

QUALITY ASSURANCE STRATEGIES AS DETERMINANTS OF PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS' EFFECTIVENESS IN KWARA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined quality assurance strategies as determinants of public secondary schools' effectiveness in Kwara State, Nigeria. It adopted a descriptive research design of survey type. The population of the study comprised 6,813 teachers in all the 317 public secondary schools in the State. Cluster sampling technique was used to group the LGAs in the State into senatorial districts. Random sampling technique was used to select two LGAs from each of the senatorial districts. Random sampling technique was used to select five schools from each of the selected LGAs while 10 teachers were also randomly selected from each of the sampled schools. Quality Assurance Strategies Questionnaire (QASQ) and Students' Academic Performance Proforma (SAPP) were used to collect data. The QASQ was validated and found reliable with a reliability coefficient of 0.73. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that there was a significant relationship between quality assurance strategies and public secondary schools' effectiveness in Kwara State, Nigeria ($r=0.522$, $p<0.05$). The study concluded that if government prioritises integration of quality assurance strategies such as adequacy of teachers, adequacy of facilities and regular teacher professional development into the operation of public secondary schools in Kwara State. Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, it was recommended that government should improve upon its attention to the quality assurance strategies through adequate provision of teachers, adequate provision of facilities, and regular teacher professional development to enhance public secondary schools' effectiveness in terms of students' academic performance.

Keywords: Quality Assurance Strategies; Adequacy of Teachers, Adequacy of Facilities, Professional Development and School Effectiveness

Introduction

The role played by education in the development of all the countries around the globe cannot be underrated. As a result of this, viable education is needed by Nigeria to be able to confidently compete with other countries across the globe socially, politically, economically and technologically. It could be stated that differences in the viability of education among countries in the world is one of the factors responsible for the distinctions among them, especially in the aspect of citizens' standard of living. In the light of this, one of the ways of properly making Nigerian education system viable is by consistently injecting and integrating quality assurance strategies into all its inputs or processes such as physical facilities; instructional resources; human resources; inspection and supervision; selection of school sites; construction of school buildings;

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provision of instructional resources; recruitment and selection, performance appraisal, motivation and capacity building of teachers. Basically, unless adequate attention is persistently given to quality assurance in Nigerian public secondary schools, the hope of realising qualitative education at this level might continually fail.

Quality assurance has not been firmly integrated into the operation of public secondary schools in Kwara State. This is because, some of these schools are run with dilapidated or congested classrooms, shortage of instructional resources, inadequate and/or unqualified teachers, poor learning environment and inadequate inspection from the government officials. In addition, adequate attention has not been given to teacher professional development to enhance their effective job performance. All these could be one of the factors responsible for public secondary schools' ineffectiveness in terms poor students' academic performance in Senior School Certificate Examinations (SSCE). According to Babalola (2004), quality assurance in education is a proactive means of ensuring quality of inputs, teaching-learning processes, learning environment and consequent enhance school effectiveness. Digolo (2003) observes that ensuring quality in the factors such as curriculum, instructional materials, equipment, school management, teacher capacity building and physical resources are part of the strategies for achieving school effectiveness. Ijaiya (2009) opines that working towards integrating quality assurance to teachers, supervision, , school monitoring, school facilities and location helps in realising school effectiveness, in term of students' academic performance. According to Ehusani (2002), quality assurance strategies help to process education in such a way which would develop the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of students, thereby facilitating the realisation of school effectiveness. Tyagi (2009) explains that, school effectiveness refers to the extent to which a school has realised its stated goals. That is, the extent to which a school has achieved appreciable students' academic performance over a period of time.

However, to achieve public secondary schools' effectiveness, there is need for quality assurance strategies such as adequacy of teachers, adequacy of school facilities and regular teacher professional development. In the view of Ajayi and Ayodele (2001), adequacy of facilities is necessary in the school system in order to boost teachers' job performance and invariably assist in the actualisation of school effectiveness. Adequacy of school facilities is key to the smooth operation of any educational institution, irrespective of the level. Without adequacy of facilities, teachers' job performance could be hampered; thus, school ineffectiveness in terms of poor students' academic performance.

As elucidated by Nakpodia (2008), professional development is the process of continuously updating teachers' knowledge, skills and interests in the chosen field. The benefits of professional development to teachers is to assist teachers obtain higher teaching qualifications; acquire more conceptual and technical knowledge, skills and competencies in their teaching subjects. Through professional development programmes such as seminars, conferences, workshops, lectures, symposia and further studies for acquisition of higher teaching qualifications; teachers' knowledge, skills and techniques are expected to be updated to make them assist the schools to achieve effectiveness. Teachers are critical in every education system. No matter how adequate other resources are, unless teachers are also adequately provided in all the subjects, realisation of school effectiveness could be a mirage. Akinsolu (2010) stresses that, on regular basis, adequacy of teachers needs to be reviewed in schools to enhance effectiveness. Based on these assertions, discussions above, the researchers considered it pertinent to examine quality assurance strategies as determinants of public secondary schools' effectiveness in Kwara State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Secondary schools' ineffectiveness in Nigeria in terms of poor students' academic performance in SSCE has been a burning issue in the minds of the stakeholders in education, most especially government and parents/guardians. This is because the results derived from the SSCE, especially the West African Senior School Certificate Examinations (WASSCE) over the years have not been commensurate with the investment in which they are made. From the WASSCE results released by the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) in the last five years, it was only in the year 2016 that 52.97% candidates got five credits and above, including English language and General Mathematics. The percentages of their performance in the years 2015, 2017, 2018 and 2019 were below average. This scenarios which called for sober reflection and it could be as result of inadequate attention to quality assurance strategies in public secondary schools by the Nigeria government.

Many researchers had examined other variables related to this study. For instance, Fasasi (2006) investigated quality assurance: A practical solution to examination malpractices in Nigerian secondary schools. Oyetola, Kayode and Okunuga (2015) conducted a study on quality assurance and effectiveness of Lagos State junior secondary schools. Peter (2015) examined quality assurance strategies and students' academic performance in Orelope Local Government secondary schools, Osun State. Ijaiya (1998) also investigated the problems of teacher staffing in Kwara State secondary schools. All these studies are relevant to this study; but, none of them examined quality assurance strategies as determinants of public secondary schools' effectiveness in Kwara State, Nigeria. Hence, this is the gap which this study filled.

Literature Review

The term quality assurance has gained a great recognition in education system, due to its impacts in achieving the stated goals. According to Ifedili (2015), quality assurance is the process of ensuring that the educational outputs (students) are processed with all required staff and quality programmes, facilities and materials to meet the universal standard. It is a guarantee of confidence and certainty by a programme of study given by an institution that, standards are being maintained and enhanced. Menyanga (2014) notes that, quality assurance is a means of putting in place appropriate structures, legislations, supervision of school staff and other resources in order to make the set minimum standards in education attained and sustained. Materu (2007) states that quality assurance is a planned and systematic review processes of an institution or programme to determine whether or not acceptable standards in education, scholarship and infrastructure are being met, maintained and enhanced.

Teachers are the mainstay of every education system. This because, they are the centripetal force which holds the success of the system. As a result of this, there is need for adequate provision of teachers for schools, if actualisation of effectiveness is of importance. Ijaiya (1998) agrees that, improving the quantity and quality of the teaching force in schools is seen as the key to raising students' academic performance. Thus, maintaining adequacy and quality of teachers should be the government's utmost priority. Similarly, Lassa (2000) claims that teaching cannot be provided by just anybody. This therefore, necessitates adequate provision of teachers who possess the wherewithal to plan and deliver the lessons or instruction in such a way that school effectiveness can be achieved. Sabitu, Babatunde and Oluwole (2012) states that school facilities refer to the entire school plant such as blocks of classrooms, staffrooms,

laboratories, workshops, libraries, laboratory equipment, consumables, audio-visual aids, electricity, water, chairs, tables, stationeries, playground, storage spaces and others which any school has. A school without adequate facilities might find it difficult to achieve effectiveness. Ademilua (2000) observes that, inadequate provision of school facilities has been a major factor responsible for poor students' academic performance in Ekiti State. Without adequate school facilities, there would be a continuous decline in students' academic performance. Ogunsaju, (2000) informs that, professional development relates to the preparation and progressive training given to teachers so that the school goals and objectives can be achieved. According to Alabi (2000), professional development in Nigerian education system aims at amending deficiencies of teachers at the time of appointment; assisting non-professional teachers to professionalise, empowering teachers to face challenges arising from innovations in the school curriculum; and facilitating acquisition of higher qualifications.

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. Awolola (1998) states that, school effectiveness simply means the extent to which appreciable students' academic performance is actualised. School effectiveness can be also viewed as the extent to which the 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. Students' academic performance is an important yardstick which is universally agreed upon as an important measure of school effectiveness. According to Adeyemo (2011), academic performance refers to the achievement which a student makes in school; that is his scores in a particular examination. Stiggings (2001) stated that academic performance has to do with what a student has achieved in learning in school, over a specified period of time. Ekundayo (2013) believes that students' academic performance is affected by a range of statistical indicators including the student-staff qualification of teachers, ratio and years of experience of the teachers. However, factors such as adequacy of teachers, adequacy of school facilities and regular professional development of teachers could also determine students' academic performance.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to:

- i. examine the relationship between quality assurance strategies and public secondary schools' effectiveness in Kwara State, Nigeria;
- ii. determine the relationship between adequacy of teachers and public secondary schools' effectiveness in Kwara State, Nigeria;
- iii. examine the relationship between adequacy of facilities and public secondary schools' effectiveness.
- iv. examine the relationship between regular teacher professional development and public secondary schools' effectiveness.

Research Hypotheses

Ho: There is no significant relationship between quality assurance strategies and public secondary schools' effectiveness in Kwara State, Nigeria

- Ho1:** There is no significant relationship between adequacy of teachers and public secondary schools' effectiveness.
- Ho2:** There is no significant relationship between adequacy of facilities and public secondary schools' effectiveness.
- Ho3:** There is no significant relationship between regular teacher professional development and public secondary schools' effectiveness.

Methodology

This study adopted the descriptive research design of survey type. The population of the study consisted of all the 6,813 teachers in the entire 317 public secondary schools in Kwara State. Multi-stage sampling technique was used for the study. Cluster sampling technique was used to group the Local Government Areas (LGAs) into senatorial districts. Random sampling technique was used to select two LGAs from each of the senatorial districts (Kwara central, Asa and Ilorin East; Kwara South, Oyun and Isin; and Kwara North, Patigi and Kaima) to make a total of six, out of the entire 16 in the State. Random sampling technique was used to select 5 schools from each of the selected LGAs to make a total of 30 while 10 teachers were randomly selected from each of the sampled schools to make a total of 300 respondents for the study. An instrument designed by the researcher captioned "Quality Assurance Strategies Questionnaire" (QASQ) was used to collect data from teachers on adequacy of teachers, adequacy of school facilities and regular teacher professional development. The questionnaire had 18 items with response options of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (Disagree) and Strongly Disagree (SD). To measure effectiveness, a proforma entitled "Students' Academic Performance Proforma" (SAPP) was used to collect information from the principals of the sampled schools, on the total number of students who sat for WASSCE and the exact number who had five credits and above including English language and General Mathematics in their respective schools between the years 2017 and 2019. The questionnaire was validated by three experts in the Department of Educational Management, Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria. The reliability of the instrument was carried out by administering 20 copies of the questionnaire twice, within the interval of two weeks, to some teachers who were not part of the respondents of the study. The data gathered were analysed using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation and reliability coefficient of 0.73 was realised. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation was also used to test the hypotheses formulated at 0.05 level of significance. Out of the 300 copies of questionnaire distributed, only 274 were returned for data analysis.

Results

Ho: *There is no significant relationship between quality assurance strategies and public secondary schools' effectiveness in Kwara State, Nigeria*

Table 1: Quality Assurance Strategies and Public Secondary Schools' Effectiveness

Variable	N	X	SD	Cal. r-value	p-value	Decision
Quality Assurance Strategies	274	2.71	0.55	0.522	0.002	Ho Rejected
Public Secondary Schools' Effectiveness	274	2.84	0.73			

p-value<0.05

Table 1 shows the calculated r-value (0.522) while the p-value (0.002) is less than the significance level (0.05). Hence, main hypothesis (Ho) is rejected. This shows that there was a significant relationship between quality assurance strategies and public secondary schools' effectiveness in Kwara State, Nigeria.

Ho₁: *There is no significant relationship between adequacy of teachers and public secondary schools' effectiveness in Kwara State, Nigeria*

Table 2: Adequacy of teachers and Public Secondary Schools' Effectiveness

Variable	N	X	SD	Cal. r-value	p-value	Decision
Adequacy of teachers	274	2.91	0.75	0.537	0.001	Ho ₁ Rejected
Public Secondary Schools' Effectiveness	274	2.84	0.73			

p-value<0.05

Table 2 shows the calculated r-value (0.537) while the p-value (0.001) is less than the significance level (0.05). Hence, hypothesis (Ho₁) is rejected. This shows that there was a significant relationship between adequacy of teachers and public secondary schools' effectiveness in Kwara State, Nigeria.

Ho₂: *There is no significant relationship between adequacy of facilities and public secondary schools' effectiveness in Kwara State, Nigeria*

Table 3: Adequacy of Facilities and Public Secondary Schools' Effectiveness

Variable	N	X	SD	Cal. r-value	p-value	Decision
Adequacy of facilities	274	2.54	0.41	0.506	0.001	Ho ₂ Rejected
Public Secondary Schools' Effectiveness	274	2.84	0.73			

p-value<0.05

Table 3 shows the calculated r-value (0.506) while the p-value (0.001) is less than the significance level (0.05). Hence, hypothesis (Ho₂) is rejected. This shows that there was a significant relationship between adequacy of facilities and public secondary schools' effectiveness in Kwara State, Nigeria.

Ho₃: *There is no significant relationship between regular teacher professional development and public secondary schools' effectiveness in Kwara State, Nigeria*

Table 3: Regular Teacher Professional Development and Public Secondary Schools' Effectiveness

Variable	N	X	SD	Cal. r-value	p-value	Decision
Regular Teacher Professional development	274	2.69	0.50	0.588	0.023	Ho ₃ Rejected
Public Secondary Schools' Effectiveness	274	2.84	0.73			

p-value<0.05

Table 4 shows the calculated r-value (0.588) while the p-value (0.023) is less than the significance level (0.05). Hence, hypothesis (Ho₃) is rejected. This shows that there was a significant relationship between regular teacher professional development and public secondary schools' effectiveness in Kwara State, Nigeria.

Discussions

The finding of main hypothesis revealed that there was a significant relationship between quality assurance strategies and school effectiveness in public secondary schools, Kwara State, Nigeria. The implication of this is that, if quality assurance strategies in terms of adequacy of teachers, adequacy of facilities and regular teacher professional developments are given adequate attention, it would help in achieving school effectiveness. The finding agrees with the view of Henry Fasasi (2006) that, quality assurance assists in realising school effectiveness, irrespective of the level of educational system. The finding of hypothesis one revealed that there was a significant relationship between adequacy of teachers and school effectiveness in public secondary schools, Kwara State, Nigeria. The means that if there was adequate number of teachers for each of the subjects taught in public secondary schools in Kwara State, Nigeria it would enhance effective teachers' job performance and consequently lead to actualisation of effectiveness. This finding agrees with the view of Samuel (2010) that teachers are very important resources in every education system as such, they should be adequately be made to schools in order to enhance effectiveness.

The finding of hypothesis two revealed that there was a significant relationship between adequacy of facilities and school effectiveness in public secondary schools, Kwara State, Nigeria. The means that if school facilities such as classrooms, library, laboratories, workshops chairs and tables, text books and teaching aids are adequately provided, it would facilitate actualisation of school effectiveness. This finding corroborates the view of Samuel (2010) that realisation of effectiveness could be difficult when schools are not provided with adequate facilities. This justifies the importance of adequacy of school facilities to the realisation of school effectiveness.

The finding of hypothesis three revealed that there was a significant relationship between regular teacher professional development and school effectiveness in public secondary schools, Kwara State, Nigeria. This means that if government prioritises regular professional development of teachers, it would help update their knowledge, skills and techniques; enhance their effective job performance, and consequently facilitate actualisation of school effectiveness. This finding corroborates the view of Erickson and Carl (2002) that professional development is very important, because it is a way through which teachers get more knowledge, skills and techniques which would help them to discharge their duties in ways could lead to actualisation of school effectiveness.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that if government prioritises integration of quality assurance strategies such as adequacy of teachers, adequacy of facilities and regular teacher professional development into the operation of public secondary schools in Kwara State, Nigeria, it would help achieve effectiveness. Adequacy of teachers is actually the key to the enhancement of school effectiveness; adequacy of facilities contributes significantly to the realisation of school effectiveness. Regular teacher professional development would help in achieving school effectiveness.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, the following recommendations were made:

- i. Government should improve upon its attention to the quality assurance strategies through adequate provision of teachers, adequate provision of facilities, and regular teacher professional development to enhance public secondary schools' effectiveness in Kwara State, Nigeria in terms of students' academic performance;
- ii. Government should heighten its efforts in ensuring provision of adequate teachers for all the subjects taught in public secondary schools, to enhance effective teachers' job performance which would help actualise effectiveness;
- iii. There is need for government to prioritise adequate supply of facilities such as classrooms, laboratories, textbooks, library and teaching aids to schools; to harness effective teaching and learning processes which would eventually assist in achieving school effectiveness.
- iv. Professional development of teachers through regular and periodic conferences, seminars, workshops, lectures and furthers studies for acquisition of more teaching qualifications should be intensified by the government to enhance effective delivery of teachers' job performance and consequently result in school effectiveness.

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