

Administrative Strategies Employed By School Administrators in the Attainment of Quality Assurance in Secondary Schools

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Abstract: This paper investigates administrative strategies for the attainment of quality assurance in secondary schools in Cross River State. The design of the study employed a descriptive survey. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. The population of the study comprised 5652 respondents. The sample of the study consisted of 228 principals. Questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection tagged Administrative Strategies for Attainment of Quality Assurance in Secondary Schools Questionnaire (ASAQASSQ). Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while t-test statistics was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that the School administrators' planning strategies for quality assurance in secondary schools include staff personnel strategies for the achievement of quality assurance in secondary schools and budgeting strategies for the achievement of quality assurance in secondary schools. It was recommended among others that state government should appoint capable and qualified persons as principals in order to implement the documented administrative strategies for quality assurance in secondary school administration.

Keywords; Administrative Strategies, school administrators, attainment, quality assurance and secondary schools

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I. Introduction

Education could be seen as an instrument for achieving socioeconomic and technological growth and development of any nation. It is an instrument par-excellence and the means of developing human intellect, technical skills, character and effective citizenship for self-reliance and effective national development (FRN, 2013). A simple way of appreciating education is that it is a tool or a necessary weapon that is needed by every human being in order to effectively navigate this complex world (Aguba, 2009). Education in essence is the most effective instrument for academic progress, social mobilization, political survival and effective national development of a country, it constitutes the single largest enterprise in Nigeria (Akpa, 2002). The educational policy of any nation is to achieve education for all (E.F.A.) (Moest, 2008). The priority is to ensure equitable access and improvement in the quality and efficiency of all level of education.

The concern of the principal of secondary school is to direct the activities of teachers, students and other staff in the school towards the school objectives. The roles to be performed by the school principal can be categorized into two, namely: supervision of school programmes which include: curricula and extra curricula activities (allocation of schedule of duty or subjects, school time table, school organization, etc.) interpersonal relation which involves school discipline, evaluation of teachers performance, community support and involvement, helping in solving staff and student personal problems e.t.c.

The principal of a school is a planner, director, controller, coordinator, organizer, adviser and a problem-solver (Maduabuchi, 2002). He identifies and set goals and objectives of the school, which of course, must be in line with the national objectives, analyses tasks and share responsibilities to the staff according to specialization and expertise (Ugochi, 2007). The status of secondary school principal is not gender discriminating. Therefore, a principal can either be a male or female. A good principal should champion the course of quality assurance in his or her school to ensure a better school administration.

The ultimate goal of education administration at all levels is to develop an all inclusive and quality education that is accessible and relevant for self reliance. This is guided by the understanding that good education contributes significantly to economic growth, improvement of employment prospects and income generating opportunities for sustainable development.

For qualitative education to be achieved in a nation, the teacher (human resources) financial and instructional facilities (material resources) must be co-operatively organized. In other words, the teacher in secondary school must be well trained and supervised (assisted), the learners continuously evaluated and funds and facilities adequately provided.

There is a number of administrative processes that exist to assist the administrator in carrying out his day-to-day activities. An administrator who ignores these processes is likely to encounter problems in the task of school administration. Hence, administration is seen as a collection of processes dealing with the various ways in which human and material resources are utilized to achieve set goals in an organization. These processes include such elements as planning, decision making, organizing, coordinating, motivating, directing, evaluating, staffing, and budgeting. Enyi in Ogbonnaya (2013) stressed that administrative process can therefore be regarded as the sum total of the various processes of planning, organizing, stimulating, coordinating, staffing, budgeting, communication and evaluating, which aid administrators in the utilization of resources in the achievement of organizational goals.

Within the school system, virtually all the various aspect of the school programmes and activities should be planned. According to Oboegbulem (2011) planning is the process of deciding in advance, the methods and procedures which an individual, group or organization intends to follow in order to accomplish its outlined objectives. The important thing in planning is to decide, in advance, the objectives to be achieved and how to utilize the available resources in achieving these objectives. In other words, to plan is to decide in advance what is to be done and how to do it. The scarcity of resources makes the need more necessary, since the little available resources have to be evenly spread to reach every competing segment.

No administrator can function alone without the assistance of others. Thus, in order to achieve the set educational objectives, the administrator must have a frame work or structure for his school on which posts are created and assigned to people. Enyi (1999) sees organizing in schools as an administrative process of having a structure and assigning people to the posts for the purpose of performing specific duties. It is sometimes seen as a process on which an administrator identifies and groups the work to be done in smaller units, and assigns people to the various units with relevant materials and authority. Organizing in schools enables the principal to assign duties to academic and non academic staff according to competence and it tends to minimize conflict in schools, since each person knows what to do.

Organizing helps the principal to coordinate the various organizational activities, since he is aware of the various assignments given to individuals. Principals, who are charged with the responsibility of utilizing human and material resources in schools, need to have the ability to coordinate these resources in order to achieve the desired results. Nwankwo (1982), explained coordination as a process whereby an orderly pattern of group effort is developed to ensure unity of action in the pursuit of common goals.

Thus, a secondary school with various departments, units and individuals with different functions need to be properly coordinated to ensure that the set school objectives are achieved. Coordination may therefore be defined as the process of directing and harmonizing resources and group activities for achieving set educational goals without friction.

In the school situation, staff personnel administration forms an important responsibility of the school administration in achieving the goals of the school in particular and education in general. Staffs in the secondary schools include not only the teachers, but also non teaching staff, clerk, watchmen, labourers, cooks, and laboratory attendants. Teaching and nonteaching staff are important tools in the hands of the secondary school principals in achieving educational objectives.

The functional scope of staff personnel administration as stated in Enyi 1999, includes responsibilities of the administrator in;

- i. Determining the personnel needs of the school, (tutorial and nontutorial);
- ii. Satisfying personnel needs;
- iii. Maintaining and improving services of the staff.

In educational institution, the budget is prepared by the bursary department or finance office as the case may be. Ogbonnaya (2005) had defined budget as the financial statement of the proposed expenditure and expected revenue of the government, public corporations, or educational institution for a particular period of time. The budget usually covers a period one year. It shows clearly the expected income and proposed expenditure of government or an educational institution for the coming year. The principal must be sure of what revenue is to be anticipated and from what sources it is to be derived before preparing his budget for the school. Budget controls the financial behavior of principals in a school system and prevent waste or reckless spending of fund provided for various educational services.

The administrative dealings of various secondary schools in Cross River state seems to have been hindered by numerous problems. These problems may include: poor supervision, conflict among teachers, inadequate funding, inadequate facilities, lack of principal-teacher relationship, and poor leadership styles of the principal among others. Some school principals in Cross River state seem to lack vision, there appears to be inadequate job analysis and work plan with poor instructional supervision which culminated into poor curriculum delivery in schools and consequently poor academic performance by the students. As far as the

position of a principal is concerned, the issue of “gender” is very crucial because a principal could either be a male (man) or female (female).

Gender refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women. To put it another way: "Male" and "female" are sex categories, while "masculine" and "feminine" are gender categories (Ivan, 2008). Gender plays a very important role when it comes to the position of a principal. In any secondary school, a principal can either be male or female i.e man or woman. Some critics are of the view that women (females) have a better charisma as far as the job of principalship is concerned. Another set of critics refuted their idea and came up with an assertion that men (male) have principalship proficiency in them naturally and therefore should be considered a better gender for this profession than women. Other critics totally disagree with their conjecture, but opined that everyone is capable of becoming a principal; both men and women (male and female) provided they are qualified and have acquired a sound leadership and administrative experience. For the administrative processes to be effective in achieving quality assurance there is need to adopt some administrative process strategies (Ivan, 2008).

Administrative process strategy is a concerned with shaping an organization in the right part towards the achievement of its goal. Some of the administrative process strategies of the principals include planning strategy, organizing strategy, staff personnel strategy, coordinating strategy and budgeting strategy. These administrative strategies are pertinent in the achievement of quality assurance in secondary schools.

Quality assurance is a process of ensuring effective resource input, control, refining the processes and raising the standard of output in order to meet the set goals. Ayeni, (2012) opined that quality assurance in education is the efficient management, monitoring, evaluation and reviews of the resource inputs and transformation process (teaching and learning) to produce a quality output (students) that meets set standards and expectations of the society. Quality assurance in education aims at preventing quality problems and ensures that the products of the system conform to the expected standards. Thus, the quality of education is the degree of excellence of the output (students) which can be achieved through principals’ effective administrative strategy. McKeown (2011) argues that “quality assurance strategy is about shaping the future “and is the human attempt to get to desirable ends with available means”.

Quality assurance is an organization guarantee that the product or service it offers meets the accepted quality standards (Lopez, 2003). It is achieved by identifying what "quality" means in context; specifying methods by which its presence can be ensured; and specifying ways in which it can be measured to ensure conformity. Quality assurance is a component of quality management and it is focused on providing confidence so that quality requirements will be fulfilled (Flanna, 2008). It can be said to be Processes and procedures for ensuring that qualifications, assessment and programme delivery meet certain standards. Quality assurance relates to the achievement of educational program standards established by institutions, professional organizations, government, and/or standard-setting bodies established by government. Walklin (2002) defined quality assurance as the avoidance of non-performance by pre-empting failure through proper planning, execution, monitoring and evaluation. It is a way of managing an organization so that every job, every process, is implemented right at first time and always.

Quality assurance in the school system implies the ability of the educational institutions to meet the expectations of the users of manpower in relation to the quality of skills required by their outputs. It can be said to be the abilities of the schools to meet certain criteria relating to academic matters, staff – student ratios, staff development, physical facilities, funding, and adequate library facilities (Ajayi and Adegbesan, 2007). Quality assurance in the school system refers to all the activities that are conducted in order to achieve or maintain a certain acceptable quality level. It is an avoidance of defects in the education process. Cole (1996) opined that quality assurance in any educational institution indicates that students’ learning is well supported with adequate resources and that those actively involved both in school administration and teaching have clear job descriptions and know their job responsibilities. It involves a series of operational techniques and activities which include all the actions taken in order for the quality requirement to be met.

Quality assurance in education is a totality of the combination of some indispensable variables such as quality teachers, quality instructional materials and quality infrastructures (classrooms, seats, tables, chalkboards, etc.). Others include: favourable teacher/pupil ratio, favourable pupils/classroom ratio, and quality instructional supervision

Quality assurance means putting in place appropriate structures, legislations, supervision of personnel and materials in order to ensure that set minimum standards are attained, sustained and seen to have meaningful impact on the society. There seems to be a sharp decline in the quality of education system in most of the public schools in Cross River state. Indicators of such declining quality and wastage in the education system may include: high drop-out and failure rates, rampant examination malpractices, poor reading and writing skills among students at all levels. There is evidence of client reaction as many parents take their children to private schools within and outside the state. Adedoja (2010) explained that quality assurance have increasingly and significantly become the strongest parameters for determining the relevance and a functionality of education,

especially in developing countries where reform regimes in the sector have become imperative for meeting the Education For All and Millennium Development Goals targets.

But, inspite of the importance of quality in education, it continues to pose serious challenge to education sector, which is strategic for national and regional development. Quality assurance in education, according to Adedoja (2010), refers to the modalities for evolving, monitoring and re-appraising indices, benchmarks and good practices within an education system. Ukeje (2003) explain that quality assurance in a school setting is made possible through proper planning by the management which involves all the staff in the functions of planning, execution, monitoring and evaluation using set standards and objectives. There is need to uphold quality assurance in secondary schools to ensure a successful school administration.

Secondary education is crucial in both personal and national development. Secondary school level is the bridge between the primary and tertiary levels. Secondary education is the education children receive after primary education and before the tertiary stage within the range of 12 to 18 years (FRN, 2013). The broad goal of secondary education is to prepare the individual for useful living in the society and for higher education (FRN, 2013). Specifically, the secondary school system is geared towards catering for the differences in talents, opportunities and future roles, to provide technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economic development (FRN, 2013). Secondary school should be able to provide quality teaching and learning.

The importance of secondary education cannot be over emphasized since it has both consumer and producer status. This is because it consumes the product of primary schools and produce candidates for tertiary education in the nation. Realizing the need to improve the reducing secondary education quality which had been partly attributed to ineffective principals' administrative process strategies which ought to be repositioned through improvement of administrative process strategies of principals.

Given this background, the aim of the present study is to examine and identify principals' administrative strategy for the achievement of quality assurance in secondary schools in Cross River state.

However, observations have shown that there seems to be poor principals' administrative process/strategies which have led to poor quality assurance in secondary schools in Cross River state. This can be seen in the areas of inadequate funding, inadequate facilities, poor instructional supervision, conflict among teachers, poor vision of the principals, poor principal teacher relationship and poor administrative style of the principals among others.

These situations seem to have led to poor academic achievement among the secondary school students, high drop-out rate, and high rate of examination malpractice, poor reading and writing cultures among others.

Research Questions

The following research questions will guide the study.

1. What are the principals' staff personnel strategies for the achievement of quality assurance in secondary schools in Cross River state
2. What are the principals' budgeting strategies for the achievement of quality assurance in secondary schools in Cross River state

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses formulated will guide the study, and will be tested at 0.05 level of significance.

H01: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on principals' planning strategies for attainment of quality assurance in secondary school in Cross River state.

H02: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on principals' organizing strategies for attainment of quality assurance in secondary school in Cross River state.

II. Methodology

The design of the study is a descriptive survey. According to Nworgu (2006) "a descriptive survey design is a type of research design in which a group of people or items are studied by collecting and analyzing data from only a few people or items considered to be representative of entire group".

The study was carried out in Cross River state. Is a state in South- south Nigeria , with four educational zones she shares an international boundary with camaroom and Guanineand state bandaries with Akwa Ibom , Ebonyi and Benue states

The population of the study is made up of all the 228 principals in the 228 secondary schools in Cross River state. Research, Planning and Statistics, Ministry of Education, Calabar (2013). There are 228 secondary schools spread in the 4 educational

The sample consist the entire 228 principals in the government owned secondary schools in Cross River state. The rationale for using the entire population is because it is small and can be managed by the researcher. In other words, there will be no sampling of the principals.

The instrument for data collection is a researcher developed questionnaire titled: Administrative Strategies for Attainment of Quality Assurance in Secondary Schools Questionnaire (ASQAASSQ) The questionnaire has two parts; A and B. Part A contain information on personal data of the respondents, The respondents indicated their level of agreement by ticking (✓) on the rating scale. The scale was weighed 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively.

The instrument Administrative Strategies for Attainment of Quality Assurance in Secondary Schools Questionnaire (ASQAASSQ) was face validity by three experts from Ebonyi state University Abakaliki and the University of Calabar, Calabar . Their corrections and comments were used to modify the questionnaire before the final copy is produced.

The reliability was done using . Cronbach Alpha method to ensure the internal consistency coefficient of the questionnaire. Which gave an overall internal consistency reliability.79.

The questionnaire was administered to the respondents with the assistance of and four trained research assistants.

Mean and standard deviation were used in answering the research questions an the null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using t-test statistics.

III. Findings And Discussions

Table 1: mean ratings of principals on the staff personnel strategies for the achievement of quality assurance in secondary schools

S/No	ITEMS	X	SD	DEC..
1	Taking regular attendance of staff Members	2.92	5.94	A
2	Advising the ministry of education and state secondary school board to consider the educational, occupational and personal experiences of applicants before recruitment to school	2.76	5.54	A
3	Conducting orientation programs whenever new staffs are posted to the school	2.97	6.35	A
4	Assignment of duties to teachers to be based on specialization and expertise.	2.64	5.60	A
5	Teachers to be internally supervised by their heads of department or subject coordinators	3.01	6.04	SA
6	Satisfying staff needs to achieve efficiency, good performance and job satisfaction	2.96	6.44	A
7	Delegation of duties and responsibilities to staffs in his own interest and the interest of the institution he serves.	2.39	5.09	D
8	Encouraging staff professional growth by encouraging teachers to undergo on -the -job training like seminars and workshops	2.26	4.52	D
Cluster Mean		2.74	5.69	A

Table one above reveals that items 1-8 which comprise taking regular attendance of staff members; advising the ministry of education or teaching service commission to consider the educational, occupational and personal experiences of applicants before recruitment to school; conducting orientation programmes whenever new staff are posted to the school; assignment of duties to teachers to be based on specialization and expertise; teachers to be internally supervised by their heads of department or subject coordinators and satisfying staff needs to achieve efficiency, good performance and job satisfaction are the principals' staff personnel strategies for the achievement of quality assurance in secondary schools. This is because their mean scores are above 2.50 which is the cut off mean for accepting an item. Data on the same table 1 indicate that items 7 and 8 (delegation of duties and responsibilities to staff and encouraging staff professional growth by encouraging teachers to undergo on- the- job training like seminars and workshops) are not the principals' staff personnel strategies for

the achievement of quality assurance in secondary schools. However, the cluster mean scores of 2.74 and 2.84 reveals that all the items in cluster three are the principals' staff personnel strategies for the achievement of quality assurance in secondary schools. This is because the cluster mean scores are above the 2.50 which is the cut off mean for accepting items.

Research Question two

What are the principals' budgeting strategies for the achievement of quality assurance in secondary schools in Cross River state Answer to research question 5 is presented in Table 5

Table 2: mean ratings of male and female principals on the budgeting strategies for the achievement of quality assurance in secondary schools

S/No ITEMS	X	SD	DEC.
9 Making sure that various departmental needs are forwarded by heads of department or subject coordinator for inclusion in the school budget.	2.66	5.32	A
10 Involvement of experts like the school bursar or accountant in the preparation of school budget	2.84	5.99	A
11 Seeking the input/advice of teachers on the most needed capital project(s) to be included in the school budget.	2.76	5.48	A
12 Consider the expected revenue and the source(s) it is to be derived before preparation of budget.	3.21	6.42	SA
13 Setting up budget monitoring team in the school.	2.90	5.82	A
14 Sourcing for funds from PTA/private sectors for budget implementation.	2.96	6.44	A
15 Sourcing for funds from foreign donor for budget implementation	2.87	6.15	A
16 Preparing a supplementary budget when the need arises.	2.86	6.03	A
Cluster Mean	2.88	5.96	A

The data on table 2 show that all principals agreed that items 9-16 which include making sure that various departmental needs are forwarded by heads of department or subject coordinator for inclusion in the school budget; involvement of experts like the school bursar in the preparation of school budget; seeking the input/advice of teachers on the most needed capital project(s) to be included in the school budget; considering the expected revenue and the source(s) it is to be derived before preparation of budget; setting up budget monitoring team in the school; sourcing funds from PTA/private sectors for budget implementation; sourcing for funds from foreign donor for budget implementation and preparing a supplementary budget when the need arises with the cluster mean scores of 2.88 and 3.03 are the principals' budgeting strategies for the achievement of quality assurance in secondary schools. This is because their mean scores are above the 2.50 cut off mean for accepting an item.

Hypothesis One

There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on principals' planning strategies for achievement of quality assurance in secondary schools in Cross River state.

Table 3: Summary of t-test on the difference between the Mean Rating of Male and Female Principals on Principals' Planning Strategies for Achievement of Quality Assurance in Secondary Schools in Cross River state

Status	N	X	SD	Df	t-cal	t-tab	A	Decision
Male	138	2.22	0.62	227	2.27	1.96	0.05	Not Rejected
Female	90	2.34	0.81					

Source: Researcher's Filed Survey (2019)

The table above shows the calculated t-value of -0.15 at 227 degree of freedom and 0.05 level of significant. Since the calculated t-value of -0.15 is less than the table of 1.96, the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, there is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female principals on principals' planning strategies for achievement of quality assurance in secondary schools in Cross River state.

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female principals on principals' planning strategies for achievement of quality assurance in secondary schools in Cross River state.

Table 4: Summary of t-test on the difference between the Mean Rating of Male and Female Principals on Principals' organizing Strategies for Achievement of Quality Assurance in Secondary Schools in Cross River state

Status	N	X	SD	Df	t-cal	t-tab	A	Decision
State	138	2.68	05.47	227	0.08	1.960	0.05	Not Rejected
Federal	90	2.78	4.61					

Source: Researcher's Filed Survey (2019)

The table above shows the calculated t-value of -0.08 at 227 degree of freedom and 0.05 level of significant. Since the calculated t-value of -0.08 is less than the table of 1.96, the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, there is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female principals on principals' organizing strategies for achievement of quality assurance in

IV. Discussion

The result on table three shows that there are some staff personnel strategies which can be adopted by school principals to ensure the achievement of quality assurance in secondary schools. These staff personnel strategies as indicated in table three are: taking regular attendance of staff members, advising the ministry of education or teaching service commission to consider the educational, occupational and personal experiences of applicants before recruitment to school, conducting orientation programs whenever new staffs are posted to the school, assignment of duties to teachers to be based on specialization and expertise, teachers to be internally supervised by their heads of department or subject coordinators, satisfying staff needs to achieve efficiency, good performance and job satisfaction among others while delegation of duties and responsibilities to staff and encouraging staff professional growth by encouraging teachers to undergo on- the- job training like seminars and workshops are not the principals' staff personnel strategies for the achievement of quality assurance in secondary schools. These findings indicate that adoption of good staff personnel strategies by principals could help enhance quality assurance in secondary school administration.

The result on table two indicates that there are some budgeting strategies which can be adopted by school principals to ensure the of quality assurance in secondary schools. Some of these budgeting strategies as illustrated in table five include: making sure that various departmental needs are forwarded by heads of department or subject coordinator for inclusion in the school budget, involvement of experts like the school bursar or accountant in the preparation of school budget, seeking the input/advice of teachers on the most needed capital project(s) to be included in the school budget, considering the expected revenue and the source (s) it is to be derived before preparation of budget, setting up budget monitoring team in the school, sourcing for funds from PTA/private sectors for budget implementation, sourcing for funds from foreign donor for budget implementation among others. The implication of these findings is that there are a good number of budgeting strategies which can be adopted by school principals to ensure the achievement of quality assurance in secondary schools.

V. Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study and the discussions that followed,

The principals' staff personnel strategies for quality assurance in secondary schools comprise taking regular attendance of staff members; advising the ministry of education or teaching service commission to consider the educational, occupational and personal experiences of applicants before recruitment to school and conducting orientation programmes whenever new staff are posted to the school among others while delegation of duties and responsibilities to staff and encouraging staff professional growth by encouraging teachers to undergo onthe- job training like seminars and workshops are not the principals' staff personnel strategies for the achievement of quality assurance in secondary schools. Consequently, the principals' appropriate use of the staff personnel strategies documented by this study could help enhance quality assurance in secondary schools.

The principals' budgeting strategies for quality assurance in secondary schools include making sure that various departmental needs are forwarded by heads of department or subject coordinator for inclusion in the school budget; involvement of experts like the school bursar in the preparation of school budget and seeking the input/advice of teachers on the most needed capital project(s) to be included in the school budget among others. Proper use of good budgeting strategies by the principals as documented by this study could be of help in ensuring quality assurance in secondary school administration.

VI. Recommendations

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

1. Secondary school principals should be transferred to another school after a period of some years in their resident school..
2. Budget monitoring team should be constituted in all the secondary schools in Cross River state to ensure effective implementation of school budget and also check any form of financial recklessness,

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