

# PRINCIPALS' SUPERVISORY FUNCTIONS AND STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS, KWARA STATE, NIGERIA

OLOYIN, Abdulganiyu

Department of Curriculum Studies and Instructions  
Kwara State College of Education, Oro

## **Abstract**

*This study examined principals' supervisory functions and students' academic performance in public secondary schools, Kwara State, Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive research design of survey type. The population for the study comprised 9,939 teachers in the 340 public senior secondary schools in the 16 Local Government Areas of Kwara State, Nigeria. Proportionate sampling technique via KrejcieMogan Table was used to select 313 out of 4855 teachers in Kwara Central, 116 out of 2102 teachers in Kwara North and 165 out of 2982 teachers in Kwara South Senatorial District. "Principals' Supervisory Functions Questionnaire" (PSFQ) and a Proforma tagged: Students' Academic Performance Proforma (SAPP) were used to collect data for the study. Descriptive statistics of mean ranking and percentage were used to answer the two research questions, while Inferential statistic of Multiple Regression was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that: principals' supervision of teachers' adherence to curriculum content is the most supervisory functions used by principals' in secondary schools in Kwara State; and the level of students' academic performance in secondary schools, Kwara State, Nigeria from 2020-2022 was beyond average. The study concluded that principals' supervision of teachers' adherence to curriculum content is the most supervisory functions used by principals' in secondary schools in Kwara State. Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, it was recommended among other things that, principals should ensure that teachers monitored the students' learning progress and outcome by effectively assessing their level of understanding in each subject that would enhance an excellent academic performance of students.*

**Keywords:** *Principals' Supervisory Function, Students' Academic Performance, Curriculum Content, Supervision of Learning Resource Inputs, Supervision of Instructional Process*

## **Introduction**

Principal is saddled with numerous responsibilities in the administration of secondary school. Principal is an administrative position considered to be highest in hierarchy of authority in secondary school which is occupied by a person charged with the tasks of planning, controlling and coordination of human, material, financial and time resources to foster the attainment of the school goals and objectives. The school principal as the instructional leader is entrusted with the responsibility of improving the quality of instructional delivery through adequate supervision of teachers. To support this, Ugboka (2019) and Ayeni (2018) stated that the school principals are the management whose responsibility is to provide variety of supervision functions for teachers to see the need for change, plan for change and practice new behaviour for effective teaching and learning.

This performance level has kept education stakeholders concerned over students' poor performance in the school certificate examination. Some blamed the school administrators (principals) and the teachers while others blamed the students, their parents, and the government. Whoever to blame, the fact remains that the school and its management correlate with the student's academic achievement (Adewale, 2015; Kemunto & Marwanga, 2014; Mohammed,

Principals' Supervisory functions and Students' Academic Performance in Public Secondary Schools, Kwara State, Nigeria 2016; Onuman, 2019). The school principal, who is the manager, has a lot of supervisory roles to play in the student's academic achievement.

According to Mohammed (2014), supervision involves using expert knowledge and experiences to oversee, evaluate and coordinate improving teaching and learning activities in schools. Adeoye (2016) defined supervision as an administrative function which aims at assisting teachers to fulfill their function of effectively directing the educational development of children. In view of these definitions, supervision can therefore be considered from the point of activities directed towards teachers for stimulating professional skills and competencies to promote instructional effectiveness which logically contribute to student-improved learning and successes.

Supervisory functions or duties are discharged and performed, which involves activities conducted by the principals who investigate, judge and check to see if all is in order or that school activities conform to prescription. This definition transcribes that, supervisory function is a process of giving and receiving help to improve teachers' performances, resolve problems that may occur between teachers and students, and encourage activities aimed at influencing the quality of teaching and learning. Okolo (2015) on this note, stated that supervisory functions are carried out to persuade teachers to desist from applying wrong procedures in carrying out teaching-learning assigned functions and putting all that concerned pedagogy in place, while at the same time emphasizing the importance of good human relations in the school under the leadership of a principal, who is checked by external supervisors too.

*Kolawole (2015) opined that supervisory functions* also involve the selection of personnel, stimulation of professional growth, the development of teachers, selection and revision of educational materials, objectives, teaching methods, and evaluation of instruction. Anibasa (2015) maintained that the principal holds the major position on the supervision of teachers through effective and efficient supervision of teachers' lesson plan and lesson note, punctuality, adherence to curriculum content, evaluation of students and conduct of extra-curricular activities.

Ankoma-Sey and Maina (2016) further noted that the principal's function as an instructional leader involves setting clear goals, allocating resources to instruction, managing the curriculum, monitoring lesson plans and evaluating teachers. In short, the principals who are the first teachers in secondary schools are expected to provide quality orientation and capacity building for teachers towards keeping with the current thinking in curriculum planning by ensuring good organization of the lessons with sequence, continuity and integration of concepts to facilitate systematic implementation and assessment of the curriculum to achieve the set goals.

Akinfolarin, Babalola and Aladetan (2017) added that, the supervisory role of principals in the school covers a wide range of activities which include: developing instructional units, organizing for instruction like grouping students and planning class schedules for various classes, maintaining personal records of staff, providing materials and arranging for in-service education of teachers. In tandem to the above discussions, the supervisory functions of secondary school principals to be covered in this study include: supervision of teacher capacity development, supervision of teachers' adherence to curriculum content, supervision of learning resource inputs, supervision of instructional processes and supervision of learning progress and outcome.

These supervisory functions as highlighted above however confirms principals' positions as instructional leaders who supervise, monitor, assess, evaluate and disseminate current information on educational issues and modern teaching techniques for teachers in order to stimulate them for the best practice in curriculum delivery (Abah & Odeh, 2012). Studies both internationally and locally by scholars and researchers (Adewale, 2015; Alimi & Akinfolarin,

2012) further emphasized on the importance of the principal as a change agent for the professional growth of teachers and the improvement of curriculum delivery which is the central focus of students learning outcomes. To this effect, principals must ensure effective supervision by interacting academically and socially at a regular basis with teacher and students within and outside the classroom. The primary aim of this is to monitor the implementation of curricular and ensure desirable increase in teacher's capabilities, upgrade their conceptual knowledge and teaching skills, give them support in their work to facilitate better performance in methodological practices and students' learning outcomes in the school setting. This augments the fact that effective discharge of different supervisory functions by principals in displaying their instructional leadership is a prime contributory factor in the performance of secondary school students in internal and external examinations.

Yoyole (2019) explained that students' academic performance is the desirable changes outcomes in students' behaviour after a period of teaching and learning in order to determine effectiveness of teaching and learning activities as related to teaching objective which provides information on students' academic performance. Ijaiya (2017) observed that students' academic performance refers to the standard which students should be able to know and be able to do. Iyanu and Aduwa (2015) explained that students' academic performance has been a major determinant of school effectiveness. Bello, Bukar and Ibi (2019) explained that academic performance of students is a measure of output and the main outputs in education are expressed in terms of learning, that is, changes in knowledge, skills and attitudes of individuals as a result of their experiences within the school system. Bello, Bukar and Ibi (2016) and Oloyede (2018) observed that that students' academic performance is the level of attainment of a person in an examination, that is, how an individual is able to demonstrate his/her abilities in an examination.

Many researchers have carried out studies which are related to the variables of this study. For instance, Adeyeye and Ige (2019) examined principals' supervisory roles and teachers' effectiveness in public senior secondary schools in Oyo Central, Oyo State. Falola (2017) conducted a study on principals' supervisory roles: A strategic tool for employees' performance and retention in selected private schools in Ogun State. Olasumbo (2019) investigated supervisory functions of principals' and school effectiveness in public secondary schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria. Gultom (2017) also carried out a study on effect of head of institution supervisory roles and Islamic work ethics on lecturers' job satisfaction in private Islamic universities, Indonesia. However, based on researcher's knowledge, none of these previous studies focused on the relationship between principals' supervisory functions and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Kwara State and this is the gap which this study filled

Hence, performance is regarded as educational output. It is based on this background that this study examined the relationship between principals' supervisory functions and students' academic performance in secondary schools, Kwara State, Nigeria.

### **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 Kwara 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. The dwindling performance in West African Examination Council of students at senior secondary schools in Kwara State has been a major concern to stakeholders in education. Over the years, government has spent huge amount of money in funding senior secondary school

Principals' Supervisory functions and Students' Academic Performance in Public Secondary Schools, Kwara State, Nigeria education with the expectation of better academic performance and high quality education; still there persist poor performance of students in the West African Examination Council (WAEC Chief Examiner Report 2021 (20%), 2022 (21%) and 2023 (22%). 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 Kwara state secondary schools?

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between principals' supervisory functions and students' academic performance in secondary schools, Kwara State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study is to:

- i. investigate the supervisory functions mostly used by principals in secondary schools, Kwara State, Nigeria;
- ii. examine the level of students' academic performance in secondary schools, Kwara State, Nigeria from 2021-2023; and
- iii. investigate the relationship between principals' supervisory functions and students' academic performance in secondary schools, Kwara State, Nigeria

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were raised to guide the conduct of the study.

- i. What is the supervisory functions mostly used by principals' in secondary schools in Kwara State?
- ii. What is the level of students' academic performance in secondary schools, Kwara State, Nigeria from 2021-2023?

### **Research Hypothesis**

The null hypothesis was formulated to guide for the conduct of the study:

Ho: There is no significant relationship between principals' supervisory functions and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Kwara State, Nigeria.

### **Methodology**

The study adopted a descriptive research design of survey type. The population of the study comprised 9,939 teachers in the 340 public senior secondary schools in the 16 Local Government Areas of Kwara State, Nigeria. Proportionate sampling technique via Mogan Table was used to select 313 out of 4855 teachers in Kwara Central, 116 out of 2102 teachers in Kwara North and 165 out of 2982 teachers in Kwara South Senatorial District. In all a total of 594 teachers were sample across the state. Questionnaires titled: "Principals' Supervisory Functions Questionnaire (PSFQ) and Students' Academic Performance Proforma (SAPP) were used for data collection. In order to ascertain the validity of the self-designed instrument, the draft of the instrument was given to three experts in the University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria for both face and content validity. Those that were consulted are: two lecturers from the Department of Educational Management and one lecturer from the Department of Test and Measurement in the Faculty of Education. Their opinions and suggestions were incorporated into the final instrument that was used for pilot study and later on the respondents when it was found suitable. The test re-

test reliability method was adopted in determining the reliability of the instrument. The coefficient correlation obtained from the test was 0.93. This is an indication that the instrument is highly reliable. The descriptive statistics of mean ranking and percentage were used to answer research questions while Inferential statistics of Multiple Regression was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. However, 594 questionnaires were administered but 539 were returned for analysis which indicate 90.7% retrieval level.

**Results**

**Research Question One:** What is the supervisory functions mostly used by principals' in secondary schools in Kwara State?

**Table 1**

**Mean Ranking Order of Supervisory Functions used by Principals**

S/N	Supervisory Functions Used by Principals	X	SD	Rank Order
1	principals' supervision of teacher capacity development	3.37	.34	3 <sup>rd</sup>
2	principals' supervision of teachers' adherence to curriculum content	3.67	.39	1 <sup>st</sup>
3	principals' supervision of learning resource inputs	3.33	.65	4 <sup>th</sup>
4	principals' supervision of instructional processes	3.45	.48	2 <sup>nd</sup>
5	principals' supervision of students' learning progress and outcome	3.22	.38	5 <sup>th</sup>

Source: Fieldwork, 2024  
 In Kwara State, the table revealed that principals' supervision of *teachers' adherence to curriculum content* has the highest mean score of 3.67. This implies that principals' supervision of *teachers' adherence to curriculum content* is the supervisory functions mostly used by principals' in secondary schools in Kwara State. This is followed by "principals' supervision of instructional processes" with mean score of 3.45. principals' supervision of students' learning progress and outcome has the mean least score of 3.22.

**Research Question Two:** What is the level of students' academic performance in secondary schools, Kwara State, Nigeria from 2021-2023?

*In order to answer this research question, students' academic performance results were collated. The data in 5 credits and above including English and Mathematics and less than 5 credits collected from the study were analysed as shown in Table 2*

**Table 2**

**Students' Academic Performance in WAEC in Five Credits and Above Including English and Mathematics**

Year	Total No. of Reg.	No of Students' with 5 credits and above including English and Mathematics	% of Pass	Less than 5 credits	% of Fail
2020/2021	6,211	5,418	87.2	793	12.8
2021/2022	5,210	4,483	86.0	727	14.0
2022/2023	7,883	6,882	87.3	1,001	12.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>19304</b>	<b>16783</b>	<b>86.8</b>	<b>2521</b>	<b>13.2</b>

Principals' Supervisory functions and Students' Academic Performance in Public Secondary Schools, Kwara State, Nigeria shown in the table, students' academic performance in the year under review in secondary schools, Kwara State, Nigeria from 2021-2023. The average was 87.2% and 12.8% in 2020/2021 with an upward and downward rate of 1.2% in 2021/2022. An upward success rate of 1.3% was noticed between 2021/2022 and 2022/2023. Therefore, the level of students' academic performance in secondary schools, Kwara State, Nigeria from 2021-2023 was beyond average.

**Ho:** There is no significant relationship between principals' supervisory functions and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Kwara State, Nigeria.

**Table 3:** Results of Stepwise Multiple Regression of Principals' Supervisory Functions and Students' Academic Performance

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.612	.375	.369	.61891

Table 3 presents the model summary of the regression analysis with R square value of .375. This indicates that, the independent variable (principals' supervisory functions) explained at least 37.5% of the total variability of the dependent variable (students' academic performance). The high percentage of explained variability is an indication of model adequacy. This implies that principals' supervisory functions determine students' academic performance in Kwara State secondary schools. Implicit in this result is the fact that the predictor variable accounted for 37.5% variation in students' academic performance. Further verification on the significant of the relationship of the predictor variable and students' academic performance is  $P < 0.05$ .

Since P value is lesser than 0.05 significance level, the hypothesis is rejected. This means that, there is a significant relationship between principals' supervisory functions and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Kwara State, Nigeria.

**Table 4:** Regression Analysis of Principals' Supervisory Functions and Students' Academic Performance

Model	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
1 Regression	122.505	5	24.501	63.964	.000
Residual	204.163	533	.383		
Total	326.668	538			

A study of Table 4 indicates that, the calculated F-value is 63.964 with a degree of freedom of 5/533 that is significant at 0.000. Since p value of 0.000 was lesser than 0.05 significance level, the hypothesis was rejected. The implication of this is that there is a significant relationship between principals' supervisory functions and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Kwara State, Nigeria.

**Table 5:** Model Coefficients of Principals' Supervisory Functions and Students' Academic Performance



Model	B (Coefficient)	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig
Constant	-.258	.320		-.806	.421
Supervision of Teacher Capacity Development	.009	.010	.042	.918	.359
Supervision of Teachers Adherence in Curriculum Content	.166	.012	.591	14.377	.000
Supervision of Learning Resource Inputs	-.003	.012	.012	-.292	.770
Supervision of Instructional Processes	.024	.011	.086	2.185	.029
Supervision of Learning Progress and Outcome	-.023	.013	-.076	-1.789	.074

Table 5 shows the independent influence of principals' supervisory functions and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Kwara State, Nigeria. The result revealed that supervision of teacher capacity development ( $\beta = .042$ ,  $t = .918$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ), supervision of teacher adherence to curriculum contents ( $\beta = .591$ ,  $t = 14.377$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ), supervision of learning resource inputs ( $\beta = .012$ ,  $t = -.292$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ), supervision of instructional processes ( $\beta = .086$ ,  $t = 2.185$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ) and supervision of student learning process and outcome ( $\beta = -.076$ ,  $t = -1.789$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) were independent predictors of students' academic performance. This implies that supervision of teacher capacity building, supervision of teacher adherence to curriculum contents, supervision of learning resource inputs and supervision of instructional processes has a positive relationship with students' academic performance while supervision of student learning process and outcome has a negative significant relationship with students' academic performance in Kwara State secondary schools. This further can be deduced that supervision of teacher adherence to curriculum content contributed more while supervision of student learning process and outcome contributed less to students' academic performance in Kwara State secondary schools.

### Discussion of Findings

This section gives detailed discussion of the findings from the research questions and the hypotheses tested. Table 1 showed the supervisory functions mostly used by principals' in secondary schools in Kwara State and the question revealed that principals' supervision of *teachers' adherence to curriculum content* is the most supervisory functions mostly used by principals' in secondary schools in Kwara State. This implies that supervision of teachers to strict adherence to curriculum contents constitute a major supervisory function that principal laid more emphasis on so that effective teaching and learning can take place. This finding confirmed the finding that corroborates that of Ayeni (2018) that supervision of teachers to strict adherence to curriculum contents are necessary in schools to achieve school stated objectives. He explained that the implementation of the school programmes rests in the hand of the school principal. Corroborating this fact, Onuman (2019) states that supervision of teachers to strict adherence to curriculum contents remains an essential function to actualize the aims and objectives in which the school sets to achieve.

The findings of the research question two on the level of students' academic performance in secondary schools, Kwara State, Nigeria from 2021-2023 revealed that that the average percentage of pass and fail between 2021 and 2023 was 86.8 and 13.2 respectively. As shown in the table, students' academic performance was fluctuating in the year under review in secondary schools, Kwara State, Nigeria from 2021-2023. The average was 87.2% and 12.8% in 2020/2021 with an upward and downward rate of 1.2% in 2021/2022. An upward success rate of 1.3% was noticed between 2021/2022 and 2022/2023. Therefore, the level of students' academic performance in secondary schools, Kwara State, Nigeria from 2021-2023 was beyond average. The findings buttressed that of Oloyede (2018) that the level of academic performance necessary

Principals' Supervisory functions and Students' Academic Performance in Public Secondary Schools, Kwara State, Nigeria for successful entry into the present day job market, with or without a university education, has risen the point that a focus on achieving academic success is necessary for all students throughout every year of schooling from nursery/primary to the university level. The diverse factors against student developing a positive, substantive, and internal sense of importance of the accomplishment were emphasized.

The findings of the hypothesis tested stated that there is significant relationship between principals' supervisory functions and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Kwara State, Nigeria. Principals' supervisory functions are vital in educational objectives for the improvement of teaching and learning which is the sole responsibility of head of the school. Providing qualitative education for students rests merely with the principal and teachers who professionally interact in planning and organizing instruction for the process of school goals performance. The finding is in agreement with the view of Akpakwu (2014) who opined that principals as school managers have so many supervisory roles to play. These are supervision curricular, co-curricular and school facilities. The extent to which the principal carries out these roles determines how effective the teachers would be. Inability of some principals to properly supervise the curricular, co-curricular and how school facilities are utilized is one of the factors responsible for poor students' academic performance. Hence, the principals should pay more attention to these tripartite so that the stated goals could be achieved.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the findings of this study, principal supervision is important in the development of any educational programme, it was concluded that principals' supervision of *teachers' adherence to curriculum content* is the most supervisory functions mostly used by principals' in secondary schools in Kwara State, the level of students' academic performance in secondary schools, Kwara State, Nigeria from 2021-2023 was beyond average, there is significant relationship between principals' supervisory functions and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Kwara State, Nigeria, there is significant relationship between principals' supervision of teacher capacity development and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Kwara State, Nigeria; there is significant relationship between principals' supervision of *teachers' adherence to curriculum content* and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Kwara State, Nigeria; there is significant relationship between principals' supervision of learning resource inputs and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Kwara State, Nigeria; there is significant relationship between principals' supervision of instructional processes and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Kwara State, Nigeria; and there is significant relationship between principals' supervision of students' learning progress and outcome and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Kwara State, Nigeria.

### **Recommendations**

From the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. government and principals should ensure that teachers monitored the students' learning progress and outcome by effectively assessing their level of understanding in each subject that would enhance an excellent academic performance of students;
2. training and retraining of teachers need to be regularly conducted through attendance of seminar, workshops and conference to enhance and develop their skills and knowledge in their area of discipline;
3. principal should be adequately be involved in the procurement and provision of learning



- resources in the school so that the resources procured would be a good standard thereby having a positive impact of the academic performance of students;
4. effective supervision should be regularly done on the instructional resources in the school by the principal so that the resources can be used in accordance with the stated doctrine thereby enhancing an excellent academic performance by the students;
  5. principal should monitor the learning and students academic progress and outcome regularly by promptly requesting for the students performance so see the level of performance and areas that needs improvement;
  6. government should provide all necessary teaching materials that will promote the teaching standard among teachers; and
  7. principals and managers of schools should regularly make use of supervisory functions in check making the daily affairs in the school.

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