

Influence of Principal Management Strategies in the Achievement of Quality Assurance in Public Secondary Schools in Southern Senatorial District of Taraba State, Nigeria

ADI Daniel Ph.D, & CLETUS Edoh Ph.D

Department of Educational Foundations and General Studies, College of Agricultural and Science Education, Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi, Nigeria

Abstract: This study investigated influence of principal management strategies in the achievement of quality assurance in public secondary schools in Southern Senatorial District of Taraba State, Nigeria. Two specific objectives with corresponding research questions guided the study and two hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study adopted a survey research design, and was carried out in Southern Senatorial District of Taraba State, Nigeria. The population for this study was 1642 teachers from 132 public secondary schools in Southern Senatorial District of Taraba State. A total of 240 teachers representing 15% of the entire population were selected from 20 secondary schools also representing 15% of the entire secondary schools used for the study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled “Principal Management Strategies in the achievement of Quality Assurance Questionnaire (PMSQAQ) which was developed by the researchers. The reliability of the instrument was estimated using Cronbach Alpha statistic and an overall reliability coefficient of 0.85 was obtained. The data was analyzed using Means and Standard Deviation to answer the research questions. Chi-Square Statistic to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Findings of the study revealed that; principals ability to satisfy staff needs to achieve efficiency positively influences quality assurance, assigning duties based on area specialization by principals assures quality assurance and ensuring regular attendance to duties by principals assures quality assurance in public secondary schools in Southern Senatorial District of Taraba State, Nigeria. The findings further revealed that timely disbursement of funds to departments for smooth running of schools guarantees quality, ensuring annual financial structure of accounts from the bursary department enhances quality assurance and strict monitoring of payment via due process assures quality assurance in public secondary schools in Southern Senatorial District in Taraba State, Nigeria. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that Taraba State Government should ensure modern scientific approach of managing staff are fully incorporated into staff development programmes so as to adequately equip school principals with the necessary skills needed in achieving quality assurance.

Keywords: Principals Management Strategies and Quality Assurance

I. INTRODUCTION

In Nigeria, education is a tool for boosting national progress. Nigeria’s educational objectives have been mapped out in the National Policy on Education with regards to their importance towards the needs of the individual and the society (FRN, 2014). Because of this background, the National Policy on Education set goals to enhance educational growth in the country. To promote these goals and objectives, the school principal has significant roles to play. Education in essence is the most effective instrument for academic progress, social mobilization, political survival and effective national development of a country, and it also constitutes the single largest enterprise in Nigeria. Education could be seen as an instrument for achieving socio-economic and technological growth and development of any nation (Adepoju, 2010). It is an instrument per-excellence and the means of developing human intellect, technical skills, character and effective citizenship for self-reliance and effective national development (Abdurahman, 2014). 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 cited in Festus 2010).

In general, education aims at transmitting a common set of beliefs, values, norms, and understanding across all spheres of life. It is pertinent to note that for the aims and objectives of education is to be achieved, the roles of principal in management of schools are key. This implies that principal management strategies are very essential tool for the success of any school. Principal management strategy is the way of utilizing human and material resources through cooperative efforts to achieve educational goals. It refers to the ways school principal run the day to day affairs of the school. According to Ogunu (2000), principal management strategy is the effective organization and utilization of the human and material resources in a particular system by school principals for the achievement of identified school aims and objectives. Proper management helps the principal to plan, organize staff, control, direct and coordinate school

activities to achieve pre-determined goals. Obi (2013) opined that management strategy involves the process of planning, organizing, leading and controlling the efforts of school staff and the use of other school resources in order to achieve the school goals.

The principals' in essence must carry out specific administrative functions or responsibilities which includes staff-personnel functions, students-personnel functions, financial management function, educational facilities management function and school-community relationship functions for achievement of educational objectives as identified by Akpakwu (2012), Chike-Okoli (2007) and Nwahaw (2011). In order to execute the administrative functions for achievement of the objectives of secondary education, the principals must apply certain modern scientific management strategies. That is to say, principals should provide management supportive strategies that will improve other school personnel work quality and the utilization of available professional and material resources for achieving educational objectives in secondary schools. Principals should further provide teachers with needed management supports to effectively function in their schools (Castler, 2010). In the same vein, Amadi (2013) opined that the school organization is made up of individuals with various needs and expectations. These different individuals come into the organization with different attitudes, interest, needs and values, which may run contrary to the organizational objectives. The attainment of the school organizational objectives (goals) therefore, depends on the ability of the school principals in coordinating and creating a conducive and harmonious atmosphere for the human and material resources therein, that is to say that the principal like any other administrator of an organization, upholds a process of continuously striving for the total enhancement of the organization's status.

Along the same line, Jefferson cited in Onuma (2016) affirmed that the provision of management support strategies to staff involve giving supportive instructional supervision, adequate welfare, rewards, in-service education programme as and when due. In addition, Akubue cited in Onuma (2016) also affirmed that modern management strategies has to do with providing for employees' welfare, professional growth, supportive supervision, giving rewards, counseling employees and organizational career planning. Put differently, it is the act of giving assistance, encouragement and stimulation to staff by principals to enhance their performance towards the achievement of the objectives of the school system. Imperatively, teachers in the school for example need supportive practices from their principals to be able to perform maximally. Provision of effective management strategies by school principals are essential towards building or improving teachers, students and other staff performances for achievement of educational objectives. To perform maximally, the principal must employ workable management strategies in order to get things done in the school.

Principals' management strategy is defined as the planning of curriculum organization, procedure, style and resources, arranging the environment to maximize efficiency, monitoring students and teachers' progress and anticipating potential problems (Obi, 2013). Principal s' management can impact on teachers' attitude towards students. In view of this, Ogbonnaya (2009) emphasized that effective management strategy is very necessary for coordinating all the resources of educational institutions through planning, organizing, directing and controlling of the human and material resources to attain pre-determined goals. Effective management of educational institutions by principals requires that certain strategies need to be carried out for the attainment of goals and objectives. These strategies include: instructional management, personnel management, school community relationship management, physical facilities management, financial management practices, pupils' personnel management, curriculum management, delegation of duties and business management practices. This study will concentrate on two principals' management strategies namely: personnel management strategy and financial management strategy.

Personnel management is an aspect of management strategies that lies at the core of the efficiency of a school or an organization. Oboegbulem cited in Nzewi (2006) defined personnel management strategy as the manpower activities of any organization which embraces recruitment of staff, selection, staff welfare, discipline, training, development, compensation and evaluation of staff or educational activities. For any school programme to succeed, the welfare of teachers should be given priority. There as on is that the teacher is the personality that implements the educational programmes for the attainment its objectives. He is the one trained in the act of teaching through institutions of higher learning in specialized departments of teachers' education. 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. Staff in the public secondary schools includes not only the teachers, but also non-teaching staff, clerk, watchmen, labourers, cooks, and laboratory attendants. Teaching and non-teaching staff are important tools in the hands of the secondary school principals in achieving educational objectives and quality assurance. The functional scope of staff personnel administration strategy as stated in Enyi cited in Abdurahman (2014) includes; the responsibilities of the administrator in determining the personnel needs of the school (tutorial and non-tutorial); satisfying personnel needs; maintaining and improving services of the staff through effective financial management strategy

Financial management of educational institutions is of prime importance in the achievement of quality assurance and educational objectives. According to Mgbodile cited in Nzewi (2006), financial management strategy is a way of raising money, using the money judiciously and being able to give account of the money expended to justify the purpose of

the expenditure. Ogbonnaya (2012) stresses that the central purpose of financial management strategy is the raising of funds and ensuring that the funds raised are mobilized in the most effective manner. Ogbonnaya further emphasized that the realization of the objectives of the educational programme which include quality assurance rests on the availability of funds and effective management of the funds through proper management strategy of the principal. This because money is needed for payment of staff salaries, maintenance of school physical facilities and running the administration of schools. Also, Edem (1998) articulated that the achievement of quality assurance and educational objectives, the expansion of educational programmes and the creation of educational opportunities for all, depend on adequate provision of funds which in many cases are usually limited. It is pertinent to note that inadequacy of financial resources will have the effect of limiting the educational development policy of any nation. Thus, the quality of education is the degree of excellence of the output (students) which can be achieved through principals' effective management strategy.

Quality assurance involves the systematic review of educational provision to maintain and improve its quality, equity and efficiency. It encompasses school self-evaluation, external evaluation (including inspection), the evaluation of teachers and school leaders, and student assessments (Juha, 2010). Quality assurance is a process of ensuring effective resource input, controlling, 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 their source 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. Mckeown (2011) argues that "quality assurance is about shaping the future "and is the human attempt to get to "desirable ends with available means". It also 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 refers to all the activities that are conducted in order to achieve or maintain a certain acceptable quality level (Juha, 2010).

However, there seems to be a sharp decline in the quality of education system in most of the public schools in Southern Taraba State. Taraba South Senatorial District is a senatorial district in Taraba State, comprising of the entire geographical areas of: Donga Local Government Area, Ibi Local Government Area, Takum Local Government Area, Ussa Local Government Area and Wukari Local Government Area. 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. Also, personal observation of the

researcher has shown poor quality assurance in public secondary schools in the study area.

This is 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 management 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. From the researchers observations, often times most teachers hawk wares during official school hours, some absent themselves from classes to the detriment of their students while some refuse to write their notes of lesson as well as carry out other assigned responsibilities.

These observations by the researchers are threatening the citadel of learning from the cradle and indeed detrimental to effective school management as it undermines the huge investment the Taraba State government has invested to educational development. These are testimonies of the alarming rise of poor attitude to work which leads to poor job effectiveness, as observed by the researchers during their practicum experience. It is against this background that this study sought to investigate influence of principals' management strategies in the achievement of quality assurance in public secondary schools in Southern Senatorial District of Taraba State.

Objective of the Study

This study investigated influence of principal management strategies in the achievement of quality assurance in public secondary schools in Southern Senatorial District of Taraba State. Specifically, the study sought to;

1. ascertain the influence of principals' staff management strategy on the achievement of quality assurance in public secondary schools in Southern Senatorial District of Taraba State.
2. determine the influence of principals' financial management strategy on the achievement of quality assurance in public secondary schools in Southern Senatorial District of Taraba State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study

1. What is the influence of principals' staff management strategy on the achievement of quality assurance in public secondary schools in Southern Senatorial District of Taraba State?
2. What is the influence of principals' financial management strategy on the achievement of quality assurance in public secondary schools in Southern Senatorial District of Taraba State?

Statement of Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. Principals’ staff management strategy has no significant influence on the achievement of quality assurance in public secondary schools in Southern Senatorial District of Taraba State.
2. Principals’ financial management strategy has no significant influence on the achievement of quality assurance in public secondary schools in Southern Senatorial District of Taraba State.

II. METHODOLOGY

This study adopted the survey design. This is because the design sought to find out and describe an already existing phenomenon and determines the status of same. The area of study is Southern Senatorial District of Taraba State. The study covers Wukari and Takum Education Zones, consisting four LGAs (Wukari, Ibi, Takum and Ussa). This covered part of the Southern Senatorial District of Taraba State. The population for this study was 1642 teachers from 132 public secondary schools in Southern Senatorial District of Taraba State. A total of 240 teachers representing 15% of the entire population were selected from 20 secondary schools also

representing 15% of the entire secondary schools used for the study. This agrees with Glass and Hopkins in Emaikwu (2015) who assert that when a population is above 1000, 10% of the population is enough to be used for the study. Multi-stage sampling procedure was used for the study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled “Principal Management Strategies in the achievement of Quality Assurance Questionnaire (PMSQAQ) which was developed by the researchers. The instrument is a 10-item questionnaire structured on a four-point rating scale. The reliability of the instrument was estimated using Cronbach Alpha statistic and an overall reliability coefficient of 0.85 was obtained. The data was analyzed using Means and Standard Deviation to answer the research questions. Chi-Square Statistic to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Any P-Value below 0.05 was rejected, while those above 0.05 were accepted.

III. RESULTS

Mean and Standard Deviation were used in answering the research questions

Research Question One: What is the influence of principals’ staff management strategy on the achievement of quality assurance in public secondary schools in Southern Senatorial District of Taraba State?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviations of respondents on the influence of principals’ staff management strategy on the achievement of quality assurance in public secondary schools in Southern Senatorial District of Taraba State

S/N	ITEM	N	SA	A	D	SD	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
1.	Ensuring regular attendance to duties by principals assures quality assurance	240	34	201	3	2	3.26	0.84	Agree
2.	Conducting orientation programmes for new staff by principals assures quality assurance	240	50	155	5	30	3.01	0.69	Agree
3	Assigning duties based on area specialization by principals assures quality assurance	240	168	43	15	14	3.35	0.78	Agree
4	Principals ability to satisfy staff needs to achieve efficiency positively influences quality assurance	240	209	31	0	0	3.52	0.92	Strongly Agree
5	Delegating responsibilities to staff in their interest assures quality assurance	240	89	149	2	0	3.00	0.64	Agree
	Cluster Mean and SD						3.23	0.77	Agree

Analysis of data as presented in Table 1 shows the influence of principals’ staff management strategy on the achievement of quality assurance in public secondary schools in Southern Senatorial District of Taraba State, Nigeria with corresponding Standard Deviation values. Data presented in Table 1 revealed that principals’ staff management strategy influence achievement of quality assurance, as the respondents agreed on all the items with mean scores ranging from 3.00 – 3.52 which are above the benchmark of 2.50. The table also revealed close Standard Deviation values ranging from .69 – .92 which showed that the respondents were homogeneous in their responses. The cluster mean of all the items was revealed to be 3.23 and SD= .77. With this cluster mean, it can be deduced from this finding that; principals

ability to satisfy staff needs to achieve efficiency positively influences quality assurance, assigning duties based on area specialization by principals assures quality assurance and ensuring regular attendance to duties by principals assures quality assurance in public secondary schools in Southern Senatorial District of Taraba State, Nigeria.

Hypothesis 1: Principals’ staff management strategy has no significant influence on the achievement of quality assurance in public secondary schools in Southern Senatorial District of Taraba State.

Table 2: Chi-Square test of significance of the influence of principals’ staff management strategy on the achievement of quality assurance in public secondary schools in Southern Senatorial District of Taraba State

Variables	N	Df	χ^2	Sig	Alpha Level	Remark
	240	12	452.105	.000	.05	Significant

Df = Degree of Freedom; χ^2 = Chi-Square Calculated Value; Sig = P-Value

Table 2 shows the Chi-square calculated value (χ^2) of 452.105, degree of freedom df =12 and a sig (P-value=0.00) which is less than the alpha value ($\alpha=.05$). Since $P<.05$, the result is significant, therefore the null hypothesis is rejected. This implied that principals’ staff management strategy positively influences achievement of quality

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviations of respondents on the influence of ICT skills for empowerment and job creation in Benue State, Nigeria

S/N	ITEM	N	SA	A	D	SD	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
6.	Ensuring annual financial structure of accounts from the bursary department enhances quality assurance	240	212	18	8	2	3.63	0.96	Strongly Agree
7.	Strict monitoring of payment via due process assures quality assurance	240	207	23	7	3	3.58	0.85	Strongly Agree
8	Timely disbursement of funds to departments for smooth running of schools guarantees quality	240	220	16	4	0	3.70	0.80	Strongly Agree
9	Proper budgeting of internally generated funds assures quality	240	178	59	1	2	3.54	0.75	Strongly Agree
10.	Allocation of funds to areas of pressing needs enhance quality assurance	240	219	13	0	8	3.51	0.70	Strongly Agree
	Cluster Mean and SD						3.59	0.81	Strongly Agree

Analysis of data as presented in Table 3 shows the influence of principals’ financial management strategy on the achievement of quality assurance in public secondary schools in Southern Senatorial District of Taraba State with corresponding Standard Deviation values. Data presented in Table 3 revealed that principals’ financial management strategy influences achievement of quality assurance in public secondary schools, as the respondents strongly agreed on all the items with mean scores ranging from 3.51 – 3.70 which are above the benchmark of 2.50. The table also revealed close Standard Deviation values ranging from .70 – .96 which showed that the respondents were homogeneous in their responses. The cluster mean of all the items was revealed to be 3.59 and SD= .81. With this cluster mean, it can be deduced from this finding that; timely disbursement of funds to departments for smooth running of schools guarantees quality, ensuring annual financial structure of accounts from the bursary department enhances quality assurance and strict monitoring of payment via due process assures quality assurance in public secondary schools in Southern Senatorial District in Taraba State, Nigeria.

Hypothesis 2: Principals’ financial management strategy has no significant influence on the achievement of quality assurance in public secondary schools in Southern Senatorial District of Taraba State.

assurance in public secondary schools in Southern Senatorial District of Taraba State, Nigeria.

Research Question Two: What is the influence of principals’ financial management strategy on the achievement of quality assurance in public secondary schools in Southern Senatorial District of Taraba State?

To answer this research question, responses on the influence of principals’ financial management strategy on the achievement of quality assurance in public secondary schools in Southern Senatorial District of Taraba State, Nigeria were collected and analyzed as shown in Table 3.

Table 4: -Square test of significance of influence of principals’ financial management strategy on the achievement of quality assurance in public secondary schools in Southern Senatorial District of Taraba State

Variables	N	Df	χ^2	Sig	Alpha Level	Remark
	240	12	463.059	.000	.05	Significant

Df = Degree of Freedom; χ^2 = Chi-Square Calculated Value; Sig = P-Value

Table 2 shows the Chi-square calculated value (χ^2) of 463.059, degree of freedom df =12 and a sig (P-value=0.00) which is less than the alpha value ($\alpha=.05$). Since $P<.05$, the result is significant, therefore the null hypothesis is rejected. This implied that principals’ financial management strategy positively enhances achievement of quality assurance in public secondary schools in Southern Senatorial District in Taraba State, Nigeria.

From the data analysis, the following major findings were made:

- i. Principals ability to satisfy staff needs to achieve efficiency positively influences quality assurance, assigning duties based on area specialization by principals assures quality assurance and ensuring regular attendance to duties by principals assures quality assurance in public secondary schools in Southern Senatorial District of Taraba State, Nigeria.
- ii. Timely disbursement of funds to departments for smooth running of schools guarantees quality,

ensuring annual financial structure of accounts from the bursary department enhances quality assurance and strict monitoring of payment via due process assures quality assurance in public secondary schools in Southern Senatorial District in Taraba State, Nigeria.

IV. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings arrived at in this study are discussed in line with the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

The first objective of this study ascertained the influence of principals' staff management strategy on the achievement of quality assurance in public secondary schools in Southern Senatorial District of Taraba State. It was revealed from this finding that principals staff management strategy enhances achievement of quality assurance in public secondary schools in Southern Senatorial District of Taraba State. The first finding of the study revealed that; principals ability to satisfy staff needs to achieve efficiency positively influences quality assurance, assigning duties based on area specialization by principals assures quality assurance and ensuring regular attendance to duties by principals assures quality assurance in public secondary schools in Southern Senatorial District of Taraba State, Nigeria. Similarly, the test of a related hypothesis revealed that principals' staff management strategy positively influences achievement of quality assurance in public secondary schools in Southern Senatorial District of Taraba State, Nigeria. This finding corroborates with that of Ike-Obioha (2007) who revealed that head teachers engaged in staff/pupils personnel practices and physical facilities management to a little extent. Ike-Obioha further revealed that head teachers put in effort in the provision of human and material resources in secondary schools for the sole purpose of achieving quality assurance in school management. This finding corroborates further with that of Aja-okorie (2016) who revealed that there is a significant relationship between teacher's personnel management and teachers' productivity in secondary schools. Aja-okorie further revealed that there is a significant relationship between management strategies and teachers' productivity in secondary schools. This finding corroborates also with that of Fasasi (2014) whose findings revealed that the ability of the principals to put in place strategies that would ensure quality in the production of school output is a critical factor in determining school effectiveness.

The second objective of this study determined the influence of principals' financial management strategy on the achievement of quality assurance in public secondary schools in Southern Senatorial District of Taraba State. The finding revealed that principals' financial management strategy influences the achievement of quality assurance in public secondary schools in Southern Senatorial District of Taraba State. It was revealed from this finding that; timely disbursement of funds to departments for smooth running of schools guarantees quality, ensuring annual financial structure

of accounts from the bursary department enhances quality assurance and strict monitoring of payment via due process assures quality assurance in public secondary schools in Southern Senatorial District in Taraba State, Nigeria. The finding corroborates with that of Oche (2009) whose findings revealed that principals explore other sources of funds such as P.T.A. levies, funds from school farms, magazines, speech and prize giving day, and canteens, money raised from these sources are included in school budget therefore such funds are accounted for, budgetary plans are made in collaboration with heads of department but not strictly adhered to in terms of implementation purposely geared towards achieving quality assurance. Furthermore, the findings showed that there were several factors militating against financial management such as ghost workers, untimely disbursement of funds, lack of ICT training in the bursary department and neglect of internal auditing. The findings further corroborates with that of Nkwoh (2011) who revealed that principals were moderately effective in financial and school business administration.

V. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher concluded that the place of principal management strategies in the achievement of quality assurance in public secondary schools in Southern Senatorial District of Taraba State cannot be over emphasized. From the findings of the study it is envisaged that if principals staff management and financial management strategies are fully incorporated into secondary school curriculum; it would enhance timely placement of staff and disbursement of funds to various departments for smooth running of schools to guarantee quality assurance by strict monitoring of staff dutifully.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

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

- i. Taraba State Government should ensure modern scientific approach of managing staff are fully incorporated into staff development programmes so as to adequately equip school principals with the necessary skills needed in achieving quality assurance.
- ii. Taraba State Government should ensure school principals are effectively trained on the application of modern financial management technologies in its financial management so as to achieve maximum quality assurance through financial accountability.

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