

Principals Quality Assurance Mechanisms for Enhancing Quality Public Secondary Schools in Ese-Odo L.G.A of Ondo State

Ikuelogbon Olamire

08060061093

olamire.ikuelogbon@unn.edu.ng

Department of Educational Foundations,
University of Nigeria, Nsukka

Anaenyeonu, Ifeoma .M.

08057810698

anaenyeonuiifeoma@gmail.com

Department of Educational Foundations,
University of Nigeria, Nsukka

&

Eze Grace Abiayo

0803580833

Graceresource1971@gmail.com

Abstract

This study ascertained principals' quality assurance mechanisms for enhancing quality secondary schools in Ese-Odo LGA of Ondo State. Two research questions and one null hypothesis guided the study. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. A sample of 60 made up of 20 principals and 40 were used for the study. The instrument used for data collection was a 30-item questionnaire. The research questions were answered using mean scores and standard deviations while the null hypothesis was tested using t-test statistics. The findings of the study revealed the mechanisms used by principals in assuring quality secondary schools. Also, it was revealed that principals' quality assurance mechanisms used only assure quality public secondary schools to a little extent in the LGA. Based on the findings, the researchers recommended that principals should be fully committed in the implementation of experts prescribed quality assurance mechanisms and the Ministry of Education organizes seminars, workshops, conferences for principals where quality assurance mechanisms will be discussed for continuous quality improvement, among others.

Keywords: Principal, quality assurance, mechanism, quality secondary school

Introduction

Education has been described as the bedrock of every society and tool for nation building. The worth of any educational system as an investment lies in its capability to continuously serve its recipients and customers in the society better and functionally at all

levels including secondary schools. Secondary education level as the bridge between the primary and tertiary level of education has broad aims. According to Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) (2013:12), in her National Policy on Education, contain that the primary aim of secondary education is the preparation of individuals for useful living within the society and for higher education. Specifically, the objectives of secondary education are to;

provide trained man-power in the applied science, technology and commerce; provides entrepreneurial, technical and vocational job specific skills for self-reliance, and for agricultural, industrial, and economic development; inspire students with a desire for self-improvement and achievement of excellence; raise morally upright, who can think independently and rationally, respect the views and feeling of others and appreciate the dignity of labour.

The underlining principles of secondary education is that, the secondary schools should be able to provide quality output to all those who can benefit from it. On the other hand, public secondary schools are those schools which their management is in the hands of government and its agencies. Public secondary schools according to Ogbonnaya (2010) are those secondary schools owned and managed/controlled by state or federal government. The author asserted that community secondary schools are regarded as public schools because it is run and managed by state government where the community is located. Omoroegie (2005), lamented that the products of today's public secondary school system can neither usefully live in the society nor move into higher institution without their parents' aid or forgery. They cannot think for themselves or respect the views and feelings of others. They love no iota of dignity of labour except for things that will give them quick money. The observations seem to indicate that public secondary schools are not living up to expectations in discharging their obligations.

The development of any nation in the modern world depends to a great extent on the educational system. Low quality teachers and low quality facilities produce low quality products and low quality performance in the society (Omoroegie, 2005). Ali (2000) observed that the quality of teachers has been failing for years now. The author further noted that lack of adequate practical experience through workshops, and other in-service training programmes, poor and inadequate laboratory equipment and instructional materials are the things that mar quality assurance in secondary schools. Babalola (2004) asserted that, quality education is the right of every citizen, not a privilege that the rulers may grant or withhold same. It must be stressed that education cannot be an instrument par excellence for achieving national development where the secondary education is not effectively managed to accomplish its aims and objectives. Furthermore, Sofowora (2010) noted that in order to realize. The aims and objectives of secondary education and its important roles to national development and globalization, has brought an agitation for more functional and qualitative education all over the world. This agitation and concern for quality education can never be over emphasize in quest for quality output in the secondary education.

Quality according to Fergabaum in Nwagbara (2008) is the totality of features and characteristics of a product or services that bear on its ability to satisfy stated or implied needs. Ajayi and Adegbesan (2006) refer quality as the totality of the features of a processed product or service that involves the reduction of waste and the improvement or productivity. Taking a look at the above definitions, it is about the standard of something when compared with other things. Therefore, one can deduce that quality education is the value, standard, and best to be expected from the education output that satisfied the community's need. Hence, need for quality assurance.

Quality assurance is regarded as a process and practice primarily concerned with conforming to mission specification and goal achievement within the publicly accepted standards of excellence (Okeke, 2008). Raouf (2008) assert that, quality assurance refers to an aggregate of actions and measures taken regularly to assure the quality of education products, services or processes, with an emphasis on assuring that a prescribed threshold of quality is met. Okebukola (2010), maintained that quality assurance is an umbrella concept designed to improve quality of input, process, and output of the educational system. Kiadese (2000) defined quality assurance as the confidence attached to a product or service in terms of maintaining standard. Quality assurance can also be refers to putting in place appropriate structures, legislations, supervision of personnel and materials in order to ensure that set minimum standard will be attained, sustained and seen to have meaningful impact on society Owadiae (2011). It is a phenomenon that relates to production, national and international trade, education, science and technology. It therefore means that quality assurance in secondary education is evidence based and as much depends on efficient and effective management, resource utilization, curriculum delivery, monitoring, evaluation and reviews of the resources inputs and transformation process to produce quality outputs(students) that will meet the expectations of the larger society.

Consequently in education many have been erroneously taught wrong concepts by unqualified and or untrained teachers, while students have been victims of lack of employment because of substandard education. Sub-standard infrastructural facilities available as school building and unprotected environment of the school are all evidence and need for quality assurance (Oderinde, 2004). Likewise, Agboje (2007), reported that school facilities are in deplorable condition; which could negatively affect students performances in external examinations. Consequently West African Examination Council (WAEC) Chief Examiner (Mr. Charles Eguridu) 2013/2014 reported that "A total of 529,425 candidates, representing 31.28%, obtained credits in five (5) subjects and above, including English Language and Mathematics." He noted that when compared to the 2012 and 2013 May/June WASSCE diets, there was marginal decline in the performance of candidates as 38:81 per cent was recorded in 2012 and 36.57 percent in 2013. All these are evidences of the need for quality assurance in the public secondary schools.

Quality assurance mechanisms are the process of ensuring effective resources input, control, refining the process and raising the standards of output in order to meet the set goals and satisfy public accountability (Harvey, 1999). Ayeni (2010) described quality assurance mechanisms in education as the systematic management, monitoring and evaluation of performance of school administrators, teachers and students against educational goals to ensure consistent documentation, review and decision towards quality improvement in the institutional management. To Maduewesi (2005) quality assurance mechanisms are totality of the combination of indispensable variables such as quality teachers, quality instructional materials and quality infrastructure (classroom, tables, seat, etc) for quality output. This conception raises the issue of promoting a value system in the school management which emphasizes production of quality learners' outcomes in the teaching-learning process.

In education, mechanism is the process of using quality materials to deliver instructions to the learners which will bring about quality output. Bottery (2008) suggests that educators should use assessment not only to actively and continuously measure a learner's progress but also to acquire useful data to inform their own instructional practice. From another context, Fidler (2002) perceives mechanism as a technique or approach that an organization considers suitable for the realization of its organizational objectives. Mechanism refers to a constellation of entities and activities that are organized such that they regularly bring about a particular type of desired outcome (Hedström and Ylikoski, 2010). In view of the above explanations, quality assurance mechanisms can be seen as measure set by an organization and its various components to achieve a desired outcome in the future through the efforts of principal.

The school principal, according to Ogbonnaya (2010), is the executive head of secondary school that implements the educational programmes of school and procures staff, facilities and equipment for conducive teaching and learning in schools. Manabum (2002) described principal as the person on whose shoulders rests the entire administration of secondary education, success or failure of the secondary schools objectives depends on the principal. In view of the above explanations, one could say that the principal is the educational manager, chief executive officer, finance manager, strategist and quality controller of the school for quality output. Therefore, the school principal can be defined as the person with the highest authority, who occupying the most important position in the secondary school administrations.

Statement of the Problem

The aims of secondary school education are to develop the individual mental capacity and character building for higher education and useful living within the society. In spite of the societal demand for quality assurance in schools, there is a growing concern about the realization of secondary education objectives due to doubt that many public secondary school administrators (principles) give little attention to the discharge of

instructional activities. Consequently, there has been alarming rate of the steady decline in teacher's instructional task performance and student's academic achievement which depicts non-realization of quality outputs in public secondary education in Ondo state and Ese-Odo LGA in particular. Furthermore, the certificates obtained by public secondary schools graduates in the external examinations are criticized against with the belief that it was gotten through examination malpractices. This may be seen as the result of poor performance of graduates of secondary education in services delivery in Ese-Odo LGA. This study will therefore help to determine the facts of this popular belief. The problem of this study is to ascertain principals' quality assurance mechanisms for enhancing quality secondary schools in Ese-Odo LGA of Ondo .

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this study is to investigate principals' quality assurance mechanisms for enhancing quality public secondary schools in Ese-Odo LGA of Ondo State. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Identify mechanisms used by principals to assure quality public secondary schools in Ese-Odo LGA;
2. Find out the extent principals' quality assurance mechanisms actually assure quality in the public secondary schools in Ese-Odo LGA;

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the quality assurance mechanisms used by the principals in assuring quality public secondary schools in Ese-Odo LGA?
2. To what extent do the principal's quality assurance mechanisms actually assure quality in public secondary schools in Ese-Odo LGA?

Hypotheses

One null hypothesis was formulated to guide the study and was tested at 0.05 probability level.

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of principals and HODs on the extent principals' quality assurance mechanisms actually assured quality public secondary schools in Ese-Odo LGA of Ondo state.

Methodology

The study was carried out in Ese-Odo LGA of Ondo State. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. According to Nworgu (2015), descriptive survey is a type of study which aims at collecting data, and describing in a systematic manner, the characteristic features or facts about a given population. This design is most appropriate and suitable for this study as it

enabled the researchers to seek principals’ quality assurance mechanisms that can assure quality public secondary schools in Ese-Odo LGA of Ondo State. The population of the study is 50 school administrators, which comprises of 20 principals and 40 subject head teachers from the 20 public secondary schools in Ese-Odo LGA of Ondo state which also constituted the sample size.

The instrument used for data collection was a structural questionnaire designed by the researchers, titled “Principal’s Quality Assurance Mechanism Questionnaire (PQAMQ). The items were structured along the modified four point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA) 4 = point, Agree 3 = point, Disagree 2 = point and Strongly Disagree (SD) 1 = point respectively. The data collected was analyzed using mean (\bar{X}) and standard deviation (SD), mean was used to answer research questions while t-test statistics was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The decision on the research questions were arrived at with the use of criterion mean for research question 1 and real limit of numbers for research question 2. This implies that item with a mean of 2.50 and above was accepted as quality assurance mechanism of principals while items with a mean below 2.50 were not accepted as same.

Results

Research Question One:

What are the quality assurance mechanisms used by the principals in assuring quality in public secondary schools in Ese-Odo of Ondo State?

The answer to the above research question is presented in Table 1

Table 1: Mean responses of principals and subject head teachers on the quality assurance mechanisms used by the principals in assuring quality public secondary schools in Ese-Odo LGA Ondo State.

S/N	ITEMS	Principal			HODs		
		\bar{X}	SD	RMK	\bar{X}	SD	RMK
1	Provision standby generator for electricity supply	1.32	0.57	D	1.33	0.58	D
2	Provide medical care services to the students that injured during school activities.	1.43	0.59	D	1.44	0.59	D
3	Classrooms are equipped with modern furniture e.g. chairs and table.	1.78	0.93	D	1.79	0.93	D
4	Always educates teacher on new trends in school system	1.51	0.74	D	1.52	0.74	D

5	Frequent monitoring of teachers lesson notes	2.16	0.70	D	2.11	0.78	D
6	Principals involve staff in decision making	1.50	0.67	D	1.52	0.67	D
7	Principals usually inspects the school resources	2.55	0.70	A	2.54	0.70	A
8	Build good relationship with HODs.	2.78	0.77	A	2.77	0.78	A
9	Always invites resource persons to guide students in technical laboratory studies.	1.60	0.76	D	1.60	0.76	D
10	Control teachers by use of movement book record.	2.70	0.97	A	2.71	0.97	A
11	Provision of current teaching materials for teachers.	1.30	0.66	D	1.32	0.67	D
12	Assists in provision of sporting facilities to the schools	1.27	0.51	D	1.28	0.52	D
13	Library and laboratory are been equipped with adequate and current materials.	1.48	0.66	D	1.48	0.67	D
14	Provide disciplinary measure to be given to students	2.52	0.68	A	2.53	0.68	A
15	The school have adequate staff on every subjects	1.32	0.48	D	1.33	0.48	D
16	Allocation of subjects is by qualification.	1.34	0.64	D	1.34	0.64	D
	Grand mean	2.09	0.81	D	2.10	0.82	D

The Table 1 presents the mean opinions of principals and HODs on the quality assurance mechanisms used by the principals in assuring quality in public secondary schools. From the data presented on the table it is observable that the principals' rated items 1, 2,3,4,5,6,7,10,11,12,14 and 16 mean range between 2.16, 1.51, 1.32, 1.27, 1.32, 1.43, 1.50, 1.30, 1.34, 1.48, 1.78 and 1.60. While the HODs rated the same items 2.11, 1.52, 1.33, 1.28, 1.33, 1.44, 1.52, 1.32, 1.34, 1.48, 1.79 and 1.60 respectively which fall below the 2.50 criterion mean score. This means that both principals and the HODs share the view that the quality assurance mechanisms used by the principals in assuring quality in public secondary schools cannot actually assure quality.

The same respondents rated items 8, 9, 13 and 15 differently. While principals rated the items 2.55, 2.52, 2.78 and 2.70. The HODs rated them 2.54, 2.53, 2.77 and 2.71 which fall above the 2.50 criterion mean score. This means that both principals and the HODs share the view that principals usually inspect the school resources, provide disciplinary measure to be given to students, build good relationship with HODs and control teachers by use of movement book record. These are indications that the quality assurance mechanisms used by the principals in assuring quality in public secondary schools in Ese-Odo LGA could not actually ensure quality.

Research Question Two

To what extent do the principal's quality assurance mechanisms actually assure quality in public secondary schools in Ese-Odo LGA of Ondo State?

The data for answering the above research question are presented on Table 2 below

Table 2: Mean responses of principals and HODs on the extent do the principal's quality assurance mechanisms actually assure quality in public secondary schools in Ese-Odo LGA of Ondo State.

S/N	ITEMS	Principals			HODs		
		\bar{X}	SD	RMK	\bar{X}	SD	RMK
1	The principal monitors and evaluate teachers note.	2.16	0.70	LE	2.17	0.70	LE
2	The principal organizes workshop	1.51	0.74	LE	1.52	0.75	LE
3	Provides good maintenance culture to the school material resources	1.32	0.57	LE	1.33	0.58	LE
4	There is good sporting facilities in the school	1.27	0.52	LE	1.28	0.51	LE
5	Principal usually organize inter class debate competition for students.	2.62	0.47	GE	2.63	0.47	GE
6	Provide admission policy to the administrative staff.	2.53	0.59	GE	2.52	0.59	GE
7	Assist in provision of first aid box with materials	2.50	.67	GE	2.51	0.67	GE
8	Usually involves staff in decision making	1.44	0.70	LE	1.44	0.71	LE

9	Call for interdepartmental meeting of staff on the school curriculum.	1.32	0.68	LE	1.33	0.68	LE
10	Principals inspect and supervised the school resources.	1.60	0.66	GE	1.62	0.66	GE
11	The environment is conducive for teaching and learning.	1.34	0.64	LE	1.34	0.64	LE
12	Principal usually procure some teaching materials for teachers.	1.48	0.66	LE	1.48	0.66	LE
13	Principals equipped library and laboratory with needed books and laboratory equipments.	1.78	0.77	LE	1.78	0.77	LE
14	The principal provides daily newspaper to the school press club.	1.78	0.92	LE	1.78	0.92	LE
Ground mean		2.28	0.87	LE	2.27	0.87	LE

From Table 2, the mean scores for items 5, 6, 7, and 10 exceeded 2.50 the critical mean score. This indicated that principals quality assurance that can actually assure quality secondary school provision of furniture to schools and in provision of teaching learning materials. Whereas, items 1,2,3, 4, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13 and 14 show the principal mechanisms that cannot assure quality principal monitors and evaluate teachers note, the principal organizes workshop, provides good maintenance culture to the school material resources, there is good sporting facilities in the school, usually involves staff in decision making, call for interdepartmental meeting of staff on the school curriculum, principals inspect and supervised the school, the environment is conducive for teaching and learning, Principal usually procure some teaching materials for teachers, principals equipped library and laboratory with needed books and laboratory equipments, and the principal provides daily newspaper to the school press club. From the cluster means 2.28(principals) and 2.27 (for HODs) it means that the respondents are of the view that principals quality assurance mechanisms can assure quality secondary schools to a little extent in Ese-Odo LGA of Ondo.

Hypothesis (Ho₁)

There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of principals and experts' prescribed on the extent principals quality assurance actually assured quality in public secondary schools in Ese-Odo LGA of Ondo state.

Table 3: Independent t-test Analysis of the Principals and Teachers' Responses on the Extent principals' quality assurance actually assured quality secondary schools in Ese-Odo LGA of Ondo State.

Group	n	\bar{X}	SD	Df.	t-val.	Sign-t	Remark
Principals	20	2.57	.60	58	-.170	.865	NS
Teachers	40	2.61	.73				

From the Table 3, the t- value at 48 degree of freedom and 0.05 level of significance is -0.170. Since the value of t = -0.170 and is significant at 0.865, the value is not significant at 0.05. This is because 0.865 is greater than 0.05 ($p=0.865; p>0.05$). Therefore, the hypothesis is not rejected; hence there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of the principals and subject head teachers with regard to the extent principals' quality assurance actually assured quality public secondary schools in Ese-Odo LGA of Ondo state.

Discussion of the Findings

The results obtained from research question 1 revealed that quality assurance mechanisms used by the principals in assuring quality in public secondary schools cannot actually assure quality. The results indicated that principals do not frequently monitored teachers lesson notes, do not always educates teacher on new trends in school system ,no provision of standby generator for electricity supply, do not assists in provision of sporting facilities to the schools, the schools do not have adequate staff on every subjects, do not provide medical care services to the students that injured during school activities, principals do not involve staff in decision making, no provision of current teaching materials for teachers, allocation of subjects is not by qualification, library and laboratory are not been equipped with adequate and current materials, classrooms are not equipped with modern furniture e.g. chairs and table and do not always invites resource persons to guide students in technical laboratory studies.

The finding corroborates the study of Adeolu (2012) whoreported that the provision of instructional materials and feedback to stakeholders were the challenges to quality assurance practice in secondary schools. The finding is also in line with Sofowara (2010) who found that the qualification of the teachers do not met the required qualification prescribed by National Policy on Education. Also that all the facilities are inadequate and that most of the schools lack elementary science laboratory. The study also conformed to Olatoye (2006) who observed that the provision of facilities, teachers' motivation and instructional delivery had suffered a lot in Nigeria secondary schools. The study is also in line with Eya and Chukwu

(2012) who revealed that poor instructional supervision would result to ineffective quality secondary school. Therefore, principal quality assurance mechanisms are not effective enough in assuring quality secondary schools.

The results obtained from Table 2 revealed that Principals quality assurance mechanisms can assure quality secondary schools to a small extent in Ondo central education zone. The findings indicated that most of the mechanisms used by principals could only assure secondary school to a little extent. That is to say that, principals do not monitor and evaluate teachers' notes, the principals do not organize workshop, do not provide good maintenance culture to the school material resources, there are no good sporting facilities in the school, do not usually involve staff in decision making, do not call for interdepartmental meeting of staff on the school curriculum, principals do not inspect and supervise the school, the environment is not conducive for teaching and learning, Principals do not usually procure some teaching materials for teachers, principals equipped library and laboratory with needed books and laboratory equipment to a little extent, and the principal provides daily newspaper to the school press club to a little extent.

The result agreed with Oyebade, Oladipo, and Adetoro (2009) who observed that the extent of principal quality assurance modalities can assure quality output in secondary is below average. Likewise, the finding corroborates the study of Akinbobola and Ikitde (2000) who reported that there were few qualified teachers in secondary schools, as a result, achieving quality output becomes difficult. The result is also in agreement with Ojedele (2007) who reported that all staffs are expected to be trained in quality assurance methods, problem solving technique, and communication techniques. Therefore, principals' quality assurance mechanisms can actually assure quality secondary school to a little extent.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Principals should be fully committed in the implementation of experts prescribed quality assurance mechanisms for effective secondary school administration.
2. The government, through the Ministry of Education should provide adequate fund to schools for equipping the school library with current and relevant books.
3. The Ministry of Education organizes seminars, workshops, conferences for principals where quality assurance mechanisms will be discussed for continuous quality improvement.
4. Principals should be fully committed to every activity of quality assurance for continuous quality improvement in secondary school administration.

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