

PRINCIPALS' ADMINISTRATIVE SKILLS AND PROPER CONDUCT OF EXAMINATION AMONG STUDENTS IN UYO EDUCATION ZONE OF AKWA IBOM STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT: *The study was carried out to examine principals' administrative skills and proper conduct of examination in Uyo Education Zone of Akwa Ibom State. In order to achieve this purpose, three research questions and three hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The ex-post facto research design was used for the study. The population of the study comprised 86 principals and 2838 teachers in secondary schools in Uyo Education Zone of Akwa Ibom State. The sample of this study comprised 878 respondents comprising 26 principals and 852 teachers representing 30% of the population of principals and teachers. Multi-stage sampling technique was used for this selection. The two instruments namely "Principals' Administrative Skills Questionnaire for Teachers (PASQT)" and "Examination Misconduct Questionnaire for Principals (EMQP)" were used for data collection. R-value and R² value of simple linear regression were used for answering the research question while the F-ratio was used for testing the hypotheses. Each of the hypotheses was tested at 0.05 level of significance. The result of the analysis revealed that principals' communication skills, school plant management skills as well as supervisory skills relate to proper conduct of examination among senior secondary school students. Based on the findings, it was recommended that Principals should be exposed to effective communication through seminars, workshops and conferences such that they can communicate to both staff and students in a way that they will understand what is expected of them, as well as the consequences of their involvement in examination misconduct among others.*

KEYWORDS: Administrative Skills, Examinations, Students, Education, Principals

INTRODUCTION

In Nigeria, as well as other developing nations of the world, education has become the most reliable catalyst that propels national development because it is considered to be the cornerstone and the pillar of economic growth. The ability of any nation to develop, therefore, depends to a large extent on the quality and quantity of its educated citizens since it is the educated citizens, through the skills they have acquired in schools that can harness the natural wealth of the nation.

Educational system according to John (2006) cannot be complete without examining the students. Examination is an integral part of the teaching-learning process and the success of the educational system directly depends upon the efficiency and effectiveness of its examination system. The word examination could mean so many things to so many people. It could mean an assessment of ability. It could also be defined as the test of one's knowledge, which could be in form of drill, test and observation. It could also be the test of one's skills or ability in a particular exercise. Examinations are used for academic stratification or for

assigning grades to students in order to know their ability. Examinations are conducted to assess the performance of the students and to find out whether they have attained a certain standard of academic learning and knowledge. Examinations serve as the basis for promotion from a lower class to the higher one, motivate the learners for better study, provide basis for future prediction about students, their further education and job aptitudes, appraise the students' achievement, and help the teachers to assess the effectiveness of teaching and learning methods for future improvement (Shahid, 2007).

Aisha (2005), however, lamented that one of the biggest threats to the development of education in Nigeria today is the rate at which examination misconduct is gaining grounds. The menace of examination misconduct has assumed an alarming and embarrassing dimension in both external and internal examinations. Over the years, it has become sophisticated in nature with such fanciful names as jet-bombing, ecomog, tattoo, expo, super print and so on. There abound cases where candidates smuggle text books into examination halls to copy from, get live question papers before the examinations, bribe examiners to assist them during examinations. This incidence of examination misconduct has invariably consistently remained a bane of Nigeria educational system as it has watered down the quality of education attained by some of the students or candidates.

Afigbo in Onyechere (2008), defined examination misconduct as any action done or committed which makes it impossible to use examination in determining the level of competence of a candidate in absorbing, reproducing and where appropriate applying knowledge. Nwana (2009), viewed it as an irregular behaviour exhibited by candidates or any body with the conduct of examination in or outside the examination hall, before, during or after each examination. Umoren (2009), attributed examination misconduct to many factors such as ineffectiveness on the part of the principals, laxity and unethical attitudes of teachers towards their official duties, laziness and non-commitment to their studies by the students, inadequate facilities in schools; the general lost of glory of the traditional education which inculcates among other things the very important values of hard work, diligence, integrity, and high productivity has also contributed to this. When these are lacking in any production system, education inclusive, the results are often devastating, leading especially to poor quality output and wastage which in themselves undermine capacity building and sustainable development. The researchers believed that a "mal-nourished" primary school product will breed a "kwashiokored" secondary level output which culminates into a "marasmused" tertiary product.

Fafunwa cited in Nkem (2011), stated that administrative effectiveness of principals remains the bedrock of efficient school management at the secondary school level of education. School principals have the mandate of managing both human and material resources properly because the general output whether negative or positive, strongly depend on them. The performance of the school reflects the performance of the teachers in those schools. This means that the teachers' performance is crucial to the success of the students just as the success of the teachers is dependent on the principals' management of the school resources and skills employed to meet teachers' psychological and personal interest (Adeniyi, 2005). This is so because the principal is said to be the keystone in the arch of school administration, the hubs of the educational effort. What the mainspring is to the watch, the fly wheel to the machine or the engine to the steamship, the principal is to the school.

The character of the school reflects and proclaims the character of the principal. Everything in the school, the plant, the staff, the curriculum, methods and techniques of teaching; co-

curricular activities, human relationships, bear the impress of the personality of the principal of the institution. It is rightly said that the schools become great not because of the magnificent buildings but because of “magnificent” principals; since the principal is the major component of school administration on whose ability and skill, personality and professional competence will largely depend the tone and efficiency of the school.

The principals’ administrative skills and management of school resources is bound to affect teachers’ effectiveness and invariably the students’ performance. These skills could be in the areas of communication, school plant management as well as supervision.

Principals’ communication skill is the ability of the school principals to communicate effectively with teachers, students and other members of the school community. This involves passing of information to them, listening to them, directing, instructing and motivating them for goal realization. It is the means by which principals could effectively carry out administrative functions in schools to check examination malpractice (Davis, 2012). Nwachukwu (2006), averred that communication is of paramount importance to the corporate welfare of the school system. This is because poor communication skill can give rise to misunderstanding and the inability of a leader to express himself or herself clearly could lead to poor school management and its attendant ills among which is examination misconduct. Ukpabio (2004), studied the influence of principals communication skills on teaching effectiveness of secondary school teachers in Akwa Ibom State. 200 principals were randomly selected for the study while the research made use of instrument titled “Principals’ Communication Skills and Teaching Effectiveness Questionnaire(PCSTEQ)” to collect data. The findings of the study revealed that there was significant influence of principals communication skills on teaching effectiveness of secondary school teachers in Akwa Ibom State.

Principals’ school plant management skill refers to management and maintenance of the physical condition and general appearance of the entire school buildings, equipment and surroundings in which teaching and learning take place by school principals. It is not an exaggeration to assert that good school plant management and adequate care of the school facilities can ensure a favourable environment for teaching and learning. The principal is the main person in the school responsible for the operation and maintenance of the school plant to which he is assigned. It is therefore of paramount importance that the school principals be skillfully effective in the management of the school plant for the realization of organizational goals and objectives. Nkang (2005), stated that it is the duty of the principals to maintain the equipment and facilities entrusted in their care. Aderounmu (2007), stressed the importance of maintaining school plant when the author stated that the physical outlook of the school necessarily have a strong psychological impact on the students attitude towards the school authority and their willingness to belong to the school. Thus, the principal must be prudent in spending so as to have left over to promote the aesthetic nature of the school. Akpanudo (2010), conducted a research on principal administrative style and teachers work performance in Abak Zone of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The study adopted ex-post facto design. The sample size of the study was 200 students that were randomly selected from 25 sampled schools. Four research questions were raised and four hypotheses tested at .05 level of significance. Two researcher developed instruments namely “Leaders Behavior Descriptive Questionnaire (LBDQ)” and “Teachers work performance Questionnaire (TWPQ)” were used for data collection. T-test was used for analyzing the data obtained. The result of the

analysis revealed that teachers work performance was influenced by the principal administrative styles.

Principals' supervisory skill is the ability of the principals to monitor and harmonize activities in the schools to enhance teaching and learning. This involves checking records to ensure that things are working according to plan, visiting the classrooms to observe teachers and students at work, inspecting the school compound to see that things are in order and putting staff and students in the right track among others. In every organization, it is common to see the superior officer monitoring what the subordinate does to ensure that a set standard is obtained. Educational system has a set of goals that should be achieved. It becomes necessary for the principals to observe, monitor and oversee what the teachers and students are doing to ensure the achievement of set goals and standard (Oleforo,2014). The place of the supervisory skill of the principals in the smooth running of the schools can therefore not be overemphasized.

However, the researchers are not sure if principals' administrative skills have any relationship with examination misconduct in secondary schools. This study is therefore poised to examine if relationship exists between principals' administrative skills in the areas of communication, school plant management as well as supervision and proper conduct of examination among secondary school students in Uyo Education Zone of Akwa Ibom State.

Statement of the Problem

There has been serious outcry by stakeholders of education over examination misconduct and the resultant falling standard of education as witnessed in our nation in recent times. It is no exaggeration to state that examination misconduct is about the most serious threat to academic credibility in the country as it now constitutes one of the greatest plagues that has afflicted the entire educational sector. It has weakened the validity of the results of our examinations, making it difficult to assess candidates' performance based on the certificates they hold. This monster has not only dented the image of the educational system in the country but has also led to the international community casting aspersion on our certificates and examination bodies.

Thus, there is need for a study to be carried out in order to proffer solutions to the problems created by examination misconducts; and since the school principals are the heads of the schools, the general output whether negative or positive might also strongly depend on them. The researcher is not sure whether principals' administrative skills could influence the tone of the school including incidence of examination misconduct. It is therefore against this background that this study is necessitated to examine principals' administrative skills in terms of communication, school plant management as well as supervisory skill and how these skills relate to examination misconduct in Uyo Education Zone of Akwa Ibom State

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to examine principals' administrative skills and proper conduct of examination among secondary school students in Uyo Education Zone of Akwa Ibom State.

Specifically, the study sought to achieve the following objectives:

1. To examine the relationship between principals' communication skill and proper conduct of examination among secondary school students
2. To examine the relationship between principals school plant management skill and proper conduct of examination among secondary school students
3. To examine the relationship between principals' supervision and proper conduct of examination among secondary school students

Research Questions

To guide the study, the following research questions were posed.

1. What relationship exists between principals' communication skill and proper conduct of examination among secondary school students?
2. What relationship exists between principals' school plant management skill and proper conduct of examination among secondary school students?
3. What relationship exists between principals' supervisory skill and proper conduct of examination among secondary school students?

Null Hypotheses

In line with the research questions the following null hypotheses were formulated at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant relationship between principals' communication skill and proper conduct of examination among secondary school students.
2. There is no significant relationship between principals' school plant management skill and proper conduct of examination among secondary school students.
3. There is no significant relationship between principals' supervisory skill and proper conduct of examination among secondary school students.

RESEARCH METHOD

Area of the Study

The research area for this study is Uyo Education Zone of Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria. The ex-post facto research design was used for the study. This design was considered suitable for the study because the variables under investigation were assumed to have occurred and could not be experimentally manipulated in the process of the study.

The population of this study comprised all the 86 principals and 2838 teachers from the 86 public Secondary schools in Uyo Education Zone of Akwa Ibom State.

A sample size of 878 respondents consisted of 26 secondary school principals and 852 teachers representing 30% of the total population of principals and teachers respectively was used for the study. Multi-stage sampling technique was used for the selection of both principals and teachers. The first stage involved clustering and grouping the schools

according to their Local Education Committees (LECs), the second stage involved applying percentage for selecting 30% of the schools and also the teachers in each LEC. The third stage involved random selection of these teachers among these 30% until the required sample size was reached.

The two instruments namely “Principals’ Administrative Skills Questionnaire for Teachers (PASQ)” and “Proper Conduct of Examination Questionnaire for Principals (PCEQ)” were used for data collection. Each of the instrument was divided into two sections, A and B. Section A was used to elicit personal information from the respondents while Section B was used to measure the variables of the study. The Principals’ Administrative Skills Questionnaire consisted of 15 items with 5 items measuring each of the variables while the Proper Conduct of Examination Questionnaire designed for Principals (PCEQ) consisted of 25 items. The instruments were designed with a 4- point rating scale as follows: Strongly Agree (SA,) Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD).

A total of eight hundred and seventy eight (878) copies of the instrument were given to the respondents while eight hundred and sixty two (862) were correctly filled and returned, representing 98.2% return.

The data obtained from this study was analyzed using simple regression analysis. All the hypotheses formulated were tested at .05 level of significance.

Data Analysis and Results

The results obtained were analyzed in line with the research questions and hypotheses formulated to guide the study. R-value and R^2 values of simple linear regression were used for answering the research questions while the F-ratio of simple linear regression was used for testing the hypotheses.

Research Question One

What relationship exists between principals’ communication skill and proper conduct of examination among secondary school students?

R-value and R^2 value of simple linear regression was used for answering this research question. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 1:

Table 1: Result of R and R^2 of the relationship between principals’ communication skill and proper conduct of examination among secondary school students (N= 862)

Variables	R	R^2	Adjusted	R^2	Standard Error of the Estimate
Communication skills	.617	.381	.342	.0789	
Proper conduct of examination					

The result presented in Table 1 revealed that the R-value of .617 when compared with extent scale of correlation indicates a high and positive relationship between principals’ communication skill and proper conduct of examination among secondary school students while the R^2 – value of .381 indicates that only 38.1 % variation in proper conduct of

examination among secondary school students is explained or predicted by principals' communication skill. This result implies that there exist relationship between principals' communication skill and proper conduct of examination among students.

Research Question Two

What relationship exists between principals school plant management skill and proper conduct of examination among secondary school students?

R-value and R^2 value of simple linear regression was used for answering the research question. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 2:

Table 2: Result of R and R^2 of the relationship between principals' school plant management skill and proper conduct of examination among senior secondary school students (N= 862)

Variables	R	R^2	Adjusted	R^2	Standard Error of the Estimate
School plant management skills	.592	.351	.344	.1457	
Proper conduct of examination					

The result presented in Table 2 revealed that the R-value of .592 when compared with extent scale of correlation indicates a high and positive relationship between principals school plant management skill and proper conduct of examination among secondary school students while the R^2 – value of .351 indicates that only 35.1 % variation in proper conduct of examination among secondary school students is explained or predicted by principals' school plant management skill. This result implies that there exist relationship between principals' school plant management skill and proper conduct of examination among secondary school students.

Research Question Three

What relationship exists between principals' supervisory skill and proper conduct of examination among secondary school students?

R-value and R^2 value of simple linear regression was used for answering the research question. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 3:

Table 3 : Result of R and R^2 of the relationship between principals' supervisory skill and proper conduct of examination among secondary school students (N= 862)

Variables	R	R^2	Adjusted	R^2	Standard Error of the Estimate
Supervisory skills	.859	.738	.711	.19024	
Proper conduct of examination					

The result presented in Table 3 revealed that the R-value of .859 when compared with extent scale of correlation indicates a high and positive relationship between principals' supervisory

skill and proper conduct of examination among secondary school students while the R^2 – value of .738 indicates that only 73.8 % variation in proper conduct of examination among secondary school students is explained or predicted by principals supervisory skill. This result implies that there exists relationship between principals’ supervisory skill and proper conduct of examination among senior secondary school students.

Hypothesis One

There is no significant relationship between principals’ communication skills and proper conduct of examination among secondary school students.

Simple linear regression analysis was used for testing this hypotheses, the result of the analysis is as presented in Table 4:

Table 4: The result of simple linear regression analysis for the relationship between principals’ communication skills and proper conduct of examination among students (N=862)

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F-cal	F-crit
Regression	414.55	1	414.55	33.76	3.85
Residual	10562.18	860	12.28		
Total	10976.73	861			

***significant at .05 alpha level; df=1 and 860;**

The result in Table 4 revealed that the calculated F-value of 33.76 is greater than the critical F- value of 3.85 at .05 level of significance with 1 and 860 degrees of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis that says there is no significant relationship between principals’ communication skill and proper conduct of examination among secondary school students was rejected. This implies that there is a significant relationship between principals communication skill and proper conduct of examination among secondary school students.

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant relationship between principals’ school plant management skill and proper conduct of examination among secondary school students.

Simple linear regression analysis was used for testing this hypotheses, the result of the analysis is as presented in Table 5:

Table 5: The result of simple linear regression analysis for the relationship between principals’ school plant management skill and proper conduct of examination among secondary school students (N=862)

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-cal	F-crit
Regression	353.34	1	353.34	28.61	3.85
Residual	10623.39	860	12.35		
Total	10976.73	861			

***significant at .05 alpha level; df=1 and 860;**

The result in Table 5 revealed that the calculated F-value of 28.61 is greater than the critical F- value of 3.85 at .05 level of significance with 1 and 860 degrees of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis that says there is no significant relationship between principals' school plant management skill and proper conduct of examination among secondary school students was rejected. This implies that there is a significant and positive relationship between principals' school plant management skill and proper conduct of examination among secondary school students.

Hypothesis Three

There is no significant relationship between principal's supervisory skills and proper conduct of examination among secondary school students.

Simple linear regression analysis was used for testing this hypotheses, the result of the analysis is as presented in Table 6:

Table 6: The result of simple linear regression analysis for the relationship between principals' supervisory skills and proper conduct of examination among secondary school students (N=862)

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-cal	F-crit
Regression	782.10	1	782.10	66.00	3.85
Residual	10194.63	860	11.85		
Total	10976.73	861			

***significant at .05 alpha level; df=1 and 860;**

The result in Table 6 revealed that the calculated F-value of 66.00 is greater than the critical F- value of 3.85 at .05 level of significance with 1 and 860 degrees of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis that says there is no significant relationship between principals' supervisory skill and proper conduct of examination among secondary school students was rejected. This implies that there is a significant relationship between principals' supervisory skill and proper conduct of examination among secondary school students.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The result of the analysis in Table 4 on the relationship between communication skill of principals and proper conduct of examination among secondary school students revealed that there is a significant relationship between principals' communication skill and proper conduct of examination among secondary school students. This finding implies that if there is effective communication in place in the school to communicate educational goals to both teachers and students in clear terms; ensuring that they do the needful as the implications of improper conduct of examination, the incidence of examination misconduct in the schools will be reduced. This of course needs to be triggered off by the principals who must have the knowledge of effective methods of communication to be able to manage the school well. The study supports Ukpabio (2004), who found out that there was significant influence of principals' communication skill on teaching effectiveness of teachers. The finding also

supports that of Akpanudo (2007), who found out a significant correlation between principals communication skill and management of schools.

The result of the analysis in Table 5 on the relationship between Principals' school plant management skill and proper conduct of examination among secondary school students revealed that there is a significant relationship between Principals' school plant management skill and proper conduct of examination among secondary school students. This finding could be attributed to the vital role in which school plant plays in the teaching and learning situation with a resultant effect on staff and students performance. This is because when school plant are well managed and maintained, with availability of instructional facilities, well equipped laboratories and libraries, the students performance can be enhanced and this can lead to reduction in the incidence of examination misconduct among the students. This finding supports Aderounmu (2007), who stated that the physical outlook of the school necessarily have a strong psychological impact on the students attitude towards the school authority and their willingness to belong to the school. The finding also supports that of Akpanudo (2010), who found out that teachers work performance was influenced by the principals' administrative styles. It also follows that when teachers work performance are enhanced and school facilities are in good shape and form, students academic performance will be enhanced and this will lead to reduction in cases of examination misconduct in schools.

The result of the analysis in Table 6 on the relationship between principals' supervisory skill and proper conduct of examination among secondary school students revealed that there is a significant relationship between principals' supervisory skill and proper conduct of examination among secondary school students. This result could be attributed to the prominent role which supervision has in an organization. Thus, to achieve acceptable standards and results, principals must supervise the staff and students regularly to ensure the achievement of the goals and objectives of education at that level and invariably control the incidence of examination misconduct in schools. This finding is in line with the view of Oleforo (2014), who opined that principals' supervisory skill is significantly related to teachers job performance; and hence if teachers deliver their duties effectively, students on their part will be committed and this will lead to reduction if not complete eradication of the incidence of examination misconduct in schools.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that there is significant relationship between principals' administrative skills and proper conduct of examination among secondary school students in Uyo Education Zone of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that:

1. Principals should be exposed to effective communication through seminars, workshops and conferences such that they can communicate to both staff and students in a way they will understand what is expected of them, as well as know the consequences of their involvement in examination misconduct.

2. The school plant should be well managed and maintained with instructional facilities made available to enhance teaching and learning so as to curb examination misconduct. Furthermore, reading culture through the use of the library should be encouraged, as that would be furnishing tomorrow from today, making the learners to know that they can make it on their own without looking for external aids to pass their examinations.
3. Teachers and students should be supervised regularly by the principals the teachers should be made to do their work effectively; their lesson notes/work plan should be checked to ensure adequate lesson preparation, ensuring their come to school on time and attain to their lessons appropriately. Students, on their own part, should be encouraged to take their studies seriously, as well as be made to know the implication of their indulging in examination misconduct.

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