

QUALITY ASSURANCE INDICATORS AND SECONDARY SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS IN CROSS RIVER STATE NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT: *This study assessed quality assurance indicators and secondary school effectiveness in Cross River State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study investigated the relationship between the quality of school supervision, quality of school leadership behavior and school climate on secondary school effectiveness. One null hypothesis was formulated to direct the study. The study adopted an ex-post-facto research design. Census technique was adopted by the researcher in selecting the entire population of 693 secondary school administrators in Cross River State. The instruments used for data collection was a questionnaire titled: "School Quality Assurance Indicators and Secondary School Effectiveness Questionnaire (SQAISSEQ)". The instrument was validated by experts while the reliability of the instrument was established through the Cronbach Alpha method. The null hypothesis was tested at .05 level of significance using Multiple Regression analysis with the aid of IBM SPSS. The results of the analysis revealed that; quality of school supervision, quality of school leadership behavior and school climate have a significant influence on secondary school effectiveness jointly and respectively in Cross River State. It was concluded generally that; quality assurance indicators when combined, do predict the secondary school effectiveness in Cross River State. Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended among other things that: secondary school principals should ensure that they promote good interpersonal relationship with both staff and students in the school through active involvement in decision making, motivation, and effective communication.*

KEYWORDS: Quality; Quality Assurance; Indicators; Secondary School; Effectiveness; School Effectiveness.

INTRODUCTION

School system effectiveness refers to the degree at which schools carry out their primary duties of teaching and learning successfully without disruption, and how such schools are able to attain their short or long-term objectives. Adewale (2004), posits that school effectiveness is interested in such variables as instructional leadership provided by the principal, curriculum - learning objectives, learning activities, and achievement measures Others are monitoring pupils' attendance, discipline, and school climate, expectations for quality work supported by staff and pupils, existence of school/community partnership programmes. The indicator of school effectiveness that is so obvious to society is the product of schooling, that is, the achievement level of the students in examinations.

The issue of poor school effectiveness generally is on the rise. This is reflected in the level of poor academic performance and consequently unemployment, dwindling economy, moral decadence, redundant workers, ill-prepared secondary school graduates and excessive dependence on developed western countries (Babalola, 2007). Some of these problems in Cross River State are more prevalent as many secondary school students are underperforming,

teachers also display a high sense of negative attitudes to work which is manifested in their nonchalant attitudes to writing notes of lessons, blunt refusal to teach students and other such unacceptable behavior. Government at various levels have made efforts to ensure that good standard are maintained especially at the secondary schools, all to no avail.

For instance, the Nigerian government established more schools and employed more teachers under the UBE scheme, as a measure of cutting down the student-teacher ratio and improving standards in public schools. The government has also instituted a retraining programme for teachers through the UBE as an annual event during every long vacation/holiday period, with the aim of updating teachers' knowledge of certain principles and skills in their various subject areas, school-based assessment, and general pedagogy. The government has also succeeded in making first degree the minimum qualification for teachers in public secondary schools.

In Cross River State, several other measures have also been used as a means to improve school system effectiveness. Such measures include the supply of textbooks, provision of more classroom facilities, especially through the Universal Basic Education (UBE) platform. Many teachers have also been employed in recent times through UBE as well as N-power initiative. The present Government of Sen. Ben Ayade, provided ICT facilities such as laptops, desktops, and other gadgets to secondary school teachers with gradual deductions to be made from monthly salaries, the same government have been paying secondary school teachers' salaries on time (on the 25th of each month). All these measures and many more not mentioned, were put in place to ensure that secondary schools become more effective in terms of teaching, learning and behavior modification. Despite all these provisions in place, many secondary schools in Cross River State do not appear, to have shown corresponding dynamics in terms of their level of effectiveness. It was based on these persisting issues and failed measures that spurred the researcher to wonder whether such issues were are as a result of poor school quality assurance services rendered in the secondary schools.

Quality is about excellent performance, highly committed employees, good exam results, well-planned lessons, innovative teaching methods, good attendance and punctuality, accurate collection and analysis of data, annual targets, accepting advice, working together, community participation, listening to each other and so much more (Standards & Quality Assurance Directorate (SQAD), 2011). Quality Assurance is about having systems in place for verifying the quality of work throughout the system, for feeding back on strengths and areas for improvement, and for taking action and providing support, help, and guidance where needed. It is about taking stock of all the activities designed and implemented to achieve the desired result and to redirect focus on areas that need improvement (SQAD, 2011). Everyone has a part to play in ensuring the quality of their own work, and the work of those people they oversee. Teachers, school leaders, cluster monitors and education officers in regions and at headquarters must all play their parts. So must others who have a stake in education, such as parents, outside consultants, volunteers and donors (SQAD, 2011).

There are many school quality assurance indices. The scope of this study was delimited to the quality of school supervision, quality of leadership behavior, and school climate. The thrust of this study is to investigate the association of quality of school supervision, quality of leadership behavior, school climate to school effectiveness. Empirical evidence has linked these variables with school effectiveness.

Ntukidem (2003a) studied the performance of teachers under high and low-level supervision in Cross River State. Subjects for the study were 300 teachers and 3100 students. The research findings indicate that teachers under high-level supervision performed better on their job than their counterparts under low supervision.

In another study, Akinola (2013), investigated the relationship between leadership skills possessed by Principals of public secondary schools in southwestern Nigeria and school effectiveness in terms of student's academic achievement. 154 Principals and 770 teachers, who were purposively selected, participated in the study. Findings revealed that secondary school principals in southwestern Nigeria possessed technical, interpersonal, conceptual and administrative skills. A significant relationship was found between principals' leadership skills and school effectiveness.

Statement of the Problem

The societal expectations of every secondary school are effectiveness in terms of cognitive, affective and psychomotor learning outcomes. An effective secondary school under an ideal condition, was expected to be characterized with a clear mission, high expectations for success, effective instructional leadership, frequent monitoring of students' progress, the offer of opportunity to learn, student time on task, a safe and orderly environment and a strong home-school relations, good students' academic performance in internal and external examination, high tertiary school enrolment of graduates, quality of Alumni and so on.

Going by these indices of an effective school, it appears that many secondary schools in Cross River State are far away from meeting such criteria. This is because of the poor academic performance of students in the state in both the internal and external examinations. Many secondary school teachers are not also discharging their duties as prescribed by the ethics of the teaching profession. It was observed that some secondary school principals shy away from their responsibility of effective supervision. The rate of examination malpractice is also very high, with only a few students in the state being able to pass standardized JAMB examinations in their first attempts, and many other such poor records. All these shortfalls from the students, teachers as well as the school administrators, constitute ineffectiveness within the secondary school system. How then can the school achieve stated goals when the vast majority of its human resources are ineffective in perpetuity?

Following government efforts in recent times in improving teachers' work conditions, providing more facilities, building new schools, recruiting new teachers, and in terms of improved supervision, one expects the secondary schools in Cross River State to be more efficient. There seems to be an inverse relationship between the improvement made and the effectiveness of schools. It is this deviation from normality that made the researcher consider whether school quality assurance indicators have any relationship with the effectiveness of schools in the state. Thus, the problem of this study put in question form is: what influence has quality assurance indicators such as quality of school supervision, quality of school leadership and school climate on secondary school effectiveness in Cross River State? An attempt to answer this question necessitated the study.

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of the study was to examine the relationship that exists between quality assurance indicators and secondary school effectiveness in Cross River State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to examine:

- i. How the quality assurance indicators: quality of school supervision, quality of school leadership behavior and school climate individually and collectively predict secondary school effectiveness.

Statement of Hypothesis

The following null hypothesis was formulated to direct the study:

- i. Quality assurance indicators collectively and individually are not significant predictors of secondary school effectiveness.

METHODS

The study adopted an ex-post-facto type of research. The design, ex-post facto is suited for this study since the researcher has no control over the school quality indicators variables and school effectiveness indicators since they have already occurred in the population. The population of this study comprised all the secondary school managers in all the public secondary schools in Cross River State. There are 271 principals and 422 deputy vice principals resulting in a population of 693 secondary school managers in all the available public secondary schools in Cross River State. Census technique was adopted by the researcher in selecting the entire population of 693 secondary school administrators in Cross River State. Census technique is used in situations where the population to be studied is small or manageable such that, all the elements in it could be studied entirely. This approach was considered appropriate due to the manageable number of principals and vice principals in Cross River State.

The instruments used for data collection was a questionnaire titled: “School Quality Assurance Indicators and Secondary School Effectiveness Questionnaire (SQAISSEQ)”. This instrument was designed by the researcher. The Questionnaire was structured into two sections; section A was designed primarily to obtain demographic data from respondents, while section B comprised 24 items. These items were grouped into four clusters in accordance with the sub-variables of the independent variable as well as the dependent variable of this study. Each cluster was made of six (6) items that were systematically arranged on Four-point Likert Scale. The instrument was validated by two experts in measurement and evaluation unit, Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, University of Calabar, Calabar. The reliability of the instrument was established through the test-retest method. A pilot study was conducted using 60 teachers who were randomly selected from six (6) public secondary schools in Calabar metropolis. After two weeks, the same instrument was administered to the same set of respondents. Both administrations were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis. The result realized from the reliability analysis of the instrument were 0.89 and 0.86 respectively. The indication of these results was that the instrument was internally consistent in measuring what it was purported to measure.

The instruments were administered to the respondents in the respective schools by the researcher with the help of two trained research assistants. The research assistants were trained by the researcher on the purpose and the approach of the study. At the end of the process, copies of the instruments were retrieved from the respondents for analysis without any loss. The collected data were prepared on a person by item matrix using a computer spreadsheet program (Microsoft Excel version 2016). The null hypothesis was tested at .05 level of significance using Multiple Regression analysis with the aid of SPSS v21.

Presentation of Results

Hypothesis One (H₀₁).

Quality assurance indicators collectively and individually are not significant predictors of secondary school effectiveness. The result of the data analysis using multiple regression statistical technique is presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1.

Summary of multiple regression analysis model of the composite prediction between the quality of supervision, quality of school leadership behavior and school climate on secondary school effectiveness.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.255 ^a	.065	.061	2.125

a. Predictors: (Constant), Quality of supervision, Quality of leadership behavior and school climate

The results presented in Table 1 revealed that the three predictors (quality of supervision, quality of leadership behavior and school climate) have joint multiple correlations ($R = .255$) with secondary school effectiveness. The R Square value of .061 further implies that the three sub-variables (quality of supervision, quality of leadership behavior and school climate) contributed 6.5 percent to the total variance of secondary school effectiveness in Cross River State, with the remaining 93.5 percent of the total variance due to other factors not examined in this study. However, in determining whether the R Square value of .061 obtained was statistically significant in predicting secondary school effectiveness, the Analysis of Variance of the regression model was performed as shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2.

Analysis of variance of the regression model showing the influence of quality of supervision, quality of leadership behavior and school climate on secondary school effectiveness

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	215.850	3	71.950	15.940	.000 ^b
	Residual	3109.968	689	4.514		
	Total	3325.818	692			

a. Dependent Variable: Secondary school effectiveness

b. Predictors: (Constant), Quality of supervision, quality of leadership behavior and school climate

The results presented in Table 2 disclosed that the three sub-variables which include quality of supervision, quality of leadership behavior and school climate were statistically significant in predicting secondary school system effectiveness. This is because the p-value of .000 is less than .05 alpha level. Consequently, the null hypothesis formulated earlier is rejected indicating that; quality of school supervision, quality of school leadership behavior and school climate collectively have a significant influence on secondary school effectiveness in Cross River State. Thus, the R Square value of .065 was not due to chance.

In determining whether there is a significant difference in the contribution of the three sub-variables to the dependent variable, and to determine the predictors with the highest influence, the relative contributions of the predictors was used as presented in Table 3.

TABLE 3

Relative contributions of the quality of supervision, quality of leadership behavior and school climate to secondary school effectiveness.

Model	Unstandardized		Standardized	t	Sig.	
	Coefficients		Coefficients			
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
(Constant)	10.381	.290		35.824	.000	
1	Quality of supervision	-.052	.017	-.129	-3.062	.002
	Quality of leadership behavior	.045	.022	.115	2.011	.045
	School climate	.074	.024	.189	3.077	.002

a. Dependent Variable: Secondary school effectiveness

The results presented in Table 3 showed that: quality of supervision has a significant influence on secondary school effectiveness ($p = .002 < \alpha = .05$); quality of school leadership behaviour has a significant influence on secondary school effectiveness ($p = .045 < \alpha = .05$); and school climate has a significant influence on secondary school effectiveness ($p = .002 < \alpha = .05$). It was further revealed in Table 3 that; out of the three predictors, school climate had the highest influence ($t = 3.077$; $\beta = .189$) followed by quality of supervision ($t = 3.062$; $\beta = .129$) and quality of school leadership ($t = 2.011$; $\beta = .115$) in that order.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

It was discovered through the findings of the study that quality assurance indicators when combined and even have a significant predictive effect individually on secondary school effectiveness in Cross River State. The three variables (quality of supervision, quality of leadership behavior and school climate) had joint multiple correlations ($R = .255$) with secondary school effectiveness. This study further revealed through its findings that quality of supervision, quality of leadership behavior and school climate contribute 6.5 percent to the total variance of secondary school effectiveness in Cross River State.

In addition, the study discovered that though, the percentage of the contribution was found to be low, quality of supervision has a significant relationship with secondary school effectiveness ($p = .002 < \alpha = .05$). The finding agrees with that of Ntukidem (2003a) whose study indicated that teachers under high-level supervision performed better on their job than their counterparts under low supervision. The variation was due to the positive influence of the high degree of supervision has within the school context. The three variables were found to predict significantly the school effectiveness with F-value of 15.940 The study also showed that; quality of school leadership behaviour has a significant influence on secondary school effectiveness ($p = .045 < \alpha = .05$). This finding corroborates the findings of Akinola (2013) in a study which investigated the relationship between leadership skills possessed by Principals of public secondary schools in southwestern Nigeria and school effectiveness in terms of student academic achievement, and a significant relationship was found between principals' leadership skills and school effectiveness.

It was also school climate has a significant influence on secondary school effectiveness ($p = .002 < \alpha = .05$). Between the three variables studied, school climate had the highest influence ($t = 3.077$; $\beta = .189$), followed by quality of supervision ($t = 3.062$; $\beta = .129$) and quality of

school leadership ($t = 2.011$; $\beta = .115$) in that order. This result may have been so, due to the fact that the school climate is what sets the tone for both staff and students. The nature of school climate will determine the extent to which academic activities may flow in school. Quality of supervision was ranked second perhaps because; the climate of a school determines how effective a supervisor can be. School leadership behavior was not as influential as the first two perhaps due to the complexities in the perception of individuals in responding to the items in the instrument.

Generally, the significant values of the results are not surprising because for any organization to function effectively, it is expected that all persons involved in the system must work together to achieve their set objectives. In a school system, the effectiveness of the school can be ensured if, in addition to other factors, the principal and the vice principals work hand in hand to motivate the other staff. This will promote a school climate that is highly conducive for the workers to function effectively in their different roles, which at the end, manifest in the students' quality of performance in both internal and external examinations. When school administrators carry out supervision of the different arms of the school regularly, then those concerned, both the teaching and non-teaching staff will sit up and face their work properly and that adds value to the whole system.

CONCLUSION

It was concluded generally that; quality assurance indicators have a significant influence on secondary school effectiveness in Cross River State. Quality of supervision, quality of leadership behavior and school climate influence secondary school effectiveness respectively in Cross River State. Secondary school effectiveness was influenced by 6.5 percent through the quality of supervision, quality of leadership behavior and school climate in Cross River State. School climate is the most influential factor in predicting secondary school effectiveness out of the three variables studied. However, the remaining 93.5 percent was due to other factors not studied. Thus, the qualities manifested by a school have an integral role to play in promoting effectiveness within and outside the school system. The more quality assurance indicators are raised, the more improved will the school system drive towards. Conversely, a school characterized by low quality will be expected also to turn out low quality output and performance by staff and students.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended that:

- i. Secondary school principals should ensure that they promote good interpersonal relationship with both staff and students in the school through active involvement in decision making, motivation, and effective communication.
- ii. The government should ensure that supervisors from the ministry of education are sent for regular inspection of schools on a weekly basis. Such supervisors should be provided with the necessary tools and resources required to avoid bribes and to enable them to supervise effectively.
- iii. Every secondary school principal should adopt good leadership behaviors by setting good examples for teachers and students to emulate. Principals should adopt a more contingent leadership behavior in order to display a mix of leadership approaches that suit each unique situation.

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