools in Sokoto state.
3. To assess the influence of school prefects' instructional leadership on students' academic achievement of primary schools in Sokoto state.

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant relationship between head teachers' instructional leadership and students' academic achievement of Sokoto state primary schools.
2. There is no significant relationship between teachers' instructional leadership and students' academic achievement of Sokoto state primary schools.
3. There is no significant relationship between school prefects' instructional leadership and students' academic achievement of Sokoto state primary schools.

Methodology

Research Design

The study employed cross-sectional survey design. A cross-sectional survey design involves obtaining information from a wide section of respondents at once without need to follow up the respondents for further information (Amin, 2005). A cross sectional survey design is appreciate for collecting data about preferences, attitude, practices and concern of people from sample of a population at a particular time. The results were then extrapolated to the entire population. The design was used by the research to gather data from a sample of Head teachers, teachers, school prefects. Thus, data collection was done over a short period. Quantitative approaches was used being appropriate for the study. Quantitative research approach involved collection of numerical data in order to explain, predict and control phenomenon of interest. The research applied it in order to describe the current condition of influence of school instructional leadership on the students' academic achievement in selected primary schools of Sokoto state.

Population of the Study

The population of the study comprised selected public primary schools in Sokoto state. There are 25 selected government primary schools that took part in the study. The target population were Head teachers, Teachers and school prefects from all selected primary schools. The subject targeted was considered to be true representative population of the study.

Sampling Techniques and Sample Sizes

A sample refers to the part of a population that is carefully chosen for an intensive study and whose result is taken to represent the population of the study. The study used purposive, proportionate and simple random sampling techniques in selecting participants. Purposive sampling was used in selecting schools and headteachers, while proportionate sampling technique was in selecting samples from the sample frames of teachers and school prefects; and simple random sampling method was used in distribution of questionnaires to teachers and school prefects. Thus, the samples of the study comprised 5 schools from the population giving a population of 5 head teachers, 520 teachers and 150 school prefects. The total sample frame therefore was 675 respondents. Howeve, using the guide of a simple selection procedure by Krejcie and Morgan (1970). A sample size of 248 was established to represent the sample frame of 675. All the 5 head-teachers were thus purposively selected to participate in the study due to their highly small number. Table 1 gives a summary.

Table 1 Sample size and sampling technique

Category	Population	Sample	Sampling Technique
Head teacher	5*	5	Purposive
Teacher	520	189	Proportionate Sampling
School prefect	150	54	Proportionate sampling
Total	**670**	**248**	

Source: Field survey (2025)

Data Collection Instruments

The data collection instruments used was self-administered questionnaires such as headteachers and teachers instructional leadership questionnaire and documentary review of ready-made results of the pupils.

Data Quality Control

The following ways were used to ensure the data quality control:

To establish the validity, the instruments were subjected to the scrutiny by experts who have evaluated the relevance of the items in the instruments to the objectives. The instrument was adjudged to have both face and content validity. The reliability of the headteachers and teachers instructional leadership questionnaire

was ensured through piloting of the instrument. Data collected from sample of respondents was analysed using Cronbach's Alpha giving a coefficient of 0.7 indicating the reliability of the instrument.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data collected was analyzed by using simple frequency counts and inferential statistics to analyze the data collected. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was required in order to establish correlation between the elements under independent variable (school instructional leadership) and dependent variable (students' academic achievement) and the magnitude of the relationship.

Results

The results of the study were presented in accordance with research hypotheses as follows:

H_0 1: There is no significant relationship between head teachers' instructional leadership and students' academic achievement of Sokoto state primary schools.

The result of this hypothesis is in the table 1.

Table 1: Showing Relationship between head teachers' instructional leadership and students' achievement

		Head Leadership	Academic achievement
Head teacher Leadership	Pearson Correlation	1	.323*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	24	24
Academic achievement	Pearson Correlation	.323*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	24	24

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

From the table 1, Pearson Correlation was conducted to determine the relationship between head teachers' instructional leadership and students' academic achievement. The result of the correlation revealed a weak and positive correlation (r=.323) between head teachers' instructional leadership and students' academic achievement. Considering the p-value (sig. = .000 < .05), it was therefore suggested that there is significant relationship between head teachers' instructional leadership and students' academic achievement in primary schools of Sokoto state. Therefore the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between head teachers' instructional leadership and students' academic achievement of selected primary schools of Sokoto state was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis was accepted. This implies that effective leadership of instructional approaches of the head teachers such as ensuring lesson preparation and punctuality of the teachers slightly influenced students' academic achievement in primary schools of Sokoto state.

H_0 2: There is no significant relationship between teachers' instructional leadership and students' academic achievement of Sokoto state primary schools.

Table 2: Showing Relationship between teachers' instructional leadership and students' achievement

		Teacher Leadership	Academic achievement
Teacher Leadership	Pearson Correlation	1	.532*
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	
	N	200	200
Academic Achievement	Pearson Correlation	.532*	1
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	
	N	200	200

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

From the table 2, Pearson Correlation was conducted to determine the relationship between teachers' instructional leadership and students' academic achievement. The result of the correlation revealed a moderate and positive correlation (r=.532) between teachers' instructional leadership and students' academic achievement. Considering the p-value (sig.=.000<.05), it was therefore suggested that there is a significant relationship between teachers' instructional leadership and students' academic achievement in primary schools of Sokoto state. Therefore the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between teachers' instructional leadership and students' academic achievement in selected primary schools of Sokoto state was rejected; hence the alternative hypothesis was accepted. This implies that effective instructional leadership of the teacher – such as maintenance of discipline in the class, encouraging students to participate in school activities etc highly influenced the academic achievement of the students in primary schools of Sokoto state.

H_0 3: There is no significant relationship between school prefects' instructional leadership and students' academic achievement of Sokoto state primary schools

Table 3: Showing Relationship between prefects' instructional leadership and students' achievement

		Prefects Leadership	Academic achievement
Prefect Leadership	Pearson Correlation	1	.311*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.031
	N	100	100
Academic Achievement	Pearson Correlation	.311*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.031	
	N	100	100

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

From the table 3, Pearson Correlation was conducted to determine the relationship between prefects' instructional leadership and students' academic achievement. The result of the correlation revealed a weak correlation (r =.311) between prefects' instructional leadership and students' academic achievement. Considering the p-value (sig.=.031< p =.05), it was therefore suggested that there is significant relationship between prefects' instructional leadership and students' academic achievement in primary schools of Sokoto state. Therefore the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between school prefects' instructional leadership and students' academic achievement in selected primary schools of Sokoto state was rejected therefore, the alternative hypothesis was accepted. This implies that the role of prefects in primary schools of Sokoto state slightly and significantly relate to the academic achievement of the students.

Summary of Major Findings

Results from data analysis are summarized below:

1. There is significant relationship between head teachers' instructional leadership and students' academic achievement in primary schools of Sokoto state.
2. There is a significant relationship between teachers' instructional leadership and students' academic achievement in primary schools of Sokoto state.
3. There is significant relationship between prefects' instructional leadership and students' academic achievement in primary schools of Sokoto state.

Discussion of Findings

This study investigated the relationship between instructional leadership and students' academic achievement of selected primary schools of Sokoto state.

The first finding revealed a weak and positive correlation (r=.323) between head teachers' instructional leadership and students' academic achievement. Considering the p-value (sig. = .000 < .05). This finding is supported by Musungu and Nasongo (2020) on the instructional leadership role of secondary school head-teachers who found that supervision of teachers' work by inspecting records such as schemes of work,

lesson books, records of work covered, class attendance records, and clock in/clock out book plays a key role in students' achievement.

The second finding revealed a moderate and positive correlation (r=.532) between teachers' instructional leadership and students' academic achievement. Considering the p-value (sig.=.000<.05). This finding has concur with Walberg's (1981) theory of educational productivity which posits that the environment in which learning takes place is another fundamental element to take into account when evaluating a student's performance. For example, one should test the climate in their classroom. Also, keep in mind that there are other types of environments such as library or the home. Learning, this is another factor in Welberg's theory, one may realize that the climate and methodology are far from motivating if one goes into the classroom and look at how current educational model is put into practice.

Third finding revealed a weak correlation (r =.311) between prefects' instructional leadership and students' academic achievement. Considering the p-value (sig.=.031< p =.05). in support of this finding, therefore, report conducted by the Institutional Research Office (2011) highlights that serving as a school prefect had lasting impact and was a positive contributing factor in relation to students' academic achievement, especially with regard to graduation. Also, Madawaki (2015) found school prefects' instructional leadership positively relates to the academic achievement of the students although the relationship of head teacher and school prefects with the students' academic achievement is weak as revealed. Contrary to this, Etsey (2005) argued that prefects do not have any impact on the academic achievement of the students, emphasizing that their impact is on school discipline and other minor activities.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded instructional leadership has significant relationship with students' academic achievement in selected schools of Sokoto state. Specifically, headteacher instructional leadership has relationship with students' academic achievement; teacher instructional leadership has relationship with students' academic achievement and prefects' instructional leadership has relationship with students' academic achievement. Thus, students' academic achievement could be influence positively or negatively by instructional leadership.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Head teachers should brace up to their tasks by thoroughly supervising teachers' performance by checking the students' lesson notes to confirm if the teachers are actually doing their job. Also in appointing head teachers competence and performance should be the yardstick hence, not other affiliation. Head teachers should frequently check how students are assessed at both formative and summative faces. This will help the head teachers to determining if students' assessment approach matches with the curriculum.
2. Teachers on the other hand should utilize teaching strategies that call for hands-on experience, collaboration and problem solving. This can be done by actively engaging students in learning process, engaging them in group activities and making them to enact a scenario so that learning will be matched with the students' experience.
3. Schools should involve the prefects in instructional leadership of the school. This can be done by giving them active roles to play, such as monitoring students' behavior, monitoring teachers who do not often come to class and also their method of teaching. In doing so, a class register should be open in each class at the custody of class prefects to track the record of teachers in that regard.

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