

learning is needed by government and other stakeholders involved in educational policy making.

ii. The searchlight of sexual harassment should be beamed and focused on every institution of learning at all levels instead of focusing on university settings alone.

\iii. Gender Policies and laws relating to sexual harassment should be effectively implemented across all institutions of learning in Nigeria. This will go a long way in curbing the menace, especially in Nigeria's Colleges of education which is the baking room of facilitators of Nigeria's Basic Education policy.

iv. In order to ensure the attainment of a successful basic education programme, the student-teachers' training process should go on unhindered. Hence, provisions for punishment for sexual harassment should capture academic staff, non-academic staff, poorly dressed female students and male student-teachers as well.

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SCHOOL HEADS LEADERSHIP PRACTICES AND BASIC EDUCATION IN EKITI STATE, NIGERIA

Dapo Alonge BOLARINWA

Department of Educational Management,
Faculty of Education,
Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria
E-mail: dapo.bolarinwa@eksu.edu.ng

Abstract

The study examined the relationship between school heads' leadership practices and Basic Education in Ekiti State, Nigeria. The descriptive research design of correlational study was employed in the study. The population consisted of 810 public primary and 141 Junior Secondary Schools and their teachers in Ekiti State. A validated instrument tagged "School Heads Leadership Practices Questionnaire" was used to collect data for the study. The sample consisted of 24 schools and 240 teachers. Stratified simple random sampling technique was used to select four primary schools and four Junior Secondary Schools from each of the three Senatorial Districts while simple random sampling technique was used to select 10 teachers from each of the schools selected. Percentages and Pearson product moment correlation statistics was used. To analyse the data for the study. The result revealed that there was a significant relationship between school heads' supervisory practice, communication practice, maintenance of school facilities practice and Basic Education in Ekiti State. It was recommended that school heads should not relent on their efforts at employing regular supervisory techniques; maintaining and improving their communication skills. The government should continue to lay emphasis on the maintenance of school facilities by providing funds for the school heads.

Key Words: School heads, Leadership, Leadership practices, Basic Education

Introduction

Primary education constitutes an important aspect of Nigerian educational system. Apart from being the very foundations upon which the other levels rest, it serves as the only source of secondary in-takes. Federal Republic of Nigeria (2014) realising the importance of primary education, described it as the way to the success or failure of the entire educational system. There is no doubt that a solid foundation built at the primary school level will give a super structure for a strong and dynamic nation.

In realisation of the importance of education as the basic tools of the Nigerian child for an all-round development as articulated in the World Conference, the Federal Government of Nigeria on 30th September, 1999 launched the Universal Basic Education. Under this scheme, every Nigerian child of school going age is entitled to basic education up to Junior Secondary

School level. According to Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004), the Universal Basic Education would be free, universal and compulsory for all children between the ages of six and 15. The entire concept of the Universal Basic Education is on the premise that for an individual to function effectively in the society, certain knowledge is required.

According to Universal Basic Education Commission (2006), Universal Basic Education is not a new educational policy. It is provided within the context of 6-3-3-4 National Policy on Education. Indeed, its introduction is a reinforcement of the 6-3-3-4 policy on education. Globally, the main goal of Universal Basic Education is to make basic education available for all tagged "Education For All" which also forms the slogan of the scheme. Fortunately, the same goal is aimed in Nigeria. Denga (2000) cited in Bolarinwa (2014), asserted that memories may be flashed back to 1950 when Universal Declaration of Human Right asserted that everyone has a right to education. The right to education for all Nigerian citizens triggered the launch of the Universal Basic Education in 1999 and was followed with an enabling law via Universal Basic Education Act 2004, which was signed in May, 2004.

Basic Education is the educational foundation of every child. It provides the basic learning and reading skills. It includes the Lower Basic Education (Primary 1-3), Middle Basic (Primary 4-6) and Upper Basic (Junior Secondary School 1-3). In its totality, basic education is the first nine years of unaltered education of the child. Universal Basic Education Act (2004) defined Basic Education as early childhood care and education and nine years of formal schooling. The same Act also defined Universal Basic Education as early childhood care and education, the nine years of formal schooling; adult literacy and non-formal education, skills acquisition programmes and the education of special groups such as, nomads and migrants, girl-child and women, almajiri, street children and disabled groups. A close look at the above shows that in the context of the law, Basic Education bears a restrictive definition while Universal Basic Education is broadly defined, but the critical nature of education as defined here include, compulsory, free and universal education for every child of primary and

Junior Secondary School age.

It was observed that education and politics are related. This is because, in Nigeria, many changes had been recorded in the political system over the years and these had resulted to instability of its educational system. New policies are formulated due to criticism of the inadequacies in the former policies. It appears this had led to situations whereby policies in use become abandoned while new ones are formulated and at times, the existing one becomes manipulated to suit the government in power. In support of this assertion, Ekiti State is among the states that refused to operate a Junior Secondary School as a separate institution. This is not so good enough for sustainable basic education in Ekiti State!

According to Okoroma (2006), the Universal Primary Education (UPE) meant to address the problem of educational disparity within and between the states of the federation was jettisoned in 1999 for the Universal Basic Education (UBE) meant to ensure total eradication of illiteracy in the country through the provision of education for all. Six years later, most of the operational factors that hampered the success of the Universal Primary Education for example, poor funding, inadequate facilities, poor teacher motivation and so on, can still bedevil the Universal Basic Education. If the Universal Basic Education is not repositioned, it is likely to end up like the Universal Primary Education. He went further that re-launching of the Universal Primary Education in a different name – Universal Basic Education, was not also surprising because of the monumental failure of the Universal Primary Education, it is worrisome that the Universal Basic Education is going the same way of the Universal Primary Education whose failure is no longer in dispute.

In support of the above, Gbagi (2010) reported that as part of the white paper raised on education reform, the country might return to the former 6-5-4 system beginning from next session. Plan had reached an advanced stage on the proposed change and the Federal Government would soon make its decision known.

According to Universal Basic Education Commission (2008), the inadequate attention paid to the basic education sub-sector over the years had resulted in the near collapse of the educational system which led to limited access to quality education. The illiteracy rate was on the high side; teachers were poorly trained and poorly motivated while funding of basic education continued to decline.

Leadership practices according to Onuselogu and Uzoechina (2015), is the competencies required for effective and efficient planning, staffing, organising, coordinating, controlling, decision-making, and

initiating of actions for effective management of school. The situations above appear to have risen as a result of the school heads inability to exhibit their leadership practices in terms of supervisory practice, communication practice, and maintenance of school facilities practice. According to Akpan and Onabe (2016), the extent to which sustainable Basic Education can be achieved depends greatly on the leadership practices (students' personnel services, resource provision, collaborations in the school and so on) of the school heads.

According to Glickman, Gordon and Ross-Gordon (2007), one of the most important functions of the school head in any school is that of being an instructional leader. The school head oversees teaching and learning in the school to ensure that quality instruction takes place. Chike-Okoli (2006) stated that in the context of education, supervision refers to the role played by an education officer (or supervisor) in being responsible and making sure that teachers do their work effectively.

Supervision of schools in the Universal Basic Education programme is an aspect of quality control. It is bound with the efficiency of learning and the improvement of the teaching/learning services. Quality control of Basic education centre is closely associated with a vital component of education, Monitoring and Evaluation. Today, "Quality Control" is used more or less synonymous to supervision or inspection which is within the comprehension of the wider segment of educated publics. Meanwhile, it has been observed that there is inefficiency in the level of supervision by the school heads and this could have a serious implication for the sustainability of Basic Education.

More so, it appears that poor attitude towards supervision by the school heads is becoming alarming. Some of the school heads seem to be actually out of touch with modern supervision techniques. They have estranged themselves from the actual instructional realities of the classroom and as a result, their activities as supervisors tend to be of very little value to the teachers and students which could result to non-sustainability of Basic Education in Ekiti State. Therefore, sustainable Basic Education in Ekiti State to some extent appears to depend on school heads supervisory techniques. This is so because, it aims at correcting observed lapses of teachers with a view to achieving the stated goals and objectives in the classroom. Akinfolarin, Babalola and Aladetan (2017) maintained that a system not supervised and evaluated will not yield the desired result and when supervision is absent, it leads to ineffective curriculum delivery.

A study was carried out by Aggrey (2010) on the supervisory roles of heads teachers in public Basic schools in the Agona Municipality in the Central Region of Ghana and found out that head teachers, as supervisors of institution, were often constrained in their supervisory roles as a result of delays in the release and disbursement of the capitation grant to finance school activities; inadequacy of the amount of money released and disbursed as capital grant to the schools which in this situation, head teachers become financially handicapped and this adversely affects effective and efficient supervision of instruction of the school; absenteeism and lack of regularity and punctuality to school by some teachers were found to be recurring phenomena in some of the public Basic schools which negatively affected the effectiveness of the supervisory roles of head teachers because, school heads lacked the power to sanction non-performing teachers. A study was also carried out by Glanz, Shulma and Sullivan (2007) on the impact of instructional supervision on students' achievement, can we make the connection? They found out that schools with effective supervision models had significant increase in students' achievement because; a culture of teacher empowerment and collaboration is established.

Communication is said to be the live wire of any organisation. This is why it becomes indispensable for it to be purposeful. According to Abdulrahman, Shamsudeen and Jamil (2018), communication is the means whereby people in an organisation exchange information regarding the operation of an enterprise. Wood (2012) opined that communication has personal, organisation, and social functions such as informing, supervising, guiding, transmitting knowledge and skills, educating, integrating, expressing feelings, setting up social relationships, reducing anxiety and solving problems, given performance feedback, entertaining, warning, assuming necessary roles, information sharing, persuading, and expressing emotions and innovations.

It appears communication process is one of the most important processes regarding the success of administrators and the sustainability of organisations. Uzun and Ayik (2017) asserted that communication skills of administrators come into prominence when carrying out administrative activities. According to Abdulrahman, Shamsudeen and Jamil (2018), the importance of communication in any organisation has been long recognised and hardly an action is taken in any organisation without communication leading to it. The form which communication take can profoundly affect the attitude of the employee and the degree which they understand and support management policies and actions. What the school heads communicate depending on situation but broadly

include: government policies e.g. curriculum matters, staff and student welfare issues, circular from the Ministry of Education and Teaching Service Commission, information on school fees and levies, notice of meetings and other important school events like, sports, observation about staff and student discipline, school plant maintenance and supervisory reports, staff promotion, committee reports, and personal matters such as when staff is bereaved.

In a study conducted by Nwosu (2017) on principals' communicating strategies and teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Ikenne Local Government Area of Ogun State; it was found out that there is a significant relationship between principals' communication strategies and teachers' job performance.

It seems, some school heads lack good communication skills which made them fail to disseminate current information on educational issues and teaching techniques to teachers. According to Ibrahim and Mahmoud (2017), educational institutions need effective leaders who are good communicators. Personal observation has shown that notice boards are no longer in use by some school heads to give information to the teachers and students. This perhaps, has made individuals to work at cross purposes towards the achievement of the school goals thereby making the sustainability of Basic Education almost impossible.

The school facilities are very important for meaningful and rewarding teaching and learning process. They are the material resources that facilitate effective teaching and learning in schools. Jaiyeoba and Atanda (2005) posited that educational facilities are those things which enable a skilful teacher to achieve a level of instructional effectiveness that exceeds what is possible when they are not provided.

The state of infrastructural decay in many schools in Ekiti State is a manifestation of poor funding of the system. Ahmed (2003) opined that in most of the nation's schools, teaching and learning take place under a most un-conducive environment, lacking the basic materials and thus hindered the fulfilment of educational objectives. Ensuring that school facilities are maintained is the exclusive preserve of the school heads. There are a lot of school plant facilities that require regular maintenance for them not to be grounded. It appears most school heads are not fully concerned about the physical environment and facilities around the school. Obidoa (2006) pointed out that dilapidated buildings, leaking roofs, abandoned projects, over-grown trees and lawns, dingy and dark buildings and so on have demoralising

effects on people, especially, the adolescents. As a result, the school heads have the responsibility of ensuring that these facilities are in good shape. Babayemi (2006) asserted that even with the meagre resources at their disposal, they have the responsibility of providing teachers and other instructional staff with the necessary resources for effective teaching.

Moreover, the purpose of school facilities maintenance is to minimise unforeseen faults. However, a good maintenance culture will include an all-round planning of the school facilities. The lukewarm attitude towards the care and maintenance of school facilities in Ekiti State has not been without consequences. Awokoya (1981) cited in Bolarinwa (2014) asserted that the poor state of Nigeria schools has brought about both financial and human losses to the nation. An example of the above point was the 1990 incident of Saque Comprehensive College, Port-Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria where a number of lives were lost when the building collapsed. No wonder! Awosika bitterly cautioned that Ministries and Local Governments that fails to maintain their school buildings might unwilling be sowing the seed of sorrow among the public at large.

In a study carried out by Ibara and Idu (2011) on management practices of Universal Basic Education programme of head teachers in Rivers State, Nigeria. It was revealed that head teachers routinely undertake checks to detect damages on facilities such as desks, chairs, broken windows, and others. The possible explanation to this finding is that, it is unfortunate that after detection of minor damages on school facilities, the head teacher cannot undertake minor repairs. In collaboration, Amirize (2000) cited in Bolarinwa (2014) observed that the role of public school administrators with regard to facilities maintenance is not quite clear or specific. According to him, some public school administrators have been known to complain that when they spend their personal money on minor repairs of school facilities they hardly recover such funds. The implication is that school administrators remain nonchalant and watch a good number of facilities deteriorate and waste when little funds could have restored their functionality. In essence, in the absence of funds to support routine maintenance, head teacher may not be in position to effectively manage school facilities.

Moreover, besides the loss of life, money and materials, it seems improper maintenance of school facilities have seriously hampered the instructional process in Ekiti State public schools. In support, Edem (1987) cited in Bolarinwa (2014) pointed out that the problem of education is further aggravated by the fact that quite often, the planners do not relate school facilities to the learning process, learning is not

expected to occur even under dilapidated building and any falling in performance in education is then blamed on the teachers and the students.

More so, school heads are the people entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring that educational resources supplied by the government are put in place and judiciously utilised. However, it appears that most schools in Ekiti State lack these resources because; the government is not ready to provide funds for their procurement. Some of the resources where available, are not properly managed by the school heads. The need for effective management of resources according to Hargreaves, Earl, Moore and Manning (2011), leads to a shift in the conception of school heads from the managerial and administrative perspective to that of instructional leadership whereby the school heads as a leader in all aspects of the school curricula, imparting and enforcing on the intellectual and emotional development of the teachers, changing the instructional climate of the school and affecting and transforming the students learning and achievement behaviour and attitude.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses have been formulated for the study:

HO₁. There is no significant relationship between school heads' supervisory practice and Basic Education in Ekiti State, Nigeria.

HO₂. There is no significant relationship between school heads' communication practice and Basic Education.

HO₃. There is no significant relationship between school heads' maintenance of facilities practice and Basic Education.

Methodology

Descriptive research design of correlational study was used for the study. As at the time of this study, the population consisted of 810 public primary and 141 Junior Secondary Schools and their teachers in Ekiti State, Nigeria. The sample consisted of 24 schools and 240 teachers. Stratified simple random sampling technique was used to select four primary schools and four Junior Secondary Schools from each of the three Senatorial Districts while simple random sampling technique was used to select 10 teachers from each of the schools selected. A validated instrument tagged "School Heads' Leadership Practices Questionnaire" (SHLPQ) was designed and used to collect data for the study. The reliability co-efficient calculated for SHLPQ was 0.78 through the test-re-test method which was high enough to ensure the reliability of the instrument. The instrument was administered by the researcher.

Results

The three null hypotheses formulated for the study were analysed and tested as shown in Tables 1, 2 and 3.

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Df	r-Cal	r-tab
Supervisory practice	240	23.58	9.38	239	0.360*	0.138
Basic Education	240	22.98	9.79			
p<0.05* (Significant Result)						

Table 1 shows that the r-cal (0.360) is greater than the r-tab(0.138) at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is not accepted. This implies that there is a significant relationship between school heads' supervisory leadership practice and Basic Education.

Table 2: Test of relationship between school heads' communication practice and Basic Education

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Df	r-Cal	r-tab
Communication practice	240	23.94	10.12	239	0.908*	0.138
Basic Education	240	22.98	9.79			
p<0.05* (Significant Result)						

Table 2 shows that the r-cal(0.908) is greater than the r-tab(0.138) at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is not accepted. This implies that there is a significant relationship between school heads' communication practice and Basic Education.

Table 3: Test of relationship between school heads' maintenance of school facilities practice and Basic Education

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Df	r-Cal	r-tab
Maintenance of school facilities practice	240	23.42	15.44	239	0.581*	0.138
Basic Education	240	22.98	9.79			
p<0.05* (Significant Result)						

Table 3 shows that the r-cal(0.581) is greater than the r-table (0.138) at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is not accepted. This implies that there is a significant relationship between school heads' maintenance of school facilities practice and Basic Education.

Discussion

The result revealed that there was significant relationship between school heads' supervisory leadership practice and Basic Education. This might be because of the collaborative and interactive type of supervision employed by the school heads. This finding supports that of Glanz, Shulma and Sullivan (2007) who found that schools with effective supervision models had significant increase in students' achievement because; a culture of teacher empowerment and collaboration is established; Akpan and Onabe (2016) who said that the extent to which sustainable Basic Education can be achieved depends greatly on the leadership practices (students' personnel services, resource provision, collaborations

in the school and so on) of the school heads; Glickman, Gordon and Ross-Gordon (2007) who asserted that one of the most important functions of the school head in any school is that of being an instructional leader; and Akinfolarin, Babalola and Aladetan (2017) who maintained that a system not supervised and evaluated will not yield the desired result and when supervision is absent, it leads to ineffective curriculum delivery.

The study revealed that there was significant relationship between school heads' communication practice and Basic Education. This might be because of the school heads' ability to disseminate information appropriately. This finding supports that of Ibrahim and Mahmoud (2017), who asserted that educational institutions need effective leaders who are good communicators and Nwosu (2017) who found that there is a significant relationship between principals' communication strategies and teachers' job performance.

The study revealed that there was significant

relationship between school heads' maintenance of school facilities practices and Basic Education. This might be as a result of maintenance strategies like preventive and predictive, corrective, breakdown, running and shutdown and culture employed by the school heads. This finding supports that of Ibara and Idu (2011) who revealed that head teachers routinely undertake checks to detect damages on facilities such as desks, chairs, broken windows, and others; Jaiyeoba and Atanda (2005) who posited that educational facilities are those things which enable a skilful teacher to achieve a level of instructional effectiveness that exceeds what is possible when they are not provided; and Babayemi (2006) who asserted that even with the meagre resources at their disposal, school heads have the responsibility of providing teachers and other instructional staff with the necessary resources for effective teaching.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, school heads' supervisory practices, communication practices and maintenance of school facilities practice made significant contributions to the sustainability of public Basic Education.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. The school heads should not relent on their efforts at employing the right supervisory techniques at the right time and should make their supervision regular for the sustainability of public Basic Education.
2. The school heads should try as much as possible to maintain and improve upon their communication skills.
3. The government should continue to lay emphasis on the maintenance of school facilities by providing funds for the school heads and monitor the use of the fund.

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