

PRINCIPALS ROLE IN THE IMPROVEMENT OF QUALITY ASSURANCE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ENUGU STATE

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to determine principals' role in the improvement of quality assurance in secondary schools in Enugu State. One research question and one null hypothesis were formulated and tested at .05 level of significance. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population for the study comprised all the 297 secondary school principals in the public secondary schools in Enugu State. The entire population was used for the study. No sampling was done because the population was adequate. Questionnaire was used for data collection. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha Reliability estimate. The instrument yielded the reliability coefficient of .74, indicating that the instrument is reliable and suitable for the study. The data collected with the questionnaire was analyzed using Mean ($\bar{x}$) with Standard Deviation (SD) to answer the research questions, while the hypothesis was tested using t-test statistics at .05 level of significance. For the decision rule; real limit of the mean scores were applied. The null hypothesis were rejected when the significant level was less than .05 and were not rejected when the significant level was more than .05 level of significance. From the result of the findings, it was concluded that; to a great extent the supervisory role of principals were performed in the improvement of quality assurance in public secondary schools in Enugu State. There is no significant difference in the mean response of male and female principals on the extent to which the principals' supervisory roles are performed in the improvement of quality in public secondary schools in Enugu State. The researcher recommended among that efforts should be made by the government in supervising the principals to ensure that their supervisory roles are carried out successfully with all seriousness and diligence.

Keywords: Principals, Quality Assurance, Secondary School

Introduction

The role of education in the development of an individual and the society at large cannot be over-emphasized. Education equips individuals with the ability that will enable them to explore the world, manipulate it for their survival and establish themselves (Ojim, 2021). Ude (2015) noted that potentials deposited in individuals are exposed through education so that individuals can acquire training and knowledge in a profession and earn a living. Education enables an individual to cultivate good habits and develop the right attitude to work and life as good citizens especially, the secondary education (Enyi, 2015). Secondary education does not only occupy an important place in the Nigeria Education System but also serves as a link between the primary and tertiary levels of education; and because of its central position, its programmes have functional roles such as giving students access to higher education as well as preparing them for work. According to Ibe (2016), secondary education provides avenue for interaction among human being with divergent needs, interest and motives. Enose (2020) summed it up by noting that educational organization such as secondary school system exists in a symbolic relationship with the environment while utilizing both human and material resources for the production of educated, socialized graduates with a principal as the administrative head.

Principal as a leader or head in every secondary school occupies a unique and strategic position in the secondary school administrative structure, since the principal is saddled with the responsibility of leadership and accountability. Bennel (2024) stated that within the secondary school system, the principal stands out as the Chief Executive of the school. Bennel further noted that the principal is also the school administrator, the instructional leader, the personnel manager for both the staff personnel and the students. The principal assumes all routine jobs to accomplish all administrative tasks as leader for achieving school objectives for posterity (Mbipom, 2016). Onyeike and Nwosu (2018) stated that principals are the uncompromising leaders of their school as well as administrators in whose hands lies the future of these institutions. Principals are the most important people in the secondary school setting, as they have the potentials for improving and maintaining equality and quality education. Okoli (2015) noted that success or failure of the secondary school programmes depends on the individual principals' ability and skills to utilize school resources towards achievement of the set goals as they perform their management functions which include; Supervision among others.

Supervision is the process of improving all elements and conditions surrounding teaching and learning to produce better learning through providing the leadership necessary to effect improvement in the work of the teachers According to the Federal Republic of Nigeria in her National Policy on Education (2013) the objective of supervision is to ensure quality control through continuous supervision of instructional materials, teaching and learning environment. School principals' role are majorly administrative and professional, either ways, their most important function remains supervision. Okoli (2015) stated that supervision is the process of improving all elements and conditions surrounding teaching and learning to produce better learning through providing the leadership necessary to effect improvement in the work of teachers. Therefore, the principal must see it as his responsibility to help teachers improve their instructional skills, boost teachers' morale and motivation by providing adequate welfare services for staff and students. Such services according to Oke (2021) may include accommodation, good health-care services, end of the year bonus and loans, even the environment must receive adequate attention. Material resources may include playground, classrooms, toilet facilities, libraries, laboratories, school clinics and school buses. As a matter of fact, some researchers viewed these infrastructural facilities as more important than instructional supervision. That is why Okoli (2015) asserted that there is no question over the supervision of infrastructural facilities which they say is the most important role principal must play. Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) stipulated that the objective of supervision is to ensure quality control through continuous supervision of instructional materials, teaching and learning environment. Austin (2019) stated that supervision is essential to teachers effectiveness because it offers the professional support and guidance that enables them perform their best. It is a form of instructional leadership and its aim is to ensure qualitative learning in the school. In the opinion of Eze (2022) supervision of learning enables the principal to monitor the performance of his teaching staff with the aim of identifying the merits and demerits and utilizing befitting and genial systems rectify the blemishes and enhance the benefits. Along these lines the teachers are increasingly availed of the opportunity to become better. It is a process of stimulating growth and excellence in teaching. Okorie (2021) listed the following duties among others for the principal as a school supervisor; assisting teachers to formulate relevant and acceptable goals and instructional objectives; helping teachers in planning learning opportunities and experiences that will facilitate the achievement of the educational goals and objectives; development of a highly motivated staff by stimulating the teachers' interest in teaching; helping teachers develop skills and attitude formulation and helping teachers develop professionally, coordinating the varieties of teaching unit in the school.

In the opinion of Onyeike and Nwosu (2018) principals supervisory roles include the following; building and ensuring that staff adjusts to the school vision of achievement;

developing and accomplishment and conviction based vast society; instituting operations and frameworks to boost learning and molding individual initiative that sets the tone for all understudy and grown-up relationship in the school. What these imply is that effective principals' supervisory roles must ensure that college instructional standards are aligned to standard and current instructional strategies and innovations. It has been observed that principals often times do not devote adequate time to important aspect of their school management assignment (Eze, 2022). Rather, they concentrate more effort to administrative duties to the negligence of instructional supervision. This in turn reflects in the falling standard of education in schools and the educational system as a whole. Onyeike and Nwosu (2018) asserted that lack of adequate supervision constitute an obstacle in teachers' job effectiveness. Kelly (2023) asserted that the school principals' function is to meet the standard set for the school through different indicators. The standard expected from the school then becomes the yardstick, criteria and benchmark upon which the school success is determined, hence the need for assessment.

Assessment could be said to be a carefully considered opinion or judgment, it involves the process of investigating the status of an individual or group, normally with reference to expected outcome (Nnabuike, 2022). Ezike (2023) noted that to assess is to decide the value of something. It therefore, follows that educational assessment is concerned with decisions on educational issues. Eze (2022) asserted that assessment is the process of getting information, analyzing and drawing conclusions. Odoh (2017) viewed assessment as the use of measurement or grading based on known criteria. In the opinion of Nnabuike (2022) assessment is a procedure for determining the extent to which an attribute is present in an object or individual in numerical or quantitative terms. Assessment is thus an indispensable tool in getting information, analyzing and drawing conclusions on the role of principals in the improvement of quality assurance in secondary schools.

Quality assurance is the systematic management, monitoring and evaluation of performance of school administrators, teachers and students towards attaining educational goals. It also ensures consistent documentation, review and decision towards quality improvement in institutional management, teaching and learning processes for the achievement of set standards in schools. This conception raises the issue of promoting a value system in the institutional management which emphasizes production of quality learners' outcome in the teaching-learning processes. Ijaiya and Adegbesan (2017) asserted that quality assurance is the ability of the schools to meet certain criteria relating to academic matters, staff-students ratios, staff development, physical facilities, funding and adequate library facilities. Oladipo (2020) on the other hand opined that quality assurance in the educational system refers to the ability of educational institution to meet the expectations of the users of manpower in relation to the quality of skills acquired by their output. Therefore, it is not certain on the extent the male and female secondary school principals meet the expectations while playing their roles in the secondary schools. Thus, gender of the school principal is a factor of great concern in this study.

Gender is a socially learned behavior and expectation associated with male and female (Azikiwe, 2021). It is described as the biological sex of individuals in terms of being male or female. In Nigeria society, there are differences and inequalities between women and men in responsibilities assigned, activities taken, access to and control over resources as well as possession of leadership qualities (Adigwu, 2024). Eunice, Selpher and David (2015) observed that there is a significant relationship between the secondary school principals' gender effectiveness in management of discipline, finance as well as personnel in the secondary schools. Alhourani (2023) argued that gender does not impact on leadership effectiveness of the secondary school principals. Stating further, Alhourani asserted that female principals were effective as their male counterpart. The issues of gender has gained much attention with little or

no conclusion especially as regards the secondary school principals' effectiveness in their role both in the rural and urban secondary schools, thus this research hope to add the existing knowledge on the assessment of the role of principals in the improvement of quality assurance in public secondary schools with regards to gender. As a result of the foregoing, the researcher is motivated empirically to carry out this research on assessment of the role of principals in the improvement of quality assurance in public secondary schools in Enugu State.

Statement of the Problem

The secondary school principals are the uncompromising leaders of their schools as well as administrators in whose hands lies the future of the school. Their role to a great extent determines the effectiveness of the teachers, students and the curriculum activities. Principals abilities and powers as authoritative, specialized and pedagogical leader of the school have turned into a matter of worry as there are public cry on how principals direct school activities thus, indicating poor role performance which affects the quality of the secondary education to an extent. School effectiveness and the level of students' academic performance have been seen to center mainly on quality assurance. However, it is unfortunate to observe an increasing rate of students' poor academic performance in both internal and external examination which the public secondary schools have recorded in recent time. This makes one to wonder the quality of efforts from the various school principals to improve the quality of secondary education through administrative role. Furthermore, research has been carried out in other areas as it concerns secondary education. However, no research to the best knowledge of the researcher has been carried out on the assessment of the principals' role in the improvement of quality assurance in public secondary schools in Enugu State. These prevailing conditions motivated the researcher to embark on this study.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to ascertain the extent to which principals perform their roles in the improvement of quality assurance in public secondary schools in Enugu State; Specifically, the study aimed to ascertain the:

1. extent to which principals perform their supervisory role in the improvement of quality in public secondary schools in Enugu State.

Research Question

The following research question was posed to guide the study;

1. to what extent are the supervisory roles of the principal performed in the improvement of quality in public secondary schools in Enugu State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and will be tested at .05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant difference in the mean response scores of male and female principals on the extent to which the principals' supervisory roles are performed in the improvement of quality in public secondary schools in Enugu State.

Methods

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. Descriptive survey research design is that, in which the researcher does not manipulate the independent variable to determine their effect on the dependent variables, it was deemed suitable for the study which is concerned about finding out and describing the situation the way it is Nworgu (2018). Specifically, census survey research design was adopted meaning that the entire respondents were involved. It was considered appropriate for the study following the description of census survey by Odi (2019) as the type of survey research design in which the entire population for the study is used. The design specifies how such data is collected and analyzed. The entire population of 297 secondary school principals was used for the study. The population was made up of 162 male

and 135 female principals in the public secondary schools in Enugu State. No sampling was done because the population was adequate. 11-itemed questionnaire named “Assessment of the Role of Principals in Improvement of Quality Assurance Scale (ARPIQAS) developed by the researcher was used for data collection. The instrument had two sections; A and B. Section A contains the respondents’ bio data while section B was made up of 11 items. The response format for the instrument was 4-point scale of Very Great Extent(VGE), Great Extent(GE), Little Extent(LE) and Very Little Extent(VLE). Each response option had a numerical value assigned to it as follows;

Very Great Extent(VGE) = 4 points

Great Extent(GE) = 3 points

Little Extent(LE) = 2 points

Very Little Extent(VLE) = 1 point

In order to ensure the face validity of the instrument, draft copies of the instrument together with the research topic, purpose of the study, research questions, hypotheses and the developed instrument were given to three experts. Two experts from the Department of Educational Management while the other expert was from Measurement and Evaluation Unit of the Department of Mathematics and Computer Education, all from Faculty of Education, Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu. To determine the validity of the instrument, they were requested to assess the relevance, adequacy, suitability and comprehensiveness of the items in addressing the research questions as well as the clarity of the instruction to the respondents. The 11 generated items survived the validation. The validators’ comments were used to modify the final instrument that was used for data collection. The reliability of the instrument was determined by administering 30 copies of the questionnaire to a sample of 18 male and 12 female principals from public secondary schools in Ebonyi State in a trial testing to ascertain the internal consistency of the instrument. The respondents were assured of confidentiality of all the information they supplied. Data collected from the respondents’ responses were analyzed using Cronbach Alpha Reliability Coefficient to determine the internal consistency of the instrument. The instrument yielded the following reliability coefficient of .74. indicating that the instrument is reliable and suitable for the study. The questionnaire was administered and retrieved by the researcher with the help of three research assistants that were properly briefed on the content of the questionnaire and its administration to ensure that the questionnaire was properly administered. The research assistants assisted in the retrieval of the completed questionnaire and appointment was booked with the respondents for collection at a later date for those who were not be able to fill their own copies of the instrument because of the nature of their job. 297 copies of the questionnaire were administered to the total population; however all the 297 copies were retrieved and used for data analysis. The data collected with the questionnaire was analyzed using Mean ($\bar{x}$) with Standard Deviation (SD) to answer the research question. However, the hypothesis was tested using t-test statistics at .05 level of significance. The analysis was done with the use of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The t-test was used because of the sample size. The decision rule; real limit of the mean scores were applied, therefore the upper and lower limits of the mean was as follows;

Mean scores from 3.50 – 4.49 Very Great Extent (VGE)

Mean scores from 2.50 – 3.49 Great Extent (GE)

Mean scores from 1.50 – 2.49 Little Extent (LE)

Mean scores from 0.50 – 1.49 Very Little Extent (VLE)

The null hypotheses were rejected when the significant level was less than .05 and were not rejected when the significant level was more than .05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question One: To what extent is the supervisory role of the principal performed in the improvement of quality assurance in public secondary schools in Enugu State?

Table 1: Mean Responses and Standard Deviation of the Respondents on the Supervisory Role of the Principal Performed in the Improvement of Quality Assurance in Public Secondary Schools in Enugu State.

N=295								
S/N	Supervisory role of the principal for improvement of quality assurance include:	VGE	GE	LE	VLE	$\bar{x}$	SD	DEC
1	teachers' classroom performance	82	81	85	47	2.67	1.048	GE
2	students classroom performance	106	93	94	2	3.03	.841	GE
3	monitoring of staff activities	76	98	88	33	2.74	.968	GE
4	supervision of school time table	75	80	94	46	2.62	1.029	GE
5	supervision of school libraries	83	79	87	46	2.67	1.048	GE
6	supervision of school laboratories	76	98	88	33	2.74	.968	GE
7	supervision of school health care	83	79	87	46	2.67	1.048	GE
8	institution of operations to boost learning	75	80	94	46	2.62	1.029	GE
9	facilitating achievement of education goals	83	79	87	46	2.67	1.048	GE
10	staff position supervision	76	98	88	33	2.74	.968	GE
11	school agricultural development supervision	75	80	94	46	2.62	1.029	GE
Grand Mean/Overall SD						2.71	1.002	GE

From Table 1 above, the results of data analysis for research question 1 indicated that all the items are of a great extent which had mean responses that were higher than the cut-off point of 2.50. The value of the grand mean was also high at 2.71 as well as the overall standard deviation (1.002). This implied that the respondents agreed that all the items were supervisory role that principals perform in the improvement of quality assurance in public secondary schools in Enugu State.

Hypothesis

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the mean response scores of male and female principals on the extent to which the principals' supervisory roles are performed in the improvement of quality in public secondary schools in Enugu State.

Table 2: t-test on the Mean Response and Standard Deviation of the Male and Female Principals on the Extent to which the Principals' Supervisory Roles are Performed in the Improvement of Quality Assurance in Public Secondary Schools in Enugu State.

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	dt	Sig.	Dec.
Male	160	3.00	.500	-1.64	293	.000	NS
Female	135	3.50	.480				

Table 2 shows that the t value for the difference in mean scores of male and female principals on the extent to which the principals' supervisory roles are performed in the improvement of

quality in public secondary schools in Enugu State is -1.64 , significant at $.000$ level of significance, which is less than 0.05 set for the study. The null hypothesis was not rejected. This means that there is no significant difference in the mean scores of male and female principals on the extent to which the principals' supervisory roles are performed in the improvement of quality in public secondary schools in Enugu State.

Discussion

It was found that supervisory role of principals in the improvement of Quality assurance in public secondary schools in Enugu State is performed to great extent. This finding is in line with Okoli (2015) who stated that supervision is the process of improving all elements and conditions surrounding teaching and learning to produce better learning through providing the leadership necessary to effect improvement in the work of teachers. Investigation for significant differences between the mean scores of male and female principals indicated that there is no significant difference in the mean scores of male and female principals on the extent to which the principals' supervisory roles are performed in the improvement of quality assurance in public secondary schools in Enugu State.

Educational Implication of the Study

The finding of this study holds implications for the principals, students and government as well; The school principals should retrace and improve in their role in order to ensure quality assurance in the public secondary schools in Enugu State. The nature of roles demands that it should be taught practically done. Principals' acquisition of these roles will go a long way to promote quality assurance among school principals. The finding of this study has implication on government and her education agencies with information on the state of the public secondary school. The government will by the findings of this study strengthen her policy and programmes as well as improve supervision and monitoring of the school principals so as to ensure quality in the public secondary schools.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and implication of the results, the following recommendations were made;

1. Efforts should be made by government at supervising the principals to ensure that supervisory role is carried out successfully with all seriousness and diligence.
2. There should be in-service training for principals to improve in discharge of these roles.
3. Seminars, workshops and conferences should always be held on improvement of quality assurance among principals in the public secondary schools in Enugu State.

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