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Principal's Management Strategies and its Influence on Quality Assurance in Selected Secondary Schools in Mefou and Afamba in the Centre Region of Cameroon

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ABSTRACT

Principals have the power to set a road map for quality assurance, which is strong indicator of a successful school, but a strong determinant of the outcome is their management strategies. This paper therefore focuses on the principal's management strategy and its influence on quality assurance: the case of selected secondary schools in Mefou Afamba in the Central Region of Cameroon. The study had as main objective to access the degree of relationship between instructional strategy, communication approach and delegation of power, and quality assurance. The study used the quantitative research approach, with the questionnaire as the main instrument for data collection. The survey sample consisted of 255 teachers and principals of secondary schools. Data analysis was done through the use of structural equation modeling (SEM), which is a third-generation advanced method of data analysis. This technique is a combination factor analysis and multiple regression analysis. The results shown that: There is significant statistical evidence to suggest that principals' instructional supervision strategy positively affect quality assurance; there is significant statistical evidence to suggest that principals' communication approaches have an impact on quality assurance; there is significant statistical evidence to suggest that principals' delegation of powers strategy have an impact on quality assurance. Based on the results, principals who lay emphasis on instructional strategies, use better communication approaches and involve colleagues in every stage of their daily plans by delegation of power will prepare a smooth path for quality assurance in their schools. Such principals act as role model for effective school management. This paper attempts to bridge the gap between principal's management strategies and quality assurance. Acquiring strategies for quality assurance facilitates the creation of a quality school.

KEYWORDS:

Instructional supervision, Communication, Delegation of power, Quality assurance



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Introduction

Effective leadership always plays an important role in maintaining the efficiency of an educational institution. To achieve this effectiveness, and enhance quality assurance in secondary schools, the quality of leadership put in place has a major role to play. According to Leith and Riehl, (2003) “scratch the surface of an excellent school and you are likely to find an excellent principal. Peep into a failing school and you will find a weak leadership without setting specific goals.” It is the leadership of the nation that sets objectives for the development of different sectors of the political, economic, scientific and social and educational advancement. According to (Cheng and Townsend, 2 000) bringing educational change for improvement, it needs the key role of the principal, who should coordinate quality assurance as primary responsibility for everyone. In conjunction with its mission, the principal has to provide quality leadership in schools otherwise it will consequently have an adverse effect in general school management. Today, quality assurance has derailed drastically from the established standards equation which is the epitome of any meaningful development lack a permanent and adequate education to meet the needs of the society which are dynamic, constantly changing with time. Despite the complex central role, the principals fail to empower or dedicate power to their subordinates and are overloaded, resulting in inconsistencies and in competencies in executing their duties as chief executive officers.

Statement of the problem

The primary aim of secondary school education encompasses the acquisition of knowledge and skills producing graduate who are prepared for higher education who will go a long way to assist in the growth and development of their nation in all ramification and to meet with the competitive global standards. With this laudable aim of education, the phenomenon of quality assurance in secondary schools in Cameroon has been a subject of great concern to stakeholders, educators, administrators, policy makers, parent and students. Despite this laudable aim the product of secondary school turn to be half-baked, drop out, academic and societal misfit. This implying a wastage of resources and time. Aware of the sound objectives and the enormous sacrifices from stake holders, international organizations and parents, it is surprising that the performance of students and school standards remain below expectations. Considering the paramount position of the principal to ensure quality assurance in school, the key success factor seems to be completely absent in some schools hence the need for this investigation.

Objectives of the study

- a) To assess the relationship between instructional supervision and quality assurance in secondary school.
- b) To investigate the relationship between communication approach and quality assurance in secondary school.
- c) To find out if delegation of power has a relationship with quality assurance in secondary schools.

Literature Review

A manager should be the first to establish bridges between the members of the organization, through a careful and effective communication. A message communicated or conveyed efficiently can influence a worker’s behavior and opinion. Communication provides possible interaction between members of

the working team. Leaders should establish bridges through which effective communication can take place in the organization (Bucata & Rezesu, 2017). These characteristics build and establish a communication road map that is flexible between management strategy and the entire organizational staff, (Brian and Nicholas, 1989. According to Fonkeng, & Ntembe (2009) delegation as a tool for effective and efficient administration helps the principal to relieve himself of routine duties as such concentrates on other important administrative exercises such as policy- making, and external affairs. The principal got to understand his school, students' academic problems and create contact with teachers and students thus improving on the holistic quality of the institution. Kinutai & Zachariah (2012) carried out a study on the supervision of teachers on the academic performance of students in Kenya, where a positive correlation was found between the instructional supervision of students and quality assurance. The quality of classroom delivery will depend on the knowledge, preparation of the lesson and motivation of the teacher which can be influenced positively by the supervisory performance of the school administrator. According to Ifedili (2002), principals or school administrators who utilize their time well, set goals and achieve more and are more focused. The findings of Chrispeels et al, 2008 cited in Rautiola, (2009) reported that Delegation of power gives the principal control to improve the school's quality assurance.

There are many reasons for instructional supervision in schools. Some of these according to Ogunu (2000) are:

- To make sure that teachers are performing the duties which they are employed to do.
- Assisting teachers to develop and utilize methods and materials which will improve the progress of a child and improve teacher's professional effectiveness.
- To know the performance of teachers recruited.
- To discover special abilities possessed by the teachers in school
- To provide opportunities for staff development
- To know the effectiveness of classroom management by teachers
- To appraise the performance of the school
- To identify the needs of the school etc.

Ogunu (2001) and Ifedili (2011) in their opinion note that the rate of visits by inspectors in schools is below average. The inspection of schools is facing many problems, some of these problems are: inadequate finance, transportation, inadequate training, failure of some schools to provide needed information, recommendations made by inspectors who visited schools were never implemented. It is also report by Ifedili (2011) that many erring principals and vice principals were often posted to the inspectorate division as chief inspectors of schools. Many of these were not professionals and they carried their negative attitude to the inspectorate and ended up not achieving the purpose of their deployment. Ogunu (2001) also emphasize that despite the nations widespread of inspectorate units, reactions from the stakeholders in the nation's education tends to indicate that schools are not regularly and properly inspected and the quality of inspection in schools has progressively declined as evidenced by the poor performance of students in public examination.

Delegation is the transfer of duty or power from one person to another, typically from a manager to a subordinate, to carry out certain tasks. Delegation is a fundamental notion in management leadership (D'Souza, 2018). According to Jackson (2019), as a school manager, one cannot attain the school's aims and objectives if they handle all of the jobs alone. Furthermore, Jackson (2019) states that experiences have shown that teachers are more highly driven to achieve goals when they have played

a dominating role in drawing upon the original delegation plans. As a result, the school principal will need to exploit the talents of the other teachers who work under them, rather than fearing that they will take over, but rather trusting them and having faith in them. According to Morake, Monobe, & Mbulawa (2012), primary school managers in Botswana's South-Central region see delegation as a way of increasing teacher retention because it gives teachers a sense of ownership in their work, and they suggest that increasing teacher retention rates should consider assigning teachers a role responsibility. In Ethiopia, Jha (2014) observes that school principals' appropriate distribution of responsibilities fosters among teachers a sense of responsibility, hard effort, and dedication, which increases teacher retention. This means that if teachers are well-directed in their performance of their assigned jobs, there is efficacy in quality assurance and performance. Okello (2017) examined the motivational rewards utilized by administrators to retain teachers in secondary schools in Homa Bay County, Kenya. The study discovered that teacher empowerment included difficulties such as distributing authority, power, and responsibilities to lower-level personnel. This has greatly aided in the control of teacher transfers from one school to another. According to Akinfolarin (2017), heads can delegate duties to their subordinates by: - Allowing assistants to make decisions regarding assigned tasks; - Delegating authority and responsibility to the right person; - Providing necessary authority, resources, and support to staff; - Having complete faith in staff ability when delegating duties; - Allowing time for staff to brief you on their assigned tasks, among other things.

According to Eslit (2023) quality assurance entails the necessity for standardized assessment procedures, resources for professional growth and the incorporation of technology in quality assurance processes. Implementating fresh perspectives in the issue of quality assurance is essential for ensuring constant improvement and enhancing quality of education in the private schools. Additionally, new perspectives emerged, highlighting the importance of adaptability and flexibility in the face of changing educational landscapes, particularly in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Giofiye (2016) revealed that marking students' attendance register, prepare lessons in line with the scheme of work, complete scheme at the end of the term, good record keeping, create conducive environment for learning, are some teachers' factors in quality assurance in Delta State Secondary Schools. Abdulrahman (2014) principals' planning techniques for quality assurance in secondary schools include preparation of school time table on time; making proper arrangements prior to any external examination; taking regular attendance of staff members, staff delegation of duties and encouraging staff professional growth by undergoing on-the-job training like seminars, workshops etc. He further observed that the principals' coordinating techniques for quality assurance are ensuring that every teacher is working towards the attainment of school goals, and making sure that various departmental needs are forwarded by subject coordinator for inclusion in the school system.

The performance and leadership traits of school administrators in school management techniques would be critical in the new education paradigm, and school principals would be required to promote collaborative school cultures and foster linkages between personnel (Harris, 2020). Inevitably, the school principal position now is demanding, highly complex change, and dynamic, which requires strategies approaches to transform low-performing schools in to performing schools in to defensible betterment among students (Heystek & Terhoven, 2015). Principal- nowadays- nowadays is socially expected to accomplish numerous duties for school quality (Pashiardis *et al.*, 2018)

Quality education is education which is the main objective of the implementation of an educational institution, then through education quality assurance, a series of processes are carried out in interrelated system to collect, analyze and convey information about educational process activities and programs to create a decent quality education (Azkiyah *et al.*, 2020; Fathih *et al.*, 2021; Kango *et al.*, 2021). To achieve quality education, not every education unit is capable of doing it. Many factors

become obstacles and obstacles so many educational units are unable to carry out quality education (Bisri, 2020). According to Usman in (Barirohmah & subiyantoro, 2021), Quality assurance is all planned and systematic activities that are implemented in a quality management system to ensure that a product meets a quality requirement. For quality to be maintained and so that the quality improvement process can be controlled, quality assurance and quality improvement of education require quality standards that are carried out in a standard procedure, good formation, and carried out on an ongoing basis.

Materials and Methods

The target population of the study consisted of teachers and principals of secondary schools in Mefou and Afamba Division. This involves all the general secondary schools (public, private and confessional) in the Mefou Afamba division. The main instrument used to collect data is the questionnaire. The assessment of the research variables was done using a five point Likert Scale, with modality scores ranging from 4 (strongly agreed), 3 (agreed) 2 (disagreed) and 1 (strongly disagreed) and 0 (neutral). The sample consisted of 225 participants drawn from selected schools.

Data analysis

Discrepancies are often caused by inconsistent data and wrong measurement. To ensure that all retained indicators are valid constructs, construct validity (CV) test was conducted and validated at a significance level of 0.5 threshold. All variables were measured using five (5) point Likert scales of ordinal data. The table below shows validity for all constructs involved in the model. Multivariate regression modeling (Structural Equation Modeling) was used to test the effects between variables of the study.

Results from the analyses of construct validity (CV) and reliability for Instructional Supervision (IS), Communication Approach (CA), Delegation of Powers (DP) and Quality Assurance (QA) revealed appropriate statistical fitness as shown below:

Table 1: Validity and reliability outputs - EFA

Constructs	Indicators	Factors Loading	[Factor Loading] ²	[AVE > 0.5] Construct Validity	[$\alpha > 0.6; 0.7$] Alpha Cronbach
Instructional Supervision	IS3	0.742	0.550564	0.615898	0.71
	IS4	0.88	0.7744		
	IS5	0.723	0.522729		
Communication Approach (CA)	CA3	0.789	0.622521	0.652115	0.760
	CA4	0.832	0.692224		
	CA5	0.801	0.641601		
Delegation of Powers (DP)	DP1	0.867	0.751689	0.709896	0.827
	DP2	0.908	0.824464		
	DP3	0.744	0.553536		
Quality Assurance (QA)	QA4	0.653	0.426409	0.682978	0.777
	QA5	0.946	0.894916		
	QA6	0.853	0.727609		

Results

Multivariate Regression Modelling [Structural Equation Model]

Structural equation modelling (SEM), a multivariate statistical analysis was used to analyse the structural relationships between the variables. This technique is the combination of factor analysis and multiple regression analysis, and it is used to analyse the structural relationship between measured variables and latent constructs. In this analysis, it was determined that the model fits to the data. A “good model fit” only indicates that the model is plausible. When reporting model fit, several varying opinions exist. Kline (2010) recommends reporting the Chi-squared test, the Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), the comparative fit index (CFI), and the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR). Structural equation model was used to test the following hypotheses:

H₁: Principal Instructional Supervision (IS) strategy has a positive significant effect on Quality assurance (QA) in selected secondary schools in Mefou and Afamba division in the Central Region.

H₂: Principals’ Communication Approach (CA), has a positively influences on Quality assurance (QA) in selected secondary schools in Mefou and Afamba division in the Central Region.

H₃: Principals’ Delegation of Powers (DP) strategy has significant effect on Quality assurance in selected secondary schools in Mefou and Afamba Division in the Central Region.

The results are shown on the Structural equation model below.

Table 2: Model fit summary

Model Fit Summary	Indices	Coefficients
CMIN	CMIN	178.404
	DF	66
	P-value	0.22
	CMIN/DF	2.703
RMR,GFI	SRMR	0.042
	GFI	0.90
Baseline comparison	IFI	0.932
	TLI	0.905
	CFI	0.931
	RMSEA	0.087

RMSEA

Table 3: Regression Weights: (Group number 1 - Default model)

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
QA_MEAN	<---	IS_MEAN	.190	.066	2.891	.004	par_1
QA_MEAN	<---	DP_MEAN	.321	.063	5.115	***	par_3
QA_MEAN	<---	CA_MEAN	.150	.064	2.347	.019	par_4

Table 4: Standardized Regression Weights: (Group number 1 - Default model)

			Estimate
QA_MEAN	<---	IS_MEAN	.168
QA_MEAN	<---	DP_MEAN	.296
QA_MEAN	<---	CA_MEAN	.141

Table 4: Harmonized Test of Hypotheses

Hypotheses	P-Value at 95% (CI)	Decision / Conclusion
H1: Principals; Instructional Supervision (IS) strategy has significant effect on Quality assurance (QA)] in selected secondary schools in Mefou and Afamba Division	[H ₀ : $\mu = .004 < 0.05$, $\beta = 0.17$, CI =95%] Weak positive statistically significant. QA_MEAN<--- IS_MEAN	Reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is significant statistical evidence to suggest that principals' instructional supervision strategy positively affect quality assurance.
H2: Principals' Communication Approach (CA), has positively influences on Quality assurance (QA)]in selected secondary schools Mefou and Afamba Division	[H ₀ : $\mu = 0.019 < 0.05$, $\beta = 0.14$, CI =95%]. Weak positive statistically significant. QA_MEAN<--- CA_MEAN	Reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is significant statistical evidence to suggest that principals Communication Approach have an impact on quality assurance
H3 : Principals' Delegation of Powers (DP)) strategy has significant effect on Quality assurance in selected secondary schools in Mefou and Afamba Division	[H ₀ : $\mu = .000 < 0.05$, $\beta = 0.30$, CI =95%]. Weak positive statistically significant QA_MEAN<---DP_MEAN	Reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is significant statistical evidence to suggest that principals Delegation of Powers (DP) strategy have an impact on quality assurance.

Discussion of Findings

Results from the data analysis show that instructional supervision as a management strategy used by the principal is positively significant with a P value =.004 which is less than the threshold value of 0.05. This shows that, instructional supervision plays a major role on quality assurance. These results are consistent with KInutai & Zachariah (2012) on their study on instructional supervision where the results indicated a positive correlation between instructional supervision of students and quality assurance. Besides, the findings of Igbo (2002) also supported the results that, the success of a school is directly related to the supervisory performance of the school administrator.

Communication plays a major role in quality assurance, this is seen in the data analysed where the findings portray a positively strong statistically significant of 0.01, which is below the threshold value of 0.05. Communication is the ultimate tool in promoting interpersonal or human relation in any organization. It is a very important tool in school management. Communication in school administration aids to identify and resolve issues arising in the institution that may hinder teachers and students in the teaching learning process. In the same light. Fonkeng & Tamajong (2009) also supported the view that, communication has a correlation ship with quality assurance in school. They

also note that communication is an integral part of the process of school administration and it is not possible to conceive an organization without communication. They emphasize that a message communicated or conveyed efficiently can influence workers behaviour and opinion for effective management strategy. The flow of information from top management to subordinates should be direct and easy to understand. The findings of research question three revealed that principal's delegation of power has a significant effect on quality assurance in some selected schools in Mefou Afamba Division in the central region and Mezam division in the North West region. This is seen in the data analyzed where the findings portray a positively strong statistically significant of 0.00, which is below the threshold value of 0.05. Principals who delegate power give opportunity for their subordinate to assist them in their task, thereby improving on performance and hence quality assurance. Chrispeel et al, (2008) cited in Rautiola, (2009), shows that delegation of power gives the principal control to improve the school quality assurance. In Yusuf (2012), it is noted that principals who allow their teachers to participate in administrative task do so to enhance general management performance.

Recommendations

- Principals should be aware that their different leadership management strategies influence school quality assurance. They should be careful about choosing a leadership management strategy that does not suit the situation.
- Principal should be a role model, leading by example and should be able to apply all the different four types of leadership styles i.e., democratic laissez-faire, autocratic and situational leadership styles.
- Teachers should equally be aware that, they are responsible for the implementations of the curriculum, with this, they must bear in mind that, the success of students depend solely on them.
- Appointment of principals should be based on merit, taking into consideration professionalism, qualification, longevity, and other skills.
- Principals should constantly organize in-service training; pedagogic workshops for school administrators to help the continuous improvement of their management skills and interpersonal relationships which will help improve on the school quality assurance.

Conclusion

This paper is focused on how the principal's management strategies have a significant impact on quality assurance in Mefou Afamba Division in the Central Region of Cameroon. Most principals neglect the implementation of important factors in their day-to-day function. This study examined such as supervision, communication planning and delegation of power as important factors that could enhance quality assurance in the school. These management strategies have been tested and confirmed by other researchers. This study comes in to support other researches. Even though the study was conducted in two regions of Cameroon, generalization of the study cannot be conclusive. Analysis of the data shown that all the four hypotheses all the independent variables have a strong positive relationship with the dependent variable (quality assurance). A school manager, teachers and students cannot record high success of the quality assurance is compromised.

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