



# **Principals' Supervision and Academic Performance of Secondary School Students in Rivers State**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of principals' supervision and academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State. The study sought to determine the influence of teachers' appraisal by principals, the extent to which principal's observation of teachers in classroom and teachers' adherence to scheme of work influence students' performance in senior secondary certificate examination. The study adopted correlation study design. The study was carried out in three Local Government Areas namely; Port Harcourt, Ahoada West and Eleme Local Government Areas. The population comprised 1,229 teachers and 32 principals. The study used simple random sampling. The study sampled 204 teachers and 16 principals. The data was collected by use of questionnaire. Three experts validated the instrument and Cronbach alpha method was used to compute the reliability coefficient. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the three research questions posed for the study while Pearson product moment correlation coefficient (Pearson r) was used to test the three null hypotheses formulated to guide the study at 0.05 level of significance. The study revealed that, teachers' appraisal by principals, principals' observation of teachers in classroom and teachers' adherence to scheme of work influence students' performance in senior secondary certificate examination to a large extent. The result for the first hypothesis accepted the null hypothesis that, there is no significant relationship between teachers' appraisal by principals and students' performance in S.S.C.E. The hypotheses which state that; there is no significant relationship between principals' observation of teachers in classroom, teachers' adherence to scheme of work and students' performance in S.S.C.E. were all rejected. The researcher recommended that principals should be more proactive in their day to day supervision exercise on teachers and students, government should provide all necessary teaching materials that will promote the teaching standard among teachers, checking of professional documents of teachers by principals should be taken serious at all times among others.

**Keywords:** Principal's supervision, Teacher appraisal, Classroom observation, Scheme of work and Academic performance

## **INTRODUCTION**

In the school environment especially in public secondary schools setting, there is always a principal who occupies a high status by virtue of his appointment as the school head. An effective principal is a front line mirror in the organization's plan of action.

The National Policy on Education (2014) identified management of curriculum and instruction, monitoring and evaluation of students' progress and achievement, establishing and supporting continuous staff development and procuring instructional material for teaching and learning, supervision of classroom instruction, promotion and enhancement of learning as some supervisory roles of secondary school principals.

According to Dipaola & Hoy (2008), the most important role a school principal can take up is that of the 'teacher of teachers'. The principal should be a model collaborator and a reflector of his or her own practice. He or she must encourage teachers to observe his or her instructional process and ask them to offer constructive criticism. Kimosop (2002), asserts that, this will motivate the teacher to view supervision as a collegial process. And by daily exhibition of these behaviours, they are not only learning along side their teachers, but also act as a catalyst to professional learning. Mullen and Hertinger (2008) assert that to improve students' performance school heads must provide instructional leadership and resources. One basic instructional practice is classroom visitation.

The principal must make deliberate visits to the learning premises to inspect the state of learning resources. According to Onyango (2005), instructional supervision in the areas of class visitation, conferencing and teacher observation greatly influence students' performance. Gachoya (2008), asserts that the supervisors who made these visits were able to have an insight into the actual state of instruction and this reinforces performance. This means that if class visits are seriously carried out, students would keep alert and study and this would influence their performance. Another basic practice in principals' supervision is classroom observation. During classroom observation the principal observes how the teacher plans his work for delivery to learners.

Okumbe (1998), opined that principals must prepare a supervision schedule indicating how the teacher maintains class discipline, the lesson presentation, provides for learner differences, mastery of content, learner involvement as well as teaching methodologies used. The principal can video tape the lesson without being disrupted in the class so as to sit later with the supervised teacher and discuss the strengths and the weaknesses of the supervisee's lesson in an attempt to improve teachers' quality in instructional process.

Sule (2013), asserts that the supervisor acts as another set of eyes holding up a mirror of practice. Individual conferencing follow classroom observation during which the supervisor discusses with the supervisee what he or she observed during the observation when he or she visited the classroom. At this stage the video tape could be brought in. Edoho (2009), observes that principals' supervision should be interactive by nature. In view of Kimosop (2002), feedback got through interactive analysis helps both the supervisor and the teacher in terms of shared information in that, incorporation of the supervised teachers' suggestions helps build his confidence hence enhancing learning process. Eshiwani (1993), is of the view that, principal must check the teaching standards by reference to schemes of work, lesson plans, records of work covered, ensure duty attendance by teacher and class attendance by students by keeping their respective registers.

Ayot and Briggs (2002), opined that ineffective instructional supervision leads to poor performance among learners. He recommends regular classroom visitations to enhance higher students' achievement level. Ngunjiri (2012), agreed with this argument that effective instructional supervision results in students getting high grades in examination while fewer supervision or lack of it lead to laxity of teachers hence poor performance.

Nyamwamu (2010), notes that schools can make a difference to students achievement through the principals' supervisory leadership. It is the principal who sets the pace, leading and monitoring the staff and the students to perform to their best.

Principals in effective schools therefore involve themselves in the improvement of day to day assignment of duties and supervision of teachers. Kimeu (2010), suggest that teachers' records should be clear and available at demand principals' supervisory practices set the benchmark, the tone and tempo of the school, the direction, the level of professionalism and the climate for learning.

It is against this background that the researcher is motivated to investigate the influence of principals' supervision on performance of secondary school students in Rivers State.

### **Statement of the problem**

The ultimate goal of secondary education is to develop the individuals' mental capacity and character for higher education and useful living within the society. There is growing concern about the realization of secondary school objectives because of doubt that principals give little attention to supervision of instructional activities. Informal discussions by the researcher with some stakeholders in Rivers State

suggest that students from public schools in the state do not perform well in national examinations due to ineffective supervision of teachers by principals. This assertion from the stakeholders that the poor performance of students is as a result of ineffective supervision by principals is not verified, but the fact remains that many students perform poorly in national examinations. Could the poor performance be attributed to the ineffective supervision by principals in Rivers state secondary schools?

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to find out the influence of principals' supervision on the performance of secondary school students in Rivers State.

The study is conducted specifically, to;

- i. Determine the extent to which teachers' appraisal by principals influence students' performance in S.S.C.E. in Rivers State.
- ii. Determine the extent to which principals' observation of teachers in classroom influence students' performance in S.S.C.E.
- iii. Determine the extent to which teachers' adherence to scheme of work influence students' S.S.C.E. performance.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study

1. To what extent does teachers' appraisal by principals influence students' performance in S.S.C.E in Rivers State?
2. To what extent does principals' observation of teachers in classroom influence students' performance in S.S.C.E.?
3. To what extent does teachers' adherence to scheme of work influence students' S.S.C.E performance?

### **Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study and were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

- H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between teachers' appraisal by principals and students' performance in S.S.C.E.
- H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between principals' observation of teachers in classroom and students' S.S.C.E. performance.
- H<sub>03</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between teachers' adherence to scheme of work and students S.S.C.E performance.

### **Literature/Theoretical Framework**

Supervision in this context means a specialized help rendered to teachers by the supervisor (principal).

Harris (2000) sees supervision as what school personnel do with people and things to maintain or change the school operation in ways that directly influence the teaching process employed to promote pupils' learning.

Glickman (2001) views supervision as the actions that enable teachers to improve instructions for students and as an act that improves relationships and meets both personal and organizational needs.

Beach & Reinhartz (2000) defined supervision as "a complex process that involves" working with teachers and other educators in a collegial, collaborative relation to enhance the quality of teaching and learning within schools and that which promotes the career long development of teachers.

It is an action which renders teachers a specialized help to become more effective in teaching and promote confidence in less competent teachers.

From these definitions, supervision revolves round the teachers and the learners. It indicates that carrying out of supervision improves the teachers' class work in terms of text books usage and other instructional materials.

### Theoretical Framework

This study was based on the following theories for its theoretical underpinning

- 1) Path-Goal theory of leadership and
  - 2) Bass transformational leadership theory.
- **Path-Goal theory of Leadership:** Psychologist, Robert House develop the path-goal theory of leadership in 1971, and then redefined and updated the theory in 1996 article in the leadership quarterly. This theory holds that a leader can positively affect the performance, satisfaction, and motivation of a group by:
    - Offering rewards for achieving performance goals.
    - Clarifying paths towards these goals.
    - Removing obstacles to performance.

House (1971) argued that subordinate performance and job satisfaction could be improved if leaders clarified the paths to various desired outcomes, and provided valued outcomes when goals were achieved. The path-goal theory is relevant to this study. It emphasizes that a leader can positively influence his followers by clearing paths for them to achieve their goals. The supervisor is a leader, and to be a successful leader there is need to positively influence people which re-affirms the qualities of a good instructional supervision.

- **Bass Transformational Leadership Theory:** Propounded by Bass (1985). Bass defined transformational leadership in terms of how it affects followers, who intend to trust, admire and respect the transformational leader. He identified three ways in which leaders transform followers:
  - Increasing their awareness of task importance and value.
  - Getting them to focus on team or organizational goals, rather than their own interests.
  - Activating their higher-order needs.

Bass has noted that authentic transformational leadership is grounded in moral formations that are based on four components:

- Idealized influence
- Inspirational motivation
- Intellectual stimulation
- Individualized consideration

The theory also relates to supervision since some of the tasks of a supervisor are to motivate, influence, and stimulate the teaching-learning processes

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research study is a correlation study design. The design was considered suitable because it studied the relationship between the independent variable, principals' supervision and the dependent variable, students' academic performance without manipulating any of the variables.

The total population of the research study is made up of 1229 senior secondary school teachers and 32 principals from Port-Harcourt, Eleme and Ahoada Local Government Areas of Rivers State. The population was chosen as a matter of the investigator's research interest.

Simple random technique was used for the study. The locations of the schools were put into consideration during the selection. The sample size comprised 204 senior secondary school teachers and 16 principals. The research sample size of this study was based on total number of questionnaire returned. The research instrument used is a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher and was used in collection of relevant data for the study. The questionnaire items were validated by expert from this field of study. The language, contents and the structure of the items were critically examined and possible corrections and suggestions were made.

The reliability of the instrument was ascertained using Cronbach Alpha Method. The reliability coefficient in a study conducted with 50 senior secondary school teachers and 6 principals was 0.87. The calculated instrument reliability co-efficient was said to be good and reliable for the study.

The research instrument was personally administered directly to the senior secondary school teachers and principals sampled for the study after obtaining permission to administer the instrument from the

principals of the schools. This exercise lasted for three weeks. The instrument was supported with available records of student's performance in S.S.C.E for 2015 and 2016 in the secondary schools under study. The completed questionnaires were collected, collated and decoded into statistical data and analyzed using mean, standard deviation and Pearson product moment correlation statistics (Pearson r) at 0.05 level of significance.

**DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS**

**Research Question 1:** *To what extent does teachers' appraisal by principals influence students' performance in S.S.C.E. in Rivers State?*

**Table 1: Response on Teachers Appraisal by Principals and Academic Performance**

S/N	Items	$\bar{X}$	STD	DECISIONS
1.	Ascertain the consistency of the lesson notes.	3.00	0.77	LE
2.	Check the competency of the teacher.	3.23	0.84	LE
3.	Ascertain the quality of the teachers' teaching skills.	3.00	0.77	LE
4.	Access the availability and quality of instructional materials used in teaching.	3.27	0.86	LE
5.	Evaluation of teaching methods applied.	2.64	0.71	LE
<b>Grand Means</b>		<b>3.03</b>	<b>0.79</b>	<b>LE</b>

From table 1, the field observation shows that teachers' appraisal by principal influences students' performance in S.S.C.E with a grand mean which is greater than the criterion mean ( $3.03 > 2.50$ ).

**Research Question 2:** *To what extent does principals' observation of teachers in classroom influence students' performance in S.S.C.E.?*

**Table 2: Mean Response on Classroom Observation and Students' Performance**

S/N	Items	$\bar{X}$	STD	DECISIONS
6.	Visiting teachers in classroom when teaching.	2.95	0.76	LE
7.	Observes teaching and learning activities.	3.50	0.95	LE
8.	Checking students' notebooks.	3.16	0.82	LE
9.	Records important data on the teaching learning process.	1.77	0.84	LE
10.	Observe the teacher as he or she is able to carry along all the students in the classroom.	3.14	0.81	LE
<b>Grand Means</b>		<b>2.90</b>	<b>0.84</b>	<b>LE</b>

Table 2 reveals that principals observation of teachers in classroom goes a long way in helping students for a better performance in S.S.C.E, with a grand mean of 2.90 which is greater than the criterion mean ( $2.90 > 2.90$ ).

**Research Question 3:** *To what extent does teachers' adherence to scheme of work influence students' S.S.C.E. performance?*

**Table 3: Means Response on Adherence to Scheme of Work and Academic Performance**

S/N	Items	$\bar{X}$	STD	DECISIONS
11.	Checking the topic.	2.77	0.73	LE
12.	Checking the specific objective.	2.95	0.95	LE
13.	Checking the learning materials.	3.27	0.86	LE
14.	Checking the lesson titles to be taught.	2.05	0.76	LE
15.	Checking the learning tasks.	1.55	0.94	LE
<b>Grand Means</b>		<b>2.52</b>	<b>0.85</b>	<b>LE</b>

Table 3 indicates that teachers' adherence to scheme of work influences students' S.S.C.E performance greatly with a G.M of 2.52 which is greater than the C.M. of 2.50.

**Hypotheses Testing**

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant relationship between teachers' appraisal by principals and students' performance in S.S.C.E.

**Table 4: Analysis of hypothesis 1 using PPMC**

Respondents	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	DF	r-cal	r-crit	Decision
Principals	16	0.22	0.06	218	0.09	2.253	Accepted
Teachers	204	2.81	0.73				

Table 4 above indicated that r-calculated is less than r-critical value ( $0.09 < 2.253$ ) for degree of freedom (218) at p-value 0.05 level of significance. This means that, there is no relationship between teachers' appraisal by principals and students' performance in S.S.C.E. Hence, the null hypothesis was accepted.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant relationship between principal observation of teachers in classroom and students performance in S.S.C.E.

**Table 5: Analysis of hypothesis 2, using PPMC**

Respondents	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	DF	r-cal	r-crit	Decision
Principals	16	0.21	0.06	218	2.11'	2.253	Rejected
Teachers	204	2.69	0.78				

Table 5 above revealed that r-calculated 2.11 is greater than r-critical value 2.253 for degree of freedom (218) at P-value 0.05 level of significance. This shows that, there is significant relationship between principal observation of teachers and students S.S.C.E. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate hypothesis accepted.

**Hypothesis 3:** There is no significant relationship between teachers' adherence to scheme of work and students S.S.C.E performance.

**Table 6: Analysis of hypothesis 3, using PPMC**

Respondents	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	DF	r-cal	r-crit	Decision
Principals	16	1.18	0.06	218	3.10	2.253	Rejected
Teachers	204	2.34	0.79				

Table 6 above showed that re-calculated is greater than r-critical value ( $3.01 > 2,253$ ) for degree of freedom 218 at p-value 0.05 level of significance. This signifies that the relationship between teachers adherence to scheme of work and students S.S.C.E performance is significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate hypothesis accepted.

## DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The study investigated principals' supervision and academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State. Some of the study was in harmony with the current theoretical state of art in the academic industry while some were at variance with the convectional status quo.

The result on influence of teachers appraisal by principals on students' performance was significant and agreed with the findings of Kadenyi (2014) that appraisal of teachers assisted on improvement of students' academic performance to a great extent.

The study also revealed that there was significance in the influence of principal's observation of teachers on students' performance in S.S.C.E. This supports Kimeu (2010) that the principal should visit the classroom frequently to encourage the observation of teachers and then organize post-observation conference where issues of supervision are deliberated on.

The result on influence of teacher's adherence to scheme of work on students' performance in S.S.C.E. was significant and was in support of Mullins (2002) that, a teacher who has planned his or her lesson is confident when impacting lessons to students. He states that, confident teachers make lessons interesting and students are eager to learn. The study also agreed with (Fischer 2011) that, when teachers adhere to scheme of work, it makes the process of learning more convenient for students and also improve their academic performance.

That test on significant relationship between teachers' appraisal by principals and students' performance in S.S.C.E. was non significant which contradicts Kadenyi (2014) that appraisal of teachers on professional responsibilities by administrative heads has a relationship with students' academic performance.

The test result of hypothesis 2 on significant relationship between principal observation of teachers in classroom and students' performance in S.S.C.E. was significant. The test proved that there is a relationship between principal observation of teachers in classroom and students' performance in S.S.C.E. Finally, the test on significant relationship between teachers adherence to scheme of work and students S.S.C.E. performance was also significant. This means that a relationship exist between teachers adherence to scheme of work and students performance in S.S.C.E.

## CONCLUSION

Supervision is important in the development of any educational program in Rivers State. The results of the data analysis indicated that teachers appraisal by principals has influence on performance of students in S.S.C.E. It also indicated that principal's observation of teachers in classroom and teacher's adherence to scheme of work have influence on students' performance in S.S.C.E. The results of hypotheses test showed that teachers appraisal by principal has no significant relationship with students performance in S.S.C.E. It also showed that principals observation of teachers in classroom and teacher's adherence to scheme of work have significant relationship with students' performance in S.S.C.E.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

From the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations were made:

1. Principals should be more proactive in their day-to-day supervision exercise on teachers and students.
2. Government should provide all necessary teaching materials that will promote the teaching standard among teachers.
3. Checking of professional documents of teachers by principals should be taken serious at all times.
4. Principals should make sure that teachers cover every topic in the scheme of work in line with the time frame.
5. Laissez faire and irregular supervision amongst others must be discouraged.  
Other recommendations are as follows:
  - a. **Negative attitude of teachers:** Teachers should begin to develop positive attitude towards supervisors, bearing in mind that they are in school to help them improve their teaching skills and not as threats.

- b. **Resistance to change:** In solving this problem, principals ought to fill the communication gap by exterminating the phobia for supervision, by organizing staff conferences with the staff, to intimate them with globalize modern supervisory techniques. Failure to do this will make the teachers be at perpetual loggerhead with school administrators.
- c. **Training and retraining of supervisors:** Supervisors should compulsorily avail themselves to training and retraining opportunities in information communication technology, educational administration and supervision, to be abreast with globalize concepts and standard of teaching. This style of training could be informed of conferences, seminars, workshops, networking and collaborative team.
- d. **Excessive workload:** Some of the tasks of the principals should be reduced and be assigned to their subordinates to enable them carryout internal supervision properly.
- e. **Innovation:** For proper supervision in schools, there should be room for the introduction of new ideas and pedagogical skills.
- f. **Inadequate supervisory personnel:** There is the need for the supervisory department of the education system to be properly staffed in order for adequate supervision.
- g. **Motivation:** Supervisors ought to be properly motivated in order to put in their best. It is suggested their salaries, fringe benefits and allowances be promptly paid to them.

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