

Merit-Based Staffing and Good Leadership Prowess as Correlates Administrative Effectiveness in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State

Youngharry, Ibiere
ibiereharry@yahoo.com

and

Edeh, Pearl Ebere
mbampearl@gmail.com

Abstract

This study investigated quality assurance strategies as predictors of administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Rivers State. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. The population of the study comprised the 290 public secondary schools in Rivers State with 290 Principals in the public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The sample of this study comprised 290 Principals in the public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, representing 100% of the population was used as study participants. Census sampling technique was used for the study. Two sets of questionnaires structured in B and C that is the - Quality Assurance Strategies Questionnaire and Administrative Effectiveness Questionnaire were used for data collection. A reliability index of 0.76 was obtained. Mean scores and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while z-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The result amongst others revealed that, there is a high positive relationship between merit-based staffing, performance evaluation, effective supervision, good leadership and adequate provision of teaching facilities as a quality assurance strategy and administrative effectiveness in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. Judging holistically from the findings of the study, it is very clear that, quality assurance is seen a systematic way of establishing and maintaining quality improvement in the general school activities. In the education system, this includes all activities that contribute to the designed, assessment, monitoring of standards agreed upon by all stakeholders. It was recommended that, school principals should establish disciplinary measures that will compel every actor in the school to follow so that responsibilities, rule and regulations may take its place while administering the school programmes for quality control.

Key Words: Quality, assurance, strategies, leadership.

Introduction

Quality assurance is a global discourse and a worldwide trend that ensures sustainability of the prescribed standards in education and also guarantees achievement of the educational goals through effective teaching, learning, curriculum implementation, facilities/equipment availability, utilization and maintenance. Practically, quality assurance is directed at ensuring that the resources (human and materials) used for production (teaching and administrative processes), the services rendered and the products produced are kept at high standard to meet

the immediate needs of teaching and learning, as well as, meeting global competitiveness. Quality assurance is important for accountability and as well to support ongoing development of school programmes to enhance the effectiveness of teaching and learning. It serves as an indispensable component of quality control strategies in education that helps to ensure and maintain high standard of education at all level and assist in monitoring and supervision of educational activities especially that of teaching and learning to enhance teacher's performance and quality student's outputs.

According to Solomon and Stephen (2021), quality assurance consists of external and internal strategies that are important elements which stand for the improvement of quality standards. It is aimed at making the school system work effectively and improved the level of teaching and learning. In another scenario, Frederick (2020) opines that quality assurance practically aimed at bringing about desired changes and improvement in standard in teaching, learning, implementation of quality programmes, curriculum, infrastructure, facilities and teaching and non- teaching staff. Quality assurance strategies helps to check and standardize assessment for monitoring and reporting learning achievement, provision and monitoring of teaching in schools and among others. Chibuike (2013) suggests the strategies for enhancing quality assurance in education as follows: quality of syllabus and curriculum, accreditation council, quality of teachers, discipline of students and teachers, availability of infrastructure and facilities, thorough selection of students during admission, good governance, constant supervision, training and development of teachers and constant assessment of quality of works/researches.

More so, Nnorom & Gaius-Oke (2013) identify some quality assurance strategies as minimum academic standard, accreditation, carrying capacity and admission quota, visitation, impact assessment, research and development, publications and research assessment and structures, infrastructures and utilities. In the same vein, Okoro (2015) and Adiele (2022) name quality curriculum, quality text books, discipline of teachers, discipline of students, quality infrastructure, teaching facilities, good administrative policy, organizational policy, leadership quality, training and retraining of teachers, good admission policy, constant supervision of teachers, constant supervision of curriculum content taught, regular accreditation, assessing of quality of research, ability to cope with modern technology, accountability, professional exposure, leadership quality and good governance as quality assurance strategies.

Ayeni and Afolabi (2012) describe quality assurance as 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. Administrative effectiveness is the positive response to administrative efforts and actions with the intention to accomplish stated goals. These include administrative performance in decision making, delegation of duties and setting of examples. According to Abe (2014), effective administration entails efficiency, getting things done with least cost. Administrative effectiveness in organizations follow some principles; not just about getting results, the how is also critical as it entails efficiency which means reaching a destination with minimal cost. An effective administrator is an asset to an

organization or institution providing the link between organizations' various parts and ensures the smooth communication and transmission of information from one part to the other (Nwiyi, Ogakwu & Okorie, 2016).

Hargreaves (2017) believes that, school effectiveness is the extent to which the set goals or objectives of a school are accomplished. A school could be said to be effective when the results derived from students' performance are appreciable. The number of students who successfully pass their School Leaving Certificate Examinations is an important parameter for measuring school effectiveness. The extent to which appreciable students' academic performance is actualized, school achieves conduciveness of the learning environment, high morale of the staff, high level of conformity to the school rules and regulations by both teachers and students defines school effectiveness. In addition to that, Nwiyi, et al. (2016) further lists the following as criteria for determining administrative effectiveness:

- i. Ensuring purposeful leadership of the staff by the head;
- ii. Involvement of the heads of departments to carry out functions;
- iii. Structured lesson;
- iv. Intellectually challenging teaching;
- v. Maximum communication between teachers and pupils;
- vi. Efficient and accurate record keeping;
- vii. Parental and community involvement;
- viii. Positive school climate; and
- ix. Productive division of labour among teachers.

Nevertheless, the prominent features of effective schools can be specified according to Olorunsola and Belo (2018) and Frederick, (2020) as follows:

- i. Improved school culture;
- ii. Strong leadership;
- iii. Effective classroom management;
- iv. Improved instructional quality in school;
- v. Increased participation in school;
- vi. High expectations from students' assessment of success and feedbacks;
- vii. High systematic school atmosphere;
- viii. improvement in overall target;
- ix. neat and decent school environment; and
- x. Proper students' management i.e., student discipline, existence of positive cordial social and professional relationship among teachers.

Meanwhile, attracting and selecting competent and professional personnel who are practically knowledgeable is one best way to reposition the secondary education system for quality assurance achievement. Therefore, more seasoned professionals need to be employed on merit base, which through their knowledge, expertise and experiences can accelerate innovative business skills among undergraduates to foster skills for job creation (Yohanes & Mulyadi, 2017). Therefore, more seasoned professionals need to be employed on merit base, which through their knowledge, expertise and experiences can accelerate innovative business skills among undergraduates to foster skills for job creation (Yohanes & Mulyadi, 2017).

Merit-based staffing as a strategy for quality assurance need to also address personnel development as it appears to be an important issue within the concept of entrepreneurial leadership and therefore requires close research attention with regards to the selection process. The skills and knowledge of teachers undertaking these programmes represents must be well filtered to attract quality and professionalism in fulfilling the dreams of empowering youth after graduation to be job creators (Agboola, 2015). Jideofor (2022) also mentions that, principals implement personnel management strategies by using advertisement to announce recruitment of personnel, using written interview in the selection of personnel, short listing of the successful candidates, using interview in the selection process to attract those who merit the opportunity and that would boost the assurance of quality service delivery.

In the administration of school leadership, Jideofor (2022) and Adiele (2022) figures that, principals are expected to provide teachers with sound instructional leadership, supportive staff-personnel services, thorough and supportive instructional supervision, good motivation, exhibit effective communication system where teachers are actively involved in decision making, and actively participate in planning and evaluating the instructional programmes. Thus, the three administrative strategies of leadership that principals can engage for quality assurance for the programmes of education to run smoothly as figures by Jideofor (2022) are principals' motivational strategies which cover effective delegation of duties to staff, rationally involving them in decision making, furnishing offices and promoting teacher professional growth through trainings among others.

In the same vein, Mduwile and Komariah (2020) maintains that, for quality assurance to be achieved, leadership and administrative skills are very crucial to any leader because those skills help and keep the school together, promote peace and harmony of the school, and encouraging teamwork. Leadership and administrative skills are very important because the development of the school, student performance, accomplishment of goals is contributed or affected by lack of good leadership and administrative skills. Uche (2012) finds that, quality assurance influence contributes significantly to school leadership as it considered the involvement of subordinates in decision making as something that will bring free flow of information and enhance productivity. Akinola (2013) also establishes a significant relationship between principals' leadership skills and school effectiveness.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the importance attached to efficacy of quality in the educational system, the quality and quantity of school facilities such as classrooms, offices, halls, libraries, office furniture, laboratories and the likes that enhances the quality of teaching and learning seems to be unsatisfactorily placed and are in need of serious repairs. There are cases where students sit on the ground in some schools in the rural areas to receive lessons and the learning environment seems to be very uncondusive for teaching-learning activities. It appears that the system is faced with challenges of quality control in the place of quality curriculum in our secondary schools, quality text books, discipline of teachers, discipline of students, quality infrastructure, teaching facilities, good administrative policy, organizational policy, leadership quality, training and retraining of teachers, leadership quality and good governance.

Nonetheless, the inability of schools to acquire relevant teaching materials together with the present emphasis on electronic driven method of teaching have generally posed a threat to quality education in our secondary school system. This is because most school in Rivers State especially those in the rural areas lack modern teaching facilities, laboratories, workshops and instructional facilities to impart the knowledge and skills needed to maintain quality education and even when those facilities are available, it is either they are not enough for the learners or they are too obsolete to stand the test of time. Considering all these, the researcher deemed it necessary to research on quality assurance strategies as predictors of administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The study investigated quality assurance strategies as predictors of administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Rivers State. The objectives of the study are to:

1. Examine the extent merit-based staffing as a quality assurance strategy predicts administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Rivers State.
2. Ascertain the extent good leadership prowess as a quality assurance strategy predicts administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Research Questions

1. To what extent does merit-based staffing as a quality assurance strategy relate with administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Rivers State?
2. To what extent does good leadership prowess as a quality assurance strategy relate with administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were used to guide the study.

1. There is no significant relationship between merit-based staffing as a quality assurance strategy and administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Rivers State.
2. There is no significant relationship between good leadership prowess as a quality assurance strategy and administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Methodology

The design of the study was Descriptive survey design. The population of the study comprised all the 290 public secondary schools in Rivers State with a population of 290 Principal in the public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, which represented the study population. The sample of this study comprised 290 Principals in the public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, representing 100% of the population. Census sampling technique was used for the study. In doing this, the state was stratified into urban and rural areas and in each of the schools located in the urban and rural areas, 100% of the schools were selected. Furthermore, in each of the schools selected, 100% of the principal were selected as stratum from which the sample of the respondent was drawn.

The Section A of the instrument which is the dependent variables was titled: Quality Assurance Strategies in Public Secondary Schools Questionnaire (QASPSSQ), and the second section of the instrument which represents the independent variables was titled: Administrative Effectiveness Questionnaire (AEQ). The 4- points modified likert rating scale of (Strongly Agree (SA) = 4 points; Agree (A) = 3 points; Disagree (D) = 2 points; and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1 point) was used as response options to guide the respondents' opinions on the instrument (questionnaires). Reliability index of 0.76 was obtain using Cronbach Alpha Statistics. Pearson Product Moment Correction Coefficient was used in answering research questions while z-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05level of significance.

Results and Discussion

Data Analysis and Empirical Results.

Research question 1: To what extent does merit-based staffing as a quality assurance strategy relate with administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 1: Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the extent merit-based staffing as a quality assurance strategy relate with administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Category	n	r	Remarks
Merit Based Staffing as a Quality Assurance Strategy	235	0.765	positive High Relationship
Administrative Effectiveness			

Data on Table 1 revealed that, the r value is 0.765 which depicts a high positive relationship between merit-based staffing as a quality assurance strategy and administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Rivers State. That is, an increase in merit-based staffing as a quality assurance strategy leads to increase in secondary school administrative effectiveness respectively.

Research Question 2: To what extent does good leadership prowess as a quality assurance strategy relate with administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 2: Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the extent good leadership prowess as a quality assurance strategy relate with administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Category	N	r	Remarks
Good Leadership Prowess as a Quality Assurance Strategy	235	0.864	positive High Relationship
Administrative Effectiveness			

Data on Table 2 revealed that, the r value is 0.864 which depicts a high positive relationship between good leadership prowess as a quality assurance strategy and administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Rivers State. This indicated that, an increase in good leadership prowess as a quality assurance strategy leads to increase in secondary school administrative effectiveness.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between merit-based staffing as a quality assurance strategy and administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 3: Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) on the relationship between merit-based staffing as a quality assurance strategy and administrative effectiveness.

Category	n	r	z-ratio	z-crit.	p-value	Alpha level	Remarks
Merit-based Staffing as a Quality Assurance Strategy							
Administrative Effectiveness	235	0.765	19.12	1.96	0.006	0.05	Significant

Data result on Table 3 revealed that, the r-values is 0.765, therefore, there is a positive high relationship between merit-based staffing as a quality assurance strategy and administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Rivers State. This shows that an increase in the independent variable will lead to an increase in the dependent variable. Thus, it can be said that merit-based staffing as a quality assurance strategy will foster secondary school

administrative effectiveness. The calculated probability value (p-value) of 0.006 is less than the alpha value of 0.05. In this case, the null hypothesis is rejected; thus, there is a significant relationship between merit-based staffing as a quality assurance strategy and administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between good leadership prowess as a quality assurance strategy and administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 4: Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) on the relationship between good leadership prowess as a quality assurance strategy and administrative effectiveness.

Category	n	r	z-ratio	z-crit.	P-value	Alpha level	Remarks
Good Leadership Prowess as a Quality Assurance Strategy							
Administrative Effectiveness.	235	.864	21.6	1.96	0.007	0.05	Significant

Data on Table 4 revealed that, the r-values is .864, therefore there is a positive high relationship between good leadership prowess as a quality assurance strategy and administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Rivers State. This shows that an increase in the independent variable will lead to an increase in the dependent variable. Thus, it can be said that good leadership prowess as a quality assurance strategy will foster administrative effectiveness. in public secondary schools in Rivers State. The calculated probability value (p-value) of 0.007 is less than the alpha value of 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected; thus, there is a significant relationship between good leadership prowess as a quality assurance strategy and administrative effectiveness.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study in the hypothesis one indicated that, there is a positive high relationship between merit-based staffing as a quality assurance strategy and administrative effectiveness. This means that, as the scores of merit-based staffing as a quality assurance strategy was increasing, the scores of administrative effectiveness were also increasing. The implication is that, merit-based staffing as a quality assurance strategy would enhance secondary school administrative effectiveness. The study supports the work of Agboola (2015) who found merit-based staffing as a strategy for quality assurance addresses personnel development as it appears to be an important issue within the concept of entrepreneurial

leadership and therefore requires close research attention with regards to the selection process.

The skills and knowledge of teachers undertaking these programmes must be well filtered to attract quality and professionalism in fulfilling the dreams of empowering youth after graduation to be job creators. This finding is in agreement with Jideofor (2022) who found that, principals implement personnel management strategies by using advertisement to announce recruitment of personnel, using written interview in the selection of personnel, short listing of the successful candidates, using interview in the selection process, making provision in the work place for personnel safety and caring out induction exercise for the newly recruited staff as a personnel management strategy for enhancing teacher job performance.

The findings of the study in hypothesis four showed that, there is significant high positive relationship between good leadership prowess as a quality assurance strategy and administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Rivers State. This also means that, as the scores of good leadership prowess was increasing the scores of administrative effectiveness was also increasing. This implies that, good leadership prowess of principals will lead to administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Rivers State. This result is in agreement with that of Uche (2012) who found that quality assurance influence contributed significantly to school leadership as it considered the involvement of subordinates in decision making as something that will bring free flow of information and enhance productivity. The study corresponds with that of Akinola (2013) who also found a significant relationship between principals' leadership skills and school effectiveness.

Conclusion

It is very clear that, quality assurance is seen a systematic way of establishing and maintaining quality improvement in the general school activities. In the education system, this includes all activities that contribute to the designed, assessment, monitoring of standards agreed upon by all stakeholders. On this note, for quality to be attained in school, administrators must intensify efforts towards improving the level of cognitive achievement while more emphasis should be placed on institutional factors such as teachers' quality, learning environment, school facilities, recruitment of quality personnel, ensuring good leadership, monitoring and regular supervision of teachers' classroom activities in order to improve the effectiveness of schools.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the researchers recommended that:

1. Schools' authority and government should regularly embark on the training of teacher by organizing seminars, workshops, refresher courses, conferences and correspondence courses as in-service training as a means through which teacher's career are developed to sustain their capacity to perform well in the system.
2. There is need to improve on infrastructural facilities in public schools through consented funding to enable teachers to be able to discharge their respective duties professionally.

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