



### QUALITY ASSURANCE MECHANISMS ADOPTED BY PRINCIPALS FOR EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ANAMBRA STATE

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### A B S T R A C T

This study examined the quality assurance mechanisms adopted by Principals for effective management of public secondary schools in Anambra State. Three research questions guided the study and three null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. From a population of 5512 a sample of 1313 participants made up of 263 principals and 1050 teachers was drawn using multi-stage sampling procedure. A self-designed questionnaire titled "Principals' Quality Assurance Mechanisms Questionnaire (PQAMQ) was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by two experts from the Department of Educational Management and Policy and one expert from the Department of Educational Foundation (Measurement and Evaluation) all in the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University. Internal consistency coefficients of 0.82, 0.80 and 0.86 were obtained for the three sections of the questionnaire using Cronbach's Alpha method. An overall reliability co-efficient of 0.83 was obtained for the entire questionnaire. Data were analyzed using mean for the research questions and t-test for the hypotheses. The p-value was used to determine the significance of difference at 0.05 significant level. The result among others revealed that Principals to a high extent ensure that quality teaching and learning, are provided in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Principals also to a high extent ensure that school curriculum is relevant to the needs of learners. Based on the findings, the study recommended among others that Principals as part of their internal quality assurance mechanism should regularly visit the classroom to observe, monitor and supervise classroom instruction in order to ensure that better quality teaching and learning are provided in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

### **KEYWORDS**

Quality assurance, quality assurance mechanisms, school management, effective school management.

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### Introduction

Education is seen as a crucial tool for national and personal development in every country. This is because the level of a nation's literacy determines her extent of development. A well administered education would equip individuals with the capacity to understand and adapt to new problems and changing situations, awaken intellectual curiosity, encourage their spirit of inquiry and make them inventive, self-reliant and resourceful (Federal Republic of Nigeria, (FRN), 2014).

The education system in Nigeria is delineated into different levels, basic education, post basic education and tertiary education. The post basic education (secondary education) has the broad goals of preparing individuals for useful living in the society and for higher education. This has made it imperative that it should, among others, supply trained manpower in the applied science, technology and commerce at sub-professional levels; inspire its students with the desire for self-improvement and achievement of excellence; raise a generation of people who can think for themselves, respect the views and feelings of others and respect the dignity of labour (FRN, 2014). In order to achieve these lofty goals, secondary education must have quality.

Quality education according to Ayeni (2012) is the systematic management, monitoring and evaluation procedure adopted to ensure that the learning environment and the curriculum programme of educational institutions meet the specified standards to achieve the set goals and produce outputs that will satisfy the expectations of the society. Quality education can be achieved through a sound, standard and improved educational management emanating from effective quality assurance.

Quality assurance can be seen as a systematic management and evaluation of school administrators, teachers, school environment, students and other educational input and processes towards attaining set objectives to ensure quality educational output. The Federal Ministry of Education (2012) in its quality assurance handbook stated that quality assurance involves the process of monitoring, assessing and evaluating according to agreed standard, and communicating judgments obtained to all concerned in order to ensure quality and integrity, public accountability and consistent improvement. This handbook provides national education quality standards and outlines various quality assurance mechanisms for basic and secondary education in Nigeria. They are: quality of teaching and learning, quality of curriculum and other activities, quality of care, guidance and safety, quality of learning environment and effectiveness of leadership and management. For the purpose of this study attention will be focused on three of these mechanisms which are: quality teaching and learning, quality of curriculum and quality teaching and learning, quality of curriculum and quality teaching and learning, quality of curriculum and processes are as a statement.

Quality of teaching and learning processes has to do with the various skills possessed by the teacher which will enable him or her to effectively manage students in the classroom. It is the duty of the Principal to ensure that teachers possess relevant skills necessary to achieve quality teaching and learning in the classroom. These skills should include among others; how well the teacher arranges and manages the classroom, prepares his/her lesson, uses instructional materials and supports the learners in different ways for them to be able to apply knowledge and skills.

Similarly, quality teaching and learning is concerned with the extent to which learners acquire new knowledge and skills in their work, develop ideas through the habit of critical thinking and understanding, show engagement, application and concentration, develop the skills and capacity to work independently and collaboratively as a team. It focuses on how effective teaching and learning are in meeting the full range of learner's needs (FME, 2015).

In order to meet the full range of learner's needs, the curriculum and instruction in secondary schools are expected to be relevant for students to adapt to modern technology by preparing them to compete favourably with their global counterparts. Hussan (2011) defined curriculum as the totality of experiences the learners went through under the guidance of a teacher. Curriculum is a set of plans or materials, while instruction is the transformation of these plans into a course of action. Curriculum and instruction are concerned with imparting and implementing series of planned events that are intended to have educational consequences for one or more students (FME, 2014). A relevant curriculum, according to Zimra (2016), should provide what is regarded as

worthwhile knowledge, expected attitudes and necessary skills and competences to result in positive influence on citizens.

Effective curriculum and instruction requires Principals to ensure that teachers appropriately and timely design instructional objectives, structure learning content, organize learning experiences and materials, and evaluate instruction to ensure optimal students' learning. The role of Principals is therefore not only to assist in formulation of curriculum objectives, but to oversee how teachers implement them by supervision and provision of needed materials resources. Principals are facilitators, but should decentralize authority in such a way as to make room for creativity and innovation from teachers and learners.

Principal should also ensure that the school learning environment is conducive for learning. Conducive school learning environment deals with the overall school surroundings including school facilities such as staff and students' convenience, sport facility, water and recreational facility. Others include, school cleanliness and beautification, planting of economic and ornamental trees and flowers. The Federal Ministry of Education (2015) stated that the school learning environment should be conducive with respect to its location, layout, fencing, general security and aesthetics. Learning facilities including the classrooms, laboratories, workshops, multipurpose hall and library should be equipped and furnished for learners' use to improve learning.

The delivery of high-quality secondary education is very vital for the development of students' potentials and necessary skills for national development. Principals by virtue of their position as the chief executives of secondary schools are responsible for directing, stimulating and controlling both human and material resources within the school to enhance the delivery of quality secondary education. Undoubtedly, effective management of secondary schools by Principals is indispensable for realization of quality secondary education.

Effective school management is the ability of school Principals to maximize school inputs in an effort to produce optimum educational services. It entails the extent to which school Principals harmonize material and human resources available to them to achieve the goals of the school system. Effective school management according to Adeniyi (2012) is the ability of the school Principal to apply innovative organizational and management strategies to make the most efficient use of resources in order to accomplish school objectives and to produce quality outputs.

Observable situations in public secondary schools in Anambra State appear to suggest that Principals are not performing optimally in the achievement of quality secondary education. They seem to be grappling with management challenges such as poor learning environment, lack of teamwork, poor communication skill, poor instructional supervision, poor monitoring of students' academic progress and poor students' evaluation (Duze 2018).

Furthermore, some public secondary schools in Anambra State seem to be characterized by dilapidated infrastructure, obsolete school equipment and outdated books. Moreover, looking at the unconducive nature of physical facilities in some of the secondary schools in Anambra State, one gets worried as to the level of comfort of the students and staff in both the classroom setting and the entire environment. The environment of most schools runs short of aesthetic appeal without appropriate beautifying. Most often, the schools are overgrown with grasses which are dangerous for both staff and students. Principals seem to let their managerial roles overshadow their duties as instructional leaders, thereby limiting their much needed visible presence in their schools. These problems which appear to have emanated from poor implementation of quality assurance mechanisms by secondary school Principals in the State necessitated this study.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Quality assurance in education reflects all proactive measures adopted by Principals to ensure that the system standards remain high enough to produce results set for it. Quality assurance relates to quality of teaching personnel, quality of available instructional materials, equipment and facilities, school environment and quality of education delivery.

Regrettably, the above quality assurance mechanisms appear not to be effectively carried out by Principals in public secondary schools in Anambra State as there are reports of poor teaching and learning process, poor learner friendly environment, resource management issues, poor maintenance of physical facilities and equipment, examination malpractice, truancy and cultism, unqualified and unmotivated teachers, poor implementation of curriculum among other problems.

Furthermore, the environment of most secondary schools in Anambra State runs short of aesthetic appeal without appropriate beautification. Most teachers in the State are not given orientation after recruitment, rather they are simply deployed to schools and classrooms to resume work immediately. These situations call for concern because one may be inclined to say that if quality assurance mechanisms are being duly implemented by Principals, it would have helped in improving these situations.

#### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

- 1. To what extent do Principals ensure that quality teaching and learning are provided in public secondary schools in Anambra State?
- 2. To what extent do Principals ensure that school curriculum is relevant to the needs of learners in public secondary schools in Anambra State?
- 3. To what extent do Principals ensure that school environment is conducive for learning in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

### **Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

- There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Principals and teachers on the extent to which Principals ensure that quality teaching and learning are provided in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
- 2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Principals and teachers on the extent to which Principals ensure that school curriculum is relevant to the needs of learners in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
- There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Principals and teachers on the extent to which Principals ensure that school environment is conducive for learning in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

#### Method

A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study which was carried out in public secondary schools in Anambra State, Nigeria. Three research questions guided the study and three hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance. From a population of 5512 respondents, consisting of 263 Principals and 5,249 teachers in all the State government owned secondary schools in the six education zones of the State, a sample of 1,313 respondents (263 Principals and 1050 teachers) was drawn using a multistage sampling procedure. A Questionnaire instrument titled Principals' Quality Assurance Mechanisms Questionnaire (PQAMQ) which was validated by three experts was used for data collection. The questionnaire was structured on a four point scale of Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE) Low Extent (LE) and Very Low Extent (VLE) weighted 4, 3, 2 and 1. The internal consistency of the instrument was ascertained using Cronbach's Alpha and this yielded reliability coefficients of 0.82, 0.80 and 0.86 for the three parts of the PQAMQ and 0.83 for the entire instrument. The instrument was considered reliable in line with Nworgu (2015), who stated that if the co-efficient obtained for an instrument is up to 0.70 and above, the instrument should be considered good enough to be used for a study. The direct administration and retrieval method was used for data collection. A total of 1,313 copies of the questionnaire were administered while 1,120 were retrieved and was used for data analysis. Mean was used to answer the research questions while t-test was used to test all the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. For the research questions, a mean rating of 2.50 and above was interpreted as high extent while mean rating of less than 2.50 was interpreted as low extent. The null hypothesis was rejected where the p-value associated with the t-cal was less than 0.05 whereas the null hypothesis was not rejected where the p-value was greater than 0.05.

### Results

### Table 1: Mean Ratings of Respondents on the Extent to which Quality Teaching and Learning Are Provided by Principals in Public Secondary Schools in Anambra State N=1120

S/N To what extent do Principals ensure that:	$\overline{X}$	SD	Remark
1. teachers show good command of their subject areas.	2.62	.66	HE
2. teachers plan their lessons with clear learning objectives.	2.73	.71	HE
3. teachers make use of lesson notes in teaching the students.	2.81	.73	HE
4. teachers have a well written and structured lesson note for teaching.	2.74	.76	HE
5. teachers have a lesson plan for teaching the students.	2.64	.68	HE
6. teachers maintain good classroom arrangement.	2.63	.73	HE
7. teachers make use of instructional materials in teaching the students.	2.80	.71	HE
8. teachers maintain good dress-code and appearance in class.	2.70	.79	HE
9. teachers mark students assignments regularly.	2.65	.63	HE
Cluster Mean	2.70	.71	HE

HE=High Extent

Results in Table 1 shows the mean ratings of respondents on the extent to which Principals ensure that quality teaching and learning are provided in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The cluster mean of 2.70 with standard deviation of .71 indicate that Principals to a high extent ensure that quality teaching and learning are provided in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The analysis of the items shows that the respondents rated all the nine items to a high extent with mean ratings ranging from 2.62 to 2.81. The standard deviation scores for all the items ranged from .63 to .79 indicating that the respondents' mean ratings were homogenous.

## Table 2: Mean Ratings of Respondents on the Extent to which Principals Ensure That School Curriculum Is Relevant To the Needs of Learners in Public Secondary Schools in Anambra State N=1120

S/N To what extent do Principals ensure that school curriculum:	$\overline{X}$	SD	Remark
10. provides opportunities for learners to participate in co- and extracurricular activities	2.65	.67	HE
11. provides a broad range of curricular opportunities that cater for the interests, aptitudes and particular needs of learners	2.82	.68	HE
12. caters for the difference in opportunities open to students after their secondary school course	2.61	.73	HE
<ol> <li>fosters Nigerian unity through teaching of subjects that cut across divers ethnic groups</li> </ol>	2.85	.71	HE
14. inspires students with a desire for self-achievement through awards for best performance in taught subjects	2.71	.72	HE
15. equips students with technical knowledge such as in computer applications	2.65	.63	HE
16. equips students with vocational skills such as carpentry	2.57	.69	HE
17. ensures the physical development of students through sports	2.67	.74	HE
18. provides opportunities for individual differences through different courses	2.68	.87	HE

	Cluster Mean	2.69	.72	HE
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Results in Table 2 indicate the mean ratings of respondents on the extent to which Principals ensure that school curriculum is relevant to the needs of learners in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The cluster mean of 2.69 and standard deviation of .72 shows that Principals to a high extent ensure that school curriculum is relevant to the needs of learners in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The item by item analysis indicate that the respondents rated all the nine items to a high extent with mean ratings ranging from 2.61 to 2.85. The standard deviation scores for the nine items ranged from .63 to .87 indicating that the respondents' mean ratings for the items were relatively similar.

Environment is Conducive For Learning in Fubic Secondary Schools in Anamora State N=1120									
S/N To what extent do Principals:	$\overline{X}$	SD	Remark						
1. ensure that school buildings areas are clean	2.57	.85	HE						
2. ensure that school environment is aesthetic in nature	2.84	.75	HE						
<ol> <li>make school playground safe for the learners to carry out their activities</li> </ol>	2.66	.82	HE						
4. provide shades around the school compound	2.54	.79	HE						
5. provide water facilities for use in the school	2.52	.81	HE						
6. make sure classroom are regularly swept for learning.	2.64	.85	HE						
7. provide waste bin for the collection of refuse.	2.47	.96	LE						
8. provide ornamental trees and flowers in the school surroundings	2.28	.79	LE						
9. provide staff convenience in the school	2.24	.84	LE						
10. provide students' convenience in the school	2.58	.97	HE						
Cluster Mean	2.53	.84	HE						

 Table 3: Mean Ratings of Respondents on the Extent to Which Principals Ensure That School

 Environment Is Conducive For Learning In Public Secondary Schools In Anambra State N=1120

Table 3 shows the mean ratings of respondents on the extent to which Principals ensure that school environment is conducive for learning in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The cluster mean of 2.53 and standard deviation of .84 indicate that Principals to a high extent ensure that school environment is conducive for learning in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The analysis of the items indicates that the respondents rated item 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33 and 37 to a high extent with mean ranging from 2.52 to 2.84. The respondents on the other hand rated item 34, 35 and 36 to a low extent with mean of 2.47, 2.28 and 2.24. The standard deviation scores for items ranged from .75 to .97 indicating that the respondents' mean ratings for the items were closely related.

## Table 4: t-test Comparison of Principals and Teachers Mean Ratings of the Extent to which Principals Ensure That Quality Teaching and Learning Are Provided in Public Secondary Schools in Anambra

State.								
Source of variation	Ν	X	SD	df	t-cal	P-value	Remark	
Principals	261	2.56	.34					
				1118	6.49	.000	Sig	
Teachers	859	2.75	.42					

The results in Table 4 shows that the mean score for Principals (M=2.56, SD=.34) was significantly less than that of the teachers (M=2.75, SD=.42); t (1118) =6.49, p=.000. The null hypothesis of no significant difference

between the two groups on the extent to which Principals ensure that quality teaching and learning are provided in public secondary schools in Anambra State was therefore rejected.

# Table 5: t-test Comparison of Principals and Teachers Mean Ratings of the Extent to which Principals Ensure That School Curriculum Is Relevant to the Needs of Learners in Public Secondary Schools in Anambra State.

Source of variation	Ν	$\overline{X}$	SD	df	t-cal	<i>P</i> -value	Remark
Principals	261	2.95	.26				
				1118	12.59	.000	Sig
Teachers	859	2.61	.41				

The results as presented in Table 5 shows that the mean score for Principals (M=2.95, SD=.26) was significantly greater than that of the teachers (M=2.61, SD=.41); t (1118) =12.59, p=.000. The null hypothesis of no significant difference between the two groups on the extent to which Principals ensure that school curriculum is relevant to the needs of learners in public secondary schools in Anambra State was therefore rejected.

 Table 6: t-test Comparison of Principals and Teachers Mean Ratings of The Extent to which Principals

 Ensure That School Environment Is Conducive for Learning in Public Secondary Schools in Anambra

State.									
Source of variation	Ν	$\overline{X}$	SD	df	t-cal	<i>P</i> -value	Remark		
Principals	261	2.79	.36	1118	9.38	.000	Sig		
Teachers	859	2.45	.54						

The analysis in Table 6 shows that the mean score for Principals (M=2.79, SD=.36) was significantly greater than that of the teachers (M=2.45, SD=.54); t (1118) =9.38, p=.000. The null hypothesis of no significant difference between the two groups on the extent to which Principals ensure that school environment is conducive for learning in public secondary schools in Anambra State was therefore rejected.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The findings of this study indicated that Principals to a high extent ensure that quality teaching and learning are provided in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Provision of quality teaching and learning is paramount in the achievement of quality assurance. This finding was not surprising to the researcher because public secondary schools in Anambra State have been performing optimally in both internal and external examinations. For instance, in the 2020 West Africa Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) Anambra State took the second position behind Abia State. Also a teacher from Anambra State, emerged the overall best teacher in public secondary schools in Nigeria in the 2021 President's teachers' and school excellence awards. In the 2022 awards, two Anambra State public school teachers took second positions for senior and junior categories, while an Anambra school Principal won overall best administrator for junior school category (Eze, 2022).

The findings of this study are in tandem with that of other researchers. For instance, Oboegbulem (2007) observed that Principals ensure quality teaching and learning in secondary schools by updating teachers' professional competence through internal supervision, encouraging teachers in the new curriculum and subject content, helping teachers identify more and more professional development opportunities and out-of school experiences. In support, Naveed, Shahab and Muhammad (2013) and Afzal and Afzal (2015) found in their studies that Principals of public secondary schools in Nigeria ensure quality teaching and learning in their schools by supervising teachers classroom instructional delivery.

Contrary to these findings above, Oyoyo (2014) found that Principals apply quality teaching and learning mechanisms to a low extent in public secondary schools. The difference between this finding and that of the present study may be linked to the time difference between both studies. A lot may have happened between 2014 and 2021. Principals may have attended seminars, and conformed to the current policy requirements which influenced their perception and competence.

The findings of the hypothesis showed a significant difference in the mean ratings of Principals and teachers on the extent to which Principals ensure that quality teaching and learning are provided in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This shows that the views of Principals and teachers in this area were significantly different. Teachers' rating of the extent to which Principals ensure provision of quality teaching and learning was higher than that of the Principals.

This study also found that Principals to a high extent ensure that school curriculum is relevant to the needs of learners in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Principals have it as a duty to ensure that the contents of the national curriculum provided for the schools are translated and delivered in such a manner that it reflects the practical realities of the surrounding environment of the learners. The findings of the present study supports that of Kazi (2011), Bozimo and Ikwumelu (2013) who observed that secondary school curriculum contents in Nigeria is related to learners' needs, culture, aspiration and adequate in scope and age of the learners.

The findings of the present study is not in line with that of Odoh (2001), Boaduo (2010) and Gathara (2011), Oyibe and Oketa (2012). These researchers found that the level of implementation of school curriculum is low because of the limited availability of resources which are needed for quality implementation, lack of curriculum reforms in secondary school curriculum, inadequate use of educational technologies to deliver the curriculum so as to increase efficiency of teaching and learning among others. The difference between these findings and that of the present study may be as a result of differences in area of the study and the time at which these studies were carried out. These studies were carried out over 10 years ago and may not reflect the current realities as found by the present study.

The finding of the hypothesis indicated that Principals and teachers differed significantly in their mean ratings of the extent to which Principals ensure that school curriculum is relevant to the needs of learners. This implies that Principals and teachers perception in this area are different, while Principals rated themselves high in ensuring that school curriculum is relevant to the needs of learners teachers did not rate them as much.

Another finding of this study indicated that Principals to a high extent ensure that school environment is conducive for learning in public secondary schools. According to the Federal Ministry of Education (2015) the school learning environment should be made conducive enough for learning with respect to its location, layout, fencing and aesthetics. The finding of this study is consistent with that of Visscher and Coe (2002), Goddard and Goddard (2009) and Ejionueme and Oyoyo (2015) who found that quality learning environmental practices were applied to a high extent in secondary schools.

The finding of the corresponding hypothesis showed that Principals and teachers differed significantly in their mean ratings of the extent ensure that school environment is conducive for learning in public secondary schools. This implies that the mean score for Principals was greater than that of the teachers. Principals rated themselves higher than they were rated by the teachers in terms of ensuring that school environment is conducive for

learning. This difference may be attributed to difference recorded in self-rating situation whereby people rate themselves higher in terms of possession or exhibition of positive traits and behavior than others.

### Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher concluded that Principals to a high extent, ensure that quality teaching and learning are provided, that school curriculum is made relevant to the needs of learners and that school environment is conducive for learning in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- 1. Principals as part of their internal quality assurance mechanism should regularly visit the classroom to monitor and supervise classroom instruction to ensure that quality teaching and learning are provided in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
- 2. Principals and other stakeholders in secondary education should always ensure quality curriculum implementation by taking into cognizance the needs of the learners and the society during the implementation of school curriculum.
- 3. The researcher also recommends that for school environment to be conducive for learning, Principals should always ensure that the school surroundings are neat, tidy as well as beautified with ornamental flowers and trees. Staff and students' convenience, sports and recreational facility as well as water should also be made available within the school.

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