

Professional Qualifications and Experience as Determinants of Supervisory Practices of Head Teachers of Public Primary Schools in South East Nigeria

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Received: 13 February 2023; Accepted: 22 February 2023; Published: 31 March 2023

ABSTRACT

The study investigated professional qualifications and experience as determinants of supervisory practices of head teachers of public primary schools in South East Nigeria. Two specific objectives with corresponding research questions guided the study and two hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study adopted an ex post facto research design. The population of the study comprises 5,453 head teachers in public primary schools in South Eastern Nigeria. The sample size for the study was 373 head teachers in public primary schools in South Eastern Nigeria. The sample size was selected using proportionate stratified random and convenience sampling techniques. The instrument for data collection was self structured questionnaire developed by the researcher titled “Professional Qualifications and Experience of Head Teachers’ and Effective Supervision Questionnaire (PQEHTESQ)”. The questionnaire was validated by experts and its reliability was established using Cronbach Alpha method which yielded a coefficient of 0.83. Data collected for the study were analyzed using Means and Standard Deviation to answer the research questions while independent t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Findings of the study revealed that, there is a significant difference among the mean responses of head teachers on supervisory practices based on professional qualifications in public primary schools in South Eastern Nigeria. The findings also revealed that there is a significant difference between the mean responses of head teachers on supervisory practices based on experience. The study concluded that professional qualifications and work experience are determinants of supervisory practices of head teachers in public primary schools in South Eastern Nigeria. These variables play a significant role in the supervisory practices of head teachers. Based on the findings, the researcher recommended among others that, the Government should ensure that only qualified teachers with repository competencies and knowledge skills acquired in the course of academic learning as measured by teacher academic qualification or by way of in-service training are made head teachers for enhanced supervision of academic activities and seminars and workshops should be organized where the head teachers with more years of work experience are made to share their experience on how they have succeeded in supervision with those of lesser experience.

Keywords: Professional Qualifications, Experience, Head Teachers and Supervisory Practices.

INTRODUCTION

The objective of educational institutions is achievable when the standard of teaching and learning is improved. The standard of teaching and learning will improve when there is efficient monitoring and supervision of schools. This is why supervision is a significant factor in improving quality of education. Supervision is an operation with the purpose of improving teaching and learning. It is a process among persons with numerous ideas in tackling teaching behaviour, educational curriculum, teaching environments, dividing students into groups, investing efforts of the instructor and vocational development. The burden in achieving these educational objectives lies in effective supervision.

Supervision is necessary to ensure uniformity and effectiveness of educational programs. It is required to promote teaching and learning in schools. It incorporates checking, enquiry, fact-finding, keeping watch, survey, correction, prevention, inspiration, guidance, direction, diagnosis, and improvement (Olorode & Adeyemo, 2012). Therefore, it is necessary to care about the need to direct, guide and assist teachers to improve their performance and teaching considered as the basic pillar in improving education.

Similarly, the various levels of education (early childhood, pre-primary, primary/basic, post primary /secondary and tertiary), including the educational institutions must be properly administered and managed in order to produce vibrant outputs (students) that will contribute effectively towards national development (Ikegbusi, Njideka, Eziamaka & Nonye, 2016). This implies that supervision has a significant role in enhancing the performance of teachers and students in their teaching competence, learning ability, cognitive and vocational personalities as well as preparing the best opportunities for their success and performance (Malak & Ghada, 2013). Therefore, supervision helps to enhance the quality of education. Supervisors have the ability to make workplaces more family-friendly (Straub, 2012). To achieve the stated goal of a school, there is need for effective supervision of instruction starting from the foundation or primary level of the school system. This is because the primary level of education is the success or failure of the whole school system (NPE, 2016: p11).

In pursuance of the goals of supervision, the head teacher has the responsibility of planning, organizing and motivating teachers to work. According to the Federal Government of Nigeria “the head-teacher of a primary school shall be a professionally trained teacher, who shall maintain a pleasant personality, be approachable, courteous, firm, consistent, honest and just” in the performance of his leadership roles (NPE 2016. p: 29). Therefore, instructional leadership functions include setting academic standards, providing incentives for learning, and providing incentives to teachers. Head teachers encourage decision participation; assess teaching performance, academic quality of student input, relations with teachers and community, and support systems including guidance and counselling. Head teachers promote teachers’ sense of efficacy, professional development and instructional improvement. The head teacher’s leadership in curriculum implementation could go a long way in ensuring that students gain knowledge for enhancing quality education (Okoth, 2018). The head teacher is not only the administrative head of the school but also the supervisory manager of the teacher and responsible for whatever happens in the school.

The head teacher provides a thorough appraisal of the teacher based on certain pedagogically approved standard that could be different or prejudicially appraised from the actual standard if an individual teacher was to give self-appraisal (Alabi, 2018). Thus, head teachers as school managers must have the capacity to guide and lead. This is a central factor for strengthening education system and achieving quality education of a nation. The head teacher desires teachers who are positive, dynamic, fair, student centred and actively involved in the instruction life of the school (Alabi, 2018).

The head teacher as a supervisor is a liaison officer between the government and the school. The government of Nigeria has carried out giant strides to ensure that quality education is provided in the school system including the primary level of education. This include the establishment of efficient inspectorate services at the federal, state and local government levels aimed at maintaining minimum standard at all levels of education below the tertiary level (NPE, 2016). It also elaborates on the goals and functions of the inspectorate service. This goal among others is to set and improve standard in all aspects of the educational system. The inspectorate services also ensures that there is uniform standard and quality control of all instructional activities in school through regular inspection and continuous supervision and to obtain information on problems and difficulties of teachers and institutions and offer practical solutions to them. The head teacher takes note of the problem in the school and reports to the government. The head teacher knows the performance of the staff. He should know those who are effective, ineffective and those who are willing to work as well as their financial and family problems. It is the duty of the head teacher to notify government and recommend staff for promotion and upgrading. It is the head teacher who mark their lesson

notes every day and supervises their teaching. Head teacher plans and ensures staff attend seminars, workshops and conferences. These functions could help to update teachers' knowledge on recent changes and happenings in teaching and learning. The head teacher holds regular meetings with staff and sometimes parents. In these meetings, the head teacher discusses with teachers their observations and mistakes. The head teacher could involve other teachers in decision-making. This would give the teachers a sense of belonging (Apebende & Ushie, 2018). To effectively carry out supervision, the professional qualification and experience of head teachers has a significant role to play.

Professional qualification is the specialization of a group of people in a particular profession. In other words, people with professional qualification utilize functional education and mental ability rather than manual labour. Examples include medical doctors, teachers, engineers, geoscientist and lawyers. Oluwatoyin and Azeez (2016) define professional qualification as the training or acquisition of a degree or any certification a prospective principal gets in addition to teaching skill, experience and other knowledge. These competence and skills could help such a school leader to achieve effectiveness in the monitoring and supervision of the school activities. Etiubon and Benson (2014) define professional qualification as the acquisition of relevant knowledge, competence and creativity needed for quality productive engagement in the teaching profession. These include teachers who in the course of their training have NCE, B.Ed, PGDE, M.Ed and PhD in education. This further distinguishes one who is a professional from one who is not.

Teachers are non-professionals if they hold qualifications such as Bachelor of Science degree (B.Sc), Bachelor of Art degree (BA), a Master of Art degree (MA), or Master of Science (M.Sc). The professional qualification of head teachers in primary school is the requirement, condition or standard the school leaders are supposed to have to act in such capacity. This professional qualification will make a school leader suitable and competent for the job. For the purpose of this study, professionally qualified teachers are teachers who hold certificate of education, graduate and postgraduate degrees obtained from a recognised educational institution. These educational institutions are National Teachers Institutes (NTI), Colleges of Education and Universities that offer education courses. Similarly, Wandera, Winston and Khithey (2019) observe that professional qualification of teachers has a positive impact on students' academic performance. The researcher is encouraged to investigate this controversy of professional qualification as a determinant of head teacher supervisory practices in primary school.

Work experience is the knowledge gained through repeated trials. Nompumelelo (2016) describes experience as the knowledge or mastery of an event or subject gained through involvement or exposure to it. The number of years that one has spent within an organization may have an impact on one's level of performance. This is because gaining work experience and many years of work within an organization could be an indication that there is an understanding between employer and employee relationship in achieving the goals of the organization. Kosgei, Mise, Odera, and Ayogi (2013) posit that experienced head teachers have a richer background of experience to draw from and can contribute insights and ideas to the course of teaching and learning. However, Sawati, Anwar and Majoka (2013) conclude that there is no relationship between the leadership style of the head teacher and their administrative experience. The present study seeks to investigate work experience of head teacher and how it determines their supervisory practices in public primary schools.

REVIEW OF RELATED STUDIES

Bamidele and Adekola (2017) investigated the effect of teachers' professional qualifications and teaching experience on students' academic achievement in basic science in junior secondary school in Ibarapa region in Oyo State. The study found that there was significant difference in the achievement of students taught by high qualification level teachers and those students taught by low qualification level teachers. The study also found that there was significant difference in the achievement of students taught by long time experienced

teachers and short time experience teachers. This implies that teachers with high level of qualification in education are likely to perform their duties maximally. Salwa and Bukman (2019) conducted a study on the effect of academic qualification, work experience and work motivation towards primary school principal performance. The study found that there was a there was significant effect of the principal's academic qualifications on their performance. The study also found that there was a there was significant effect of the principal's work experience on the principal's performance Further, Wandera, Winston and Khitiei (2019) examined influence of teachers' professional qualification on pupils' performance at Kenya Certificate of Primary Education Examination in English subject in Kenya. The study revealed that teachers' academic qualification significantly influences pupils' performance. Similarly, Emmanuel and Ambe (2014) examined the influence of teachers, professional qualification and area of specialization on the implementation of environmental education curriculum in Cross River State-Nigeria. The study found that teachers' professional qualification and area of study do not significantly influence the implementation of environmental education curriculum. Muthoka, Mula and Mutua (2017) studied influence of principals' administrative experience on principals' effectiveness in instructional supervision in public secondary schools in Mukaa sub-county, Makueni, Kenya. The study found that principals' administrative experience influence principals' effectiveness in provision of instructional supervision. Oyewole (2011) investigated the influence of working experience on job performance of secondary school teachers in Ekiti State, Nigeria and found a significant relationship between teachers' years of experience and job performance.

Statement of the Problem

Professional qualifications and work experience of head teacher in supervision of instructions are known to have implication on the attainment of primary school objectives. For example, professional qualification of head teachers of primary schools could play a major role as a determinant of effective supervision because the skills gained through education are a mark of performance level that they could exhibit. Within the context of work experience, the researcher also observed that head teacher with long tenure of work could have acquired enough relevant skills that may enable him perform better in school supervisory practices.

However, it is observed by the researcher that a lack of commitment to work exist on the part of the teachers as shown in their lateness to school and leaving school before the actual closing time. Also, most of the time, pupils are seen roaming the school premises, while some are sent on errands by the teachers when they ought to be in class. These acts by the teacher rings that the quality of supervision in the school is generally poor and could hinder the attainment of the school objectives. Since available literature revealed that demographic variables affect workers' general performance, the researcher is tempted to suggest that the observed poor supervisory practices among the primary school head teachers in South Eastern Nigeria could not be unconnected to their professional qualification and work experience. This suggestion is due to the idea that professional qualification and work experience could play a role in describing how an individual changes over time and subsequently affect how they perform in relation to their work. The above observations and views have prompted this study which therefore sought to investigate how professional qualification and work experience affects their supervisory practices in public primary schools in South Eastern Nigeria.

Objective of the Study

Specifically, the study sought to:

1. assess how professional qualification of head teachers determine their supervisory practices in public primary schools in the South Eastern Nigeria
2. assess how experience of head teachers determine their supervisory practices in public primary schools in the South Eastern Nigeria

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. What is the mean response of head teachers' professional qualification on their supervisory practices in public primary schools in South Eastern Nigeria?
2. What is the mean response of head teachers' experience on their supervisory practices in public primary schools in South Eastern Nigeria?

Statement of Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference among the mean responses of head teachers on supervisory practices based on professional qualifications in public primary schools in South Eastern Nigeria
2. There is no significant difference among the mean responses of head teachers on supervisory practices based on work experience in public primary schools in South Eastern Nigeria

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted an ex-post facto research design. The population of the study comprises 5,453 head teachers from 5,453 public primary schools in South Eastern Nigeria. The sample size for the study was 373 head teachers. The sample size was determined using Taro Yamane formula. In selecting the sample, proportionate stratified and accidental sampling techniques were adopted. The researcher employed a structured questionnaire as instrument for data collection. The questionnaire titled "Professional Qualifications and Experience of Head Teachers' and Effective Supervision Questionnaire (PQEHTESQ)" had two sections, namely, section A and B. The questionnaire was validated by experts in Educational Administration and Planning and Measurement and Evaluation. The reliability of the questionnaire was established using Cronbach Alpha method and a reliability coefficient of 0.83 was obtained. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics of Means and Standard Deviation to answer the research questions while Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used in testing the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. For the test of hypotheses, the decision was based on P-values and Alpha values. When $P < .05$, the null hypothesis was rejected and considered "Significant" and when $P > .05$, the null hypothesis was not rejected and considered "No Significant".

RESULTS

Research Question 1: What is the mean response of head teachers' professional qualification on their supervisory practices in public primary schools in South Eastern Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of responses of head teachers on their supervisory practices based on professional qualifications in public primary schools in South Eastern Nigeria

S/N	Qualifications	N	Mean	SD	Rank
1	B.ED	182	3.20	0.92	2 nd
2	B.SC/PGDE	121	3.08	1.02	4 th
3	M.ED	41	3.32	0.88	1 st
4	M.SC/PGDE	29	3.13	1.02	3 rd

Data presented on Table 1 revealed that the primary school head teachers with professional qualification of B.ED has a mean response of 3.20 and SD = 0.92; BSC/PGDE has 3.08 and SD = 1.02; M.ED has 3.32 and SD = 0.88 and M.SC/PGDE has 3.13 and SD = 1.02. It can be seen based on the rank that the mean response on supervisory practices of those with the M.ED qualification was higher, followed by those with B.ED, then

M.SC/PGDE and B.SC/PGDE.

Research Question 2: What is the mean response of head teachers’ experience on their supervisory practices in public primary schools in South Eastern Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses of Head Teachers on their Supervisory Practices based on Work Experience in Public Primary Schools in South Eastern Nigeria

S/N	Work Experience	N	Mean	SD	Rank
1	1 – 10 Years	22	2.76	0.93	3 rd
2	11 – 20 Years	120	3.29	1.00	2 nd
3	21 Years & Above	231	3.49	0.83	1 st

Data presented on Table 3 revealed that the primary school head teachers with working experience of 1 – 10 Years has a mean response of 2.76 and SD = 0.93; 11 – 20 Years has 3.29 and SD = 1.00 and 21 Years and Above has 3.49 and SD = 0.83. It can be seen based on the rank that the mean response on supervisory practices of those with working experience of 21 Years & above was higher, followed by those with 11 – 20 Years and then, 1 – 10 Years.

Hypotheses 1: There is no significant difference among the mean responses of head teachers on supervisory practices based on professional qualifications in public primary schools in South Eastern Nigeria

Table 3: One-Way ANOVA of the Mean Responses of Head Teachers on Supervisory Practices based on Professional Qualifications in Public Primary Schools in South Eastern Nigeria

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig	Remark
Between groups	2.235	3	0.745	149.000	.000	Significant
Within groups	1.851	369	0.005			
Total	4.087	372				

df= degree of freedom, F=F-ratio, Sig=P-value

Table 7 is a One-way ANOVA of the mean responses of head teachers on supervisory practices based on professional qualifications in public primary schools in South Eastern Nigeria. From the analysis, the df = 372; F=74.500 and P-value or sig=.000. Since the P-value of .000 is less than the alpha-level of .05 (p< .05), the test statistic is significant therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is a significant difference among the mean responses of head teachers on supervisory practices based on professional qualifications in public primary schools in South Eastern Nigeria

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant mean difference among head teachers’ experience in their supervisory practices in public primary schools in South Eastern Nigeria

Table 4: One-Way ANOVA of the Mean Responses of Head Teachers on Supervisory Practices based on Work Experience in Public Primary Schools in South Eastern Nigeria

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig	Remark
Between groups	34.749	2	17.375	8687.500	.000	Significant
Within groups	.828	370	0.002			
Total	35.577	372				

df= degree of freedom, F=F-ratio, Sig=P-value

Table 9 is a One-way ANOVA of the mean responses of head teachers on supervisory practices based on work experience in public primary schools in South Eastern Nigeria. From the analysis, the $df = 372$; $F = 8687.500$ and $P\text{-value or sig}=.000$. Since the $P\text{-value of } .000$ is less than the alpha-level of $.05$ ($p < .05$), the test statistic is significant therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is a significant difference among the mean responses of head teachers on supervisory practices based on work experience in public primary schools in South Eastern Nigeria

DISCUSSION

The first findings of the study revealed that there is a significant difference among the mean responses of head teachers on supervisory practices based on professional qualifications in public primary schools in South Eastern Nigeria. It was found from the study that the mean response on supervisory practices of those with the M.ED qualification was higher, followed by those with B.ED, then M.SC/PGDE and B.SC/PGDE. This means that primary school head teachers with M.ED qualification adopt better supervisory practices of teachers, pupils and the learning environment followed by those with B.ED qualifications. Aside those with M.ED and B.ED qualifications, head teachers with M.SC/PGDE qualifications were found to adopt better supervisory practices than those with B.SC/PGDE, which is the least. This finding corroborate with that of Bamidele and Adekola (2017) who found that there was significant difference in the achievement of students taught by high qualification level teachers and those students taught by low qualification level teachers. This implies that teachers with high level of qualification in education are likely to perform their duties maximally. The finding also corroborate with that of Salwa and Bukman (2019) whose study on the effect of academic qualification, work experience and work motivation towards primary school principal performance found that there was a there was significant effect of the principal's academic qualifications on their performance. Further, the findings of Wandera, Winston and Khitieyi (2019) revealed that teachers' academic qualification significantly influences pupils' performance. In this study however, head teachers qualification was found to significantly influence their own supervisory practices. This finding however disagree with that of Emmanuel and Ambe (2014) who found that teachers' professional qualification and area of study do not significantly influence the implementation of environmental education curriculum. It is worthy of note that while the study of Emmanuel and Ambe (2014) looked at professional qualifications and implementation of curriculum, this study focused on supervisory practices in which a significant result was obtained. From the findings of the present study, it can be stated that the professional qualifications of head teachers plays a significant role in their supervisory practices. Head teachers who have sound qualification in education such as Master of Education (M.ED) and Bachelor of Education (B.ED) are inherently better able to supervise. The head teachers by virtue of their high and(or) sound professional qualification in education are better prepared and equipped with appropriate supervisory practices to be adopted to effectively supervise teachers, pupils and the learning environment to achieve the objectives of primary education. Professional qualification is therefore, a proxy for quality supervision in primary schools.

The finding of the study finally revealed that there is a significant difference among the mean responses of head teachers on supervisory practices based on working experience in public primary schools in South Eastern Nigeria. It was found here that the mean response on supervisory practices of those with working experience of 21 Years & above was higher, followed by those with 11 – 20 Years and then, 1 – 10 Years. This finding implies that head teachers a with working experience of 21 Years & above adopt better supervisory practices of teachers, pupils and the learning environment than those with 11 – 20 years of experience and then, 1 – 10 years which is the least. This finding is in tandem with that of Muthoka, Mula and Mutua (2017) whose study on the influence of principals' administrative experience on principals' effectiveness in instructional supervision found that principals' administrative experience influence principals' effectiveness in provision of instructional supervision. The finding also corroborate with that of Oyewole (2011) who found a significant relationship between teachers' years of experience and job

performance. In a similar vein, Bamidele and Adekola (2017) found that there was significant difference in the achievement of students taught by long time experienced teachers and short time experience teachers. Further, the finding is in tandem with that of Salwa and Bukman (2019) whose study on the effect of academic qualification, work experience and work motivation towards primary school principal performance found that there was a there was significant effect of the principal's work experience on the principal's performance. The finding of the present study suggests therefore that the more experience the head teacher is, the better the supervisory practice will be. High years of work experience of head teachers have a good influence their supervisory practices. For head teachers who are experienced in carrying out their responsibilities, the easier it is to provide speed, convenience, accuracy and integration in teachers' supervision. The more the years of work experience a head teacher has, the more he/she is in terms of broad knowledge horizons and quality supervision for the achievement of primary school educational goals. Work experience thus play important roles in the supervisory practices of head teachers as it leads to greater acquisition of relevant knowledge, skills and abilities, which improves performance.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher concluded that, professional qualifications and work experience are determinants of supervisory practices of head teachers in public primary schools in South Eastern Nigeria. These variables play a significant role in the supervisory practices of head teachers. This means that the quality of supervision in public primary schools is explained by the head teachers' professional qualifications and work experience. Recommendations were made that:

1. The Government should ensure that only qualified teachers with repository competencies and knowledge skills acquired in the course of academic learning as measured by teacher academic qualification or by way of in-service training are made head teachers for enhanced supervision of academic activities
2. Seminars and workshops should be organized where the head teachers with more years of work experience are made to share their experience on how they have succeeded in supervision with those of lesser experience.

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