

PRINCIPALS' ADMINISTRATIVE STRATEGIES FOR THE ACHIEVEMENT OF QUALITY ASSURANCE IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ANAMBRA STATE

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Abstract

This study sought to examine principals' administrative strategies for the achievement of quality assurance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The design of the study was a descriptive survey. Three research questions and three null hypotheses guided the study. The population of the study comprised 7178 principals and teachers. The sample of the study consisted of 202 principals and teachers. Questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while t-test statistics was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study indicate that principals' planning strategies significantly influence the achievement of quality assurance in secondary schools in Anambra State, principals' organizing strategies significantly influence the achievement of quality assurance in secondary schools in Anambra State, principals' decision-making strategies significantly influence the achievement of quality assurance in secondary schools in Anambra State. The study concluded among others that proper use of the documented planning, organizing and decision-making strategies by school principals could promote quality assurance in secondary school administration. From the findings and implications of the study, it was recommended among others that state government should appoint capable and qualified persons as principals in order to implement the documented administrative strategies for quality assurance in secondary school administration.

INTRODUCTION

Education could be seen as an instrument for achieving socioeconomic and technological growth and development of any nation. Education in essence is the most effective instrument for academic progress, social mobilization, political survival and effective national development of a country, it constitutes the single largest enterprise in Nigeria (Akpa, 2016). In Nigeria, public

discussions and debates on education frequently focus on the need for consistent improvement on quality and standards (Matheri, 2015).

Quality education is the education that make sure that teaching and learning in school meet certain standard. Some secondary school administrators in effort to ensure quality, design a quality assurance management plan, strategic plan of action

that will enable them to achieve the overall aims set out by the Federal Ministry of education for effective delivery of quality education in schools. Federal government in other to ensure standard, established in 1973 federal education quality assurance to obtain information on problems and difficulties of teachers and institutions and proffer practical solutions to them, ensure minimum standards and quality control of instructional activities in schools through regular evaluation and continuous supervision, encourage dissemination of information on innovative and progressive education principles and practices in the school system through publication, workshops, meetings, seminars, conferences and so on, set, maintain and improve standards in all aspects of the school system below tertiary level among others, (Federal Ministry of Education, 2019).

Quality assurance is a way of preventing quality problems and ensures that high standard is maintained in order to achieve the stated objectives of an organization. Quality assurance is the way of maintaining and improving students in all aspects of the schools system (FRN 2013), Ohamobi (2020) defined quality assurance as strategy used to obtain effective teaching and learning for the achievement of educational objectives and goals. According to Borahan and Ziarati (2016 p.31) quality assurance is all those planned and systematic actions necessary to provide sufficient confidence that a product or service will satisfy given requirements for quality. A major characteristic of quality assurance is that it is preventive and operates to prevent mistakes, poor quality and wastages from occurring in the first place (Akagwu, 2020).

In secondary schools there are problems that affect quality assurance in

Anambra state and Nigeria at large (Enyi & Ogbonnaya, 2020). Some of them include; inadequate funding, shortage of professional teachers, inadequate infrastructural facilities, poor supervision, corruption, weak school administrators, inadequate instructional materials, poor quality of secondary School education and examination malpractice. Moreso, in Anambra State, Nigeria, public secondary schools face a myriad of challenges that collectively hinder the quality assurance standard in public secondary schools. Such as basic infrastructure, lack of qualified teachers, conducive environment, insufficient instructional material, poor supervision, corruption, weak administrators, among others.

Quality assurance in secondary schools therefore becomes very important tool in attainment of principals' administrative goals because with good and quality education that encompasses good instructional supervision, adequate facilities and equipment's, motivation of teachers and teachers' attendance to conferences, teachers quality will improve. All of which is accomplished through efficient administrative strategies.

Administrative strategies, according to Ogbonnaya, Oboegbulem, Onwurah, and Enyi (2019:14), are the sum total of the various planning, organizing, stimulating, coordinating, staffing, budgeting, supervisory, communication, and evaluating processes that help administrators to achieve organizational goals. Enyi and Ogbonnaya (2020) stressed that administrative strategy can therefore be regarded as the sum total of the various processes of planning, organizing, stimulating, coordinating, staffing, budgeting, communicating and evaluating, which aid administrators in the

utilization of resources in the achievement of organizational goals. Within the school system, virtually all the various aspect of the school programmes and activities should be planned. Ogbonnaya (2013) stressed that administrative strategies can therefore be regarded as the sum total of the various processes of planning, organizing, stimulating, coordinating, staffing, budgeting, communication and evaluating, which aid administrators in the utilization of resources in the achievement of organizational goals.

Operationally, administration strategies are the systematic methods and techniques employed by management to plan, organize, coordinate, and control various activities and resources within an organization. These strategies encompass tasks such as setting objectives, allocating resources, establishing policies and procedures, delegating responsibilities, monitoring progress, and making decisions to ensure the efficient and effective functioning of the organization. Examples include strategic planning, project management, budgeting, performance evaluation, and communication protocols. But in the context of this study, administrative strategies are delimited to Planning strategy, organizing strategy, decision-making strategy, coordinating strategy, directing strategy and motivating strategy.

Planning, according to Oboegbulem and Onwurah (2017, pg.319), is the process of selecting ahead of time what methods and procedures an individual, group, or organization will use to achieve its goals. The most important aspect of planning is deciding ahead of time what goals need to be met and how to use existing resources to accomplish them. To put it another way, planning entails

deciding ahead of time what needs to be done and how it should be done. Because the few available resources must be evenly distributed to serve every competing section, scarcity of resources makes the requirement even more pressing. In order to achieve quality assurance in education, it is vital to organize the planning at this point. When it comes to planning, principals who are in charge of employing human and material resources in schools must be able to organize these resources in order to achieve the desired results.

Organizing according to Enyi (2016, pg.317) is an administrative strategy including the creation of a framework and the assignment of personnel to certain positions for the goal of completing specific tasks. The administrator must have a framework or structure for his school on which posts are formed and assigned to people through effective organization in order to fulfill the defined educational objectives. Organizing is frequently thought as a procedure in which an administrator defines and groups the work to be done into smaller units, and then assigns individuals to the various units with the necessary resources and authority. Organizing in schools allows the principal to allocate duties to academic and non-academic personnel based on competency, which reduces conflict in schools by ensuring that everyone knows what they are supposed to do. When it comes to planning and organizing, principals who are in charge of employing human and material resources in schools must be able to coordinate these resources in order to achieve the desired results. Principals who are charged with the responsibility of utilizing human and material resources in schools needs to involve the teachers in decision making in order to achieve the desired results.

Decision-making is a cognitive process that involves choosing a course of action from multiple alternatives. It is a fundamental aspect of human behavior and is applicable in various aspects of life, including personal, professional, and social contexts (Manafa, 2019). Effective decision-making is essential for achieving goals, solving problems, and navigating through the complexities of life. It is one of the most important duties of the school principal because there are elements of decision making in every administrative act, whether it concerns students, staff, programmes and services. The school principal and other top management members of the school (vice principal, heads of departments, subject coordinators, and heads of school committees) are expected to be effective in decision-making about goal setting, curriculum planning and implementation, and coordination of human and material resources for optimal performance and achievement of the set goals (Ayeeni, 2018).

Statement of the Problem

Ideally, secondary school administration is expected to promote quality assurance in Education of the citizens for national development. It is the expectation of the government, parents and even students that quality education is received by students in Nigeria secondary schools through the adoption of appropriate administrative strategies by the principals. However, observations have shown that there seems to be poor principals' administrative strategies which have led to poor quality assurance in secondary schools in Anambra State.

In Anambra State, the standard of education appears to be good, as most of the results from external examinations, like as

the West African Examination Council examination, show that students perform well. The chart, which was released by the examination board, ranked the performances of all 36 states in the country, including the Federal Capital Territory of Abuja. Anambra State came in second position with 28, 379 applicants out of a total of 46, 385, but Abia State got first place with 63.94 percent of those who have five credits in Mathematics and English Language, compared to Anambra's 61.18 percent out of 100 percent. But despite this endeavor, secondary school education in Anambra State appears to be struggling to maintain their status quo. It seems that some principals are not carrying out their administrative duties such as communicating, budgeting and supervising the affairs of the schools in such a way to compete with other schools globally.

The administrative dealings of various secondary schools in Anambra state seems to have been hindered by numerous problems. These problems which include: poor supervision, conflict among teachers, inadequate funding, inadequate facilities, lack of principal-teacher relationship, and poor leadership styles of the principal among others. Moreover, some school principals in Anambra State seem to lack vision, there appears to be inadequate job analysis and work plan with poor instructional supervision which culminated into poor curriculum delivery in schools and consequently may affect the height Anambra state have attained educationally. The problems mentioned above should not be allowed to continue, hence the problem of this study put in question form is, 'what are the principals administrative strategies for the achievement of quality assurance in secondary schools in Anambra State?'

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to examine principals' administrative strategies for the achievement of quality assurance in secondary schools in Anambra State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. determine influence of principals' planning strategies on the achievement of quality assurance in secondary schools in Anambra State.
2. ascertain the extent principals' organizing strategies influence the achievement of quality assurance in secondary schools in Anambra State.
3. find out the extent principals' decision-making strategies influence the achievement of quality assurance in secondary schools in Anambra State.

Research Questions

The following research question guided the study:

1. To what extent does principals' planning strategies influence the achievement of quality assurance in secondary schools in Anambra State?
2. To what extent does principals' organizing strategies influence the achievement of quality assurance in secondary schools in Anambra State?
3. To what extent does principals' decision-making strategies influence the achievement of quality assurance in secondary schools in Anambra State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses formulated guided the study, and would be tested at .05 level of significance.

1. Principals' planning strategies will not significantly influence the achievement of quality assurance in secondary schools in Anambra State.
2. Principals' organizing strategies will not significantly influence the achievement of quality assurance in secondary schools in Anambra State.
3. Principals' decision-making strategies will not significantly influence the achievement of quality assurance in secondary schools in Anambra State.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study was made up of all the 263 principals and 6915 teachers in the 263 public secondary schools in the six education zones of Anambra State. All the six Education Zones, namely Aguata, Awka, Nnewi, Ogidi, Onitsha and Otuocha were studied (Post Primary Schools Service Commission Awka, (2024). The sample consist of 202 principals and teachers in the government owned secondary schools in the six educational zones of Anambra State. Purposive random sampling was used to select 5% of principals and teachers in the government owned secondary schools in the six education zones of Anambra State. The instrument that was used for data collection is a researcher structured questionnaire titled: Principal Quality Assurance Strategies Questionnaire (PQASQ). The items were placed on 4 - point scale of Very High Extent (VHE), High

Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE) and Very Low Extent (VLE). The range of the scores were weighted as 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. The test re-test reliability method was used to obtain a reliability index coefficient of 0.76. Data collected in the course of this study were analyzed using mean and standard deviation.

Mean was used to analyze the research questions while standard deviation was used to determine the homogeneity of the scores. Hypotheses were tested using paired simple t-test at 0.05 level of significance. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25 was used.

RESULTS

Hypothesis One

Principals' planning strategies will not significantly influence the achievement of quality assurance in secondary schools in Anambra State.

Table 7: Summary of t-test on Principals' planning strategies will not significantly influence the achievement of quality assurance in secondary schools in Anambra State

The table above shows the calculated t-value of 3.15 at 201 degree of freedom and 0.05 level of significant. Since the calculated t-value of 3.15 is greater than the table of 1.96, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis is accepted which states that principals' planning strategies significantly influence the achievement of quality assurance in secondary schools in Anambra State.

Hypothesis Two

Principals' organizing strategies will not significantly influence the achievement of quality assurance in secondary schools in Anambra State.

Table 8: Summary of t-test on the principals' organizing strategies will not significantly influence the achievement of quality assurance in secondary schools in Anambra State

S/No	Respondent group	No of respondent	Mean	SD	Df	Calculated t	Table t	Dec.
1	PRINCIPALS	112	2.92	6.05	201	3.15	1.96	Significant
2	TEACHERS	90	3.09	5.4				

S/No	Respondent group	No of respondents	Mean	SD	Df	Calculated t	Table t	Dec.
1	PRINCIPALS	109	2.67	5.47	201	2.08	1.96	Significant
2	TEACHERS	93	2.78	4.61				

The table above shows the calculated t-value of 2.08 at 201 degree of freedom and 0.05 level of significant. Since the calculated t-value of 2.08 is greater than the table of 1.96, the alternative hypothesis is accepted while the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis which states that principals' organizing strategies significantly influence the achievement of quality assurance in secondary schools in Anambra State.

Hypothesis Three

Principals' decision-making strategies will not significantly influence the achievement of quality assurance in secondary schools in Anambra State.

Table 9: Summary of t-test on the Principals' decision-making strategies will not significantly influence the achievement of quality assurance in secondary schools in Anambra State

S/No	Respondent group	No of respondents	Mean	SD	Df	Calculated t	Table t	Dec.
1	PRINCIPALS	117	2.74	5.69	201	2.24	1.96	Significant
2	TEACHERS	85	2.84	4.68				

The table above shows the calculated t-value of 2.24 at 201 degree of freedom and 0.05 level of significant. Since the calculated t-value of 2.24 is greater than the table of 1.96, the alternative hypothesis is accepted while the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis which states that principals' decision-making strategies significantly influence the achievement of quality assurance in secondary schools in Anambra State.

Discussion of Findings

The findings are discussed in line with the research questions and hypotheses raised in the study.

The findings of hypothesis one shows that principals' planning strategies significantly influence the achievement of quality assurance in secondary schools in Anambra State. The outcome of the study in respect of research question one and hypothesis one show that principals' planning strategies significantly influence the

achievement of quality assurance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. In line with the findings, Manafa (2019) stated that planning is the tool which is used in gaining control of the future through current acts by studying comprehensively the current problems, apply appropriate solutions, anticipating similar events, preparing for contingencies by formulating directions, mapping out activities and providing orderly sequence for achieving stated goals. This study indicates that the principals are adopting good planning strategies for the attainment of quality assurance in secondary schools.

The findings of this study based on research question two and hypothesis two indicated that principals' organizing strategies significantly influence the achievement of quality assurance in secondary schools in Anambra State. This finding agrees with the studies of Enyi (2016). He found out that organizing in schools as an administrative strategy of having a structure and assigning people to the posts for the purpose of performing specific duties achievement of quality assurance in secondary schools. According to him, no principals' can function alone without the assistance of others, in other to achieve the set educational objectives, the administrator he said must have a framework or structure for his school on which posts are created and assigned to people through effective organization.

The findings of this study based on research question three and hypothesis three indicated that principals' decision-making strategies significantly influence the achievement of quality assurance in secondary schools in Anambra State. The results of this study agree with the findings of researchers such as Akpakwu (2022). The researcher viewed that the principal is expected to apply certain strategies in taking decisions which include the reflexive strategy, reflective strategy and consistent strategy in order to achieve of quality assurance in public secondary schools. If the public secondary school principals employ efficient and effective decision making strategies, it will lead them to successful achievement educational objectives in secondary schools.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study and the discussions that followed, the following conclusions were made:

The principals' planning strategies for quality assurance in public secondary schools include preparation of school time table on time, adequate provision of ICT facilities to enhance teaching and learning in the school, provision of enough furniture in the school and equipping the school laboratories with standard laboratory facilities among others. There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on the principals' planning strategies for the achievement of quality assurance in secondary schools. Hence, adoption of these planning strategies by the school principals would enhance quality assurance in public secondary schools.

The principals' organizing strategies for quality assurance in public secondary schools comprise making proper arrangements prior to any external examination; making sure that materials needed for conducting internal examination are made available to the exam committee at the right time and organizing staff meeting on the first day of every term among others. While organizing programmes like debate and quiz competition during special assembly at least once in a week and making sure that letters of invitation to attend PTA meeting are served to all parents through their children in the school are not the principals' organizing strategies for the achievement of quality assurance in secondary schools. However, there is no significant difference

between the mean ratings of male and female principals on the principals' organizing strategies for the achievement of quality assurance in secondary schools. Therefore, the proper use of the documented organizing strategies by school principals could promote quality assurance in secondary schools.

Principals' decision-making strategies significantly influence the achievement of quality assurance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The principal is expected to apply certain strategies in taking decisions which include the reflexive strategy, reflective strategy and consistent strategy in order to achieve of quality assurance in public secondary schools.

Recommendations

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

1. Secondary school principals should adopt and implement the administrative strategies illustrated in this study to achieve quality assurance in their schools.
2. The state government should appoint capable and qualified person to head a secondary school as a principal.
3. Secondary school principals should be transferred to another school after a period of some years in their resident school.

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