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QUALITY ASSURANCE PRACTICES OF HEADTEACHERS FOR QUALITY EDUCATION IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN EBONYI STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated Quality Assurance Practices of Headteachers for Quality Education in Public Primary Schools in Ebonyi State. Two purposes, two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. Descriptive research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised seven thousand, seven hundred and thirty-nine (7,739) teachers in 1,074 public primary schools in Ebonyi State. The sample size for the study was 387 respondents using taro Yamane formular. Also proportionate random sampling technique was used to select 168 male and 219 female teachers for the study. Structured questionnaire by the researcher tagged "Quality Assurance Practices of Public Primary School Headteachers Questionnaire" (QAPPPHQ), was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by three experts, two of whom were from the Department of Educational Foundations and one from Measurement and Evaluation Unit from Science Education Department, all in Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. The reliability coefficient yielded 0.80 using Cronbach Alpha method. Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation, while t-test statistics was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The result revealed among others that funds sourcing practice and that infrastructural facilities practice as quality assurance practices for quality education in public primary schools were to a low extent. The result further revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the extent to which funds sourcing practice, infrastructural facilities practice and instructional supervision practice by headteachers served as quality assurance practice for quality education in public primary schools. Based on the findings, the researcher recommended that Ebonyi State Universal Education Board should organize training and retraining sessions for headteachers which will focus on effective funds sourcing for development of educational system.

Keywords: Quality Assurance, Practices, Headteachers, Education, Primary Schools

Introduction

Primary education remained the first stage of formal education, typically offered to children in the early years of their schooling, usually between ages 5 to 11 (Amirize & Ololube, 2018). It serves as a foundational phase where children acquire basic skills and knowledge that are essential for their further educational journey and personal development, of

which quality education services are required. Consequently, quality in educational service delivery cannot be compromised if any nation has to confront the daunting challenges of unproductivity. This is probably why United Nations (UN) set the year 2030 as target year for attaining Sustainable Development Goal which quality education is a part**.**

Obtaining quality education underpins a range of fundamental development drivers (Lingan, Cornforth & Pollard, 2023). Unfortunately, Nigeria could not meet up with the Education For All (EFA goals) targeted for year 2015 for all nations by the United Nations Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) because quality education is still found to be very low (Chiaha, Onu, Ogakwu & Amaefula, 2019). One cannot but wonder if Nigeria will attain the SDG-4 by 2030. This elucidates the crucial need for a quality assurance measure in the educational system through regular supervision of schools especially -in primary schools. To achieve the needed quality in education system, it is obligatory for educational administrators to adopt quality assurance mechanisms for quality education in schools.

Assurance for quality education is a holistic process concerned with ensuring integrity of outcomes. Assurance implies checking or comparing intentions with actualities and then doing something when actualities are too far from intentions. It includes taking action through assigned responsibilities in order to close gaps between what has occurred and what is intended (Harvey, 2018). Thus, the responsibility for quality assurance rests with school managers, which is expressed through relationships with other stakeholders in the education system.

The goal of primary education therefore is to enable pupils learn, realize their full potentials and participate meaningfully in the society. Therefore, to achieve the stated goals in primary education, the need for quality assurance becomes imperative. Quality assurance in primary schools in Ebonyi State is, therefore, not limited to Universal Basic Education Board but to headteachers and teachers who take care of the curricula (Kisuniene, 2022). It could therefore, be concluded that quality assurance practice is a process through which an organization seeks to ensure that quality is maintained or improved upon in which headteacher plays a crucial role to facilitate.

Practices involve the repeated execution of a task or activity with the aim of improving skill, technique or performance (Hlam, 2017). On the other hand, practice is the application of theoretical knowledge in real world scenarios. Practice encompasses a form of skill development and performance enhancement to the application of knowledge and the formation of habits. To ascertain quality realization assurance practices in primary education system, headteachers play a vital role in the actualization of the objectives.

The headteacher is a major facilitator for the objectives of primary education. He/She is the coordinator and manager of human and material resources available in primary schools. As human resource personnel, he has numerous areas to effectively and adequately manage if he is to be successful. He has to manage the school environment in such a way that it will be conducive for teaching and learning to take place. To adequately manage these resources effectively, fund is necessary. Nwankwo (2021) highlighted the following as mechanism for quality assurance which ranges from: supervision of instruction, provision instructional facilities, motivation of teachers, supervision of instruction, curriculum development, adequate teachers' recruitment, effective sources of funds, utilization of funds, provision of infrastructural facilities and provision of instructional materials. In context of this study, quality assurance practices border on sources of funds and provision of infrastructural facilities.

Sources of funds refer to various ways in which money can be obtained for a particular purpose or project (Ama, 2017). This includes government funding, donations from individuals or organizations, grants, loans, and internal revenue generated through sales or services. Headteachers play crucial roles in ensuring quality education through various sources of quality assurance practices. To Asodike (2020), headteachers source information and resources from a variety of sources to develop and maintain high standards in education. Sourcing information may include educational research, best practices in teaching and learning, feedback from pupils, parents, and staff, as well as collaboration with educational experts and professionals. Sourcing funds is a critical quality assurance practice for headteachers in ensuring that they have the resources needed to provide high-quality education for their pupils (Utuka, 2022). The issues on sources of funds have remained problem in the development of primary education based on the fact that most headteachers cannot contribute to the financial sustainability and success of their schools in line with provision of infrastructural facilities (Ifeoma, 2023).

Provision of infrastructural facilities refers to the process of ensuring that adequate facilities are provided maintained and adequately equipped to support educational needs of pupils and staff. Infrastructural facilities refer to the physical structures and resources necessary for the operation of primary schools such as classrooms, libraries, laboratories, playgrounds and administrative offices (Green, 2020). It involves budgeting and managing resources effectively for conducive learning environment (Harvey, 2018). Conducive learning environment and well-maintained infrastructure, not only enhance the effectiveness of teaching and learning, but also improve overall school environment. Asiyai (2021) suggest that headteachers should prioritize the provision of infrastructural facilities as

part of the quality of their school's infrastructure and identify areas that require improvement or expansion. According to him, by investing in modern and functional facilities, headteachers can support delivery of a comprehensive and high-quality education program. The researcher is of the view that, the provision of infrastructural facilities can attract more pupils and improve their retention rates. Schools with well-equipped facilities are more likely to have positive reputation in the community, leading to increased enrollment and improved educational outcomes. Additionally, adequate and maintained infrastructure enhances the overall safety and security of the school environment, contributing to the well-being of pupils and staff. Based on the fact that provision of infrastructure in primary schools improves learning, some school headteachers carter for adequate infrastructure in school environment while some headteachers lack the required skills of attracting development into the school system.

Ascertaining quality education through the headteachers in primary schools, however, remains a great problem in the school system. According to Okoro (2021) public primary school is facing challenges of low operational quality and absence of required facilities to carter for teachers and pupils which features; rampant examination malpractices, inadequate parental commitment to school activities, high rate of bullying, dominant act of indiscipline, gangsters, illegal substance abuse, inadequate supervision of pupils' activities, inbuilt culture of incompetency and general hopelessness leading to pupils' failure, truancy and dropout. There has been rising number of pupils' dropout from formal schooling system as at 2023 calendar year (public school) amounting to about ten million (10 million) (Abinboye, 2023). The difficulty in managing school productive standard by government appear a threat to education in Ebonyi State. Quality assurance practices of headteachers in public primary schools are essential for promoting high educational standards, fostering accountability, supporting pupil's outcome and ensuring continuous improvement but the short fall of primary education remains a thing of concern. Most time the quality assurance practices of headteachers in public primary schools face challenges due to inadequate resources, insufficient training and inadequate support from educational authorities/managers. Sunday (2021) observed that headteachers in public primary schools constitute a great problem in the administration of primary education. Thus, this study sought to ascertain quality assurance practices of Headteachers for Quality Education in Public Primary Schools in Ebonyi State.

Statement of the Problem

Pupils in the public primary schools in Ebonyi State appear not to be doing well in their examinations and cannot compete favourably with their private school counterparts (Adetula, 2022). This is the fact that pupils in public primary schools in Ebonyi State do not perform well could be due to low quality inputs from their

teachers, which also may be as a result of inadequate infrastructural facilities in their school environment. Complexities in educational system in applying modern techniques in teaching and learning have made it imperative for teachers to attend workshop and seminars to improve their teaching method. Researcher's personal experience and observation indicate that quality assurance practices which are tools of ensuring the employment of qualified teachers, provision of instructional materials, provision of funds, utilization of funds and the availability of facilities needed in ensuring quality education in Ebonyi State is greatly inadequate. Quality output has constituted a problem because pupils no longer find it easy to compete with their private school counterparts, hence, the mass exodus from public to private schools where teachers, adequate facilities and proper management is guaranteed. These lead to poor academic performance and poor school system development in Ebonyi State. It is on this premise that this study deemed it imperative to ascertain quality assurance practices of Headteachers in Public Primary Schools in Ebonyi State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to assess Quality Assurance Practices of Headteachers for Quality Education in Public Primary Schools in Ebonyi State. Specifically, the study sought to ascertain:

1. the extent funds sourcing serves as quality assurance practices for quality education in public primary schools in Ebonyi State
2. the extent provision of infrastructural facilities serves as quality assurance practice for quality education in public primary schools in Ebonyi State

Research Questions

In line with the objective of this study, the following research questions guided this study:

1. To what extent does fund sourcing serve as a quality assurance practice for quality education in public primary schools in Ebonyi State?
2. To what extent does provision of infrastructural facilities serve as a quality assurance practice for quality education in public primary schools in Ebonyi State?

Hypotheses

Two null hypotheses were formulated for the study and were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the extent funds sourcing serve as a quality assurance practice for quality education in public primary schools in Ebonyi State.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the extent provision of infrastructural facilities serves as a quality assurance practice for quality education in public primary schools in Ebonyi State

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. Descriptive survey design is the

plan of study which does not attempt to control or manipulate any of the variables but is focused on describing an event as it is. This is in line with Ali (2006) and Nworgu (2006) who defined descriptive surveys as studies concerned with collecting data on, and describing in a systematic manner, the characteristic features or facts about a given population. The area of the study was Ebonyi State. Ebonyi State is located in the South-East Geo-political zone of Nigeria. The state has 13 Local Government Areas, (LGA), zoned into three (3) Education Zones which include: Abakaliki, Afikpo, and Onueke Education Zones. Ebonyi State shares geographical boundaries with Benue State in the North, Abia State in the south, Cross River state in the East; and Enugu State in the West. The population of the study comprised seven thousand, seven hundred and thirty-nine (7,739) teachers in 1,074 public primary schools in Ebonyi State. The sample for the study was 387 respondents made up of two hundred and nineteen (219) female and one hundred and sixty-eight (168) male teachers using Yaro Yamane formular, for finite population. The instrument for data collection for this study is a structured questionnaire designed by the researcher, titled 'Quality Assurance Practices of Public Primary Schools Headteachers Questionnaire (QAPPPSHQ). The instrument, QAPPPSHQ, which was designed to elicit information from the respondents, is divided into sections A and B. The instrument, QQAPHTQEPPS, was structured on a 4-point rating scale of Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE), and Very Low Extent (VLE) weighted 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively for positive items and the reverse for negative items. Three (3) copies of the questionnaire were validated by three (3) experts from Faculty of Education, Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. Out of the three (3) experts, two (2) experts were from the Department of Educational Foundations, Administration and Planning while one (1) expert was a Measurement and Evaluation specialist from Science Education Department. In all the overall reliability yielded 0.80. The instrument was adjudged reliable because each of the reliability coefficient obtained from the instrument was above 0.50 as indicated by Nworgu (2006), that any reliability score above 0.50 obtained after a reliability test shows that such instrument is reliable. In answering the research questions, data collected from respondents were analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 25) using mean and standard deviation. In answering the research questions, range values were adopted, that is 1.00-1.49 for Very Low Extent (VLE), 1.50 – 2.49 for Low Extent (LE), 2.50 – 3.49 for High Extent (HE) and 3.50 - 4. 00 for Very High Extent (VHE). In testing the hypotheses, t-test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypotheses were not rejected when the p-value was greater than or equal to significant level of 0.05 (p-value ≥0.05) and vice versa.

Results

Research Question 1: To what extent does funds sourcing serve as a quality assurance practice for quality education in public primary schools in Ebonyi State?

Data collected with items 1-6 were used to analyse this research question. The result collected on these items were presented in table 1 below.

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of the Extent Funds Sourcing Serve as a Quality Assurance Practice for Quality Education in Public Primary Schools

S/N	ITEM STATEMENT	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Decision
1	Headteacher ensuring limited resources are supplemented through external aids in order to facilitate learning.	360	2.23	0.55	LE
2	Headteacher invites the community to actively participate in supporting the school financially through fund raising for better school development.	360	2.23	0.66	LE
3	Headteacher seeks funds from NGOs in order to increase social mobility	360	2.26	0.72	LE
4	Headteacher creates sources for the generation of internal revenue through PTA for improved pupils' performance	360	2.50	0.50	HE
5	Headteacher seeks collaboration of industries in funding schools for effective school development	360	1.83	0.52	LE
6	Headteacher sources funds from philanthropist in order to enhance effective learning process	360	2.50	0.50	**HE**
	Grand mean		**2.25**		**LE**

Data in Table I shows that items 1, 2, 3 and 5 have mean scores of 2.23, 2.23, 2.26, and 1.83, respectively, which indicates that to a low extent (LE) do headteachers ensured that limited resources are supplemented through external aids in order to facilitates learning, source fund through fundraising, invites the community to actively participate in supporting the school financially through fund raising for better school development, diversifies their funding sources through seeking funds from NGO in order to increase social mobility and seeks collaboration of industries in funding schools for effective school development. Items 4 and 6 recorded mean scores of 2.50 each which shows to a high extent.

The grand mean for the cluster is 2.25; this is between 1.50 and 2.49 and corresponds to Low Extent (LE). Therefore, the headteachers adopt funding sourcing practice for quality education in public primary schools in Ebonyi State is to a low extent.

Research Question 2: To what extent does provision of infrastructural facilities serves as a quality assurance practice for quality education in public primary schools in Ebonyi State?

Items 7-13 were used to answer the research question on the extent provision of infrastructural facilities by headteachers serves as quality assurance practice for quality education in public primary schools. The results with respect to this research question are presented in table 2 below.

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of the Extent Infrastructural Facilities are Provided for Quality Education.

S/N	Item Statement	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Decision
7	Headteacher ensure adequate provision of conducive classrooms for teaching effectiveness	360	2.28	0.68	LE
8	Headteachers provision of adequate library facilities promotes research and learning effectiveness	360	2.23	0.68	LE
9	Headteacher ensures availability of enough recreational facilities for improving critical thinking skills	360	2.11	0.55	LE
10	Headteacher ensures adequate staff offices are provided for comfortable staff utilization	360	1.99	0.59	LE
11	Headteacher ensures the provision of sporting facilities for staff and pupils.	360	2.50	0.51	HE
12	Headteacher ensures the provision of assembly hall for better relationship.	360	2.02	0.70	LE
13	Headteacher assists in the provision of toilet facilities for better health outcomes.	360	2.10	0.63	LE
	Grand mean		**2.17**		**LE**

Table 2 reveals that items 7-13 except item 11 which are on headteacher ensuring adequate provision of conducive classrooms for teaching effectiveness, provision of adequate library facilities, promote research and learning effectiveness, ensures availability of enough recreational facilities for improving critical thinking skills, ensures provision of adequate staff offices for comfortable staff utilization, ensures provision of assembly hall for better relationship and assists in the provision of toilet facilities for better health outcomes had mean scores of 2.28, 2.23, 2.11, 1.99, 2.02 and 2.10 with a standard deviation of 0.68, 0.68, 0.55, 0.59,0.70 and 0.63 recorded low extent respectively while item 11 recorded high extent with mean score of 2.50. The mean value for the cluster is 2.17 which is below the criterion mean of 2.50 and the SD ranged between 0.55 to 0.70 which revolve around the central mean. This shows that infrastructure facilities are provided as quality assurance practices for quality primary school education in Ebonyi State is to a low extent.

Hypotheses

$H0_1$: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the extent funds sourcing serves as a quality assurance practice for quality education in public primary schools in Ebonyi State.

Teachers' view on the extent funds sourcing serves as a quality assurance practice for quality education in public primary schools were separated across gender and subjected to test of significance difference using t-test statistical tool. Summary of results were shown on Table 3 below.

Table 3: Summary of t-test of Difference on Extent Headteachers' Adopt Funds Sourcing Practices for Quality Education

Items	Gender	N	Mean	SD	Df	t	P-Value	Decision
1.	Male Teachers	159	2.24	0.54	358	0.360	0.719	Not Significant
	Female Teachers	201	2.22	0.56				
2.	Male Teachers	159	2.29	0.66	358	1.575	0.116	Not Significant
	Female Teachers	201	2.18	0.67				
3.	Male Teachers	159	2.32	0.79	358	1.254	0.211	Not Significant
	Female Teachers	201	2.22	0.67				
4.	Male Teachers	159	2.52	0.50	358	0.741	0.459	Not Significant
	Female Teachers	201	2.48	0.50				
5.	Male Teachers	159	1.78	0.55	358	1.526	0.128	Not Significant
	Female Teachers	201	1.87	0.49				
6	Male Teachers	159	2.52	0.50	358	0.741	0.459	Not Significant
	Female Teachers	201	2.48	0.50				

Significant @ P < 0.05

Result in Table 3 for all items reveals that the difference between the mean rating of male and female teachers on extent funds sourcing serves as a quality assurance practice for quality education in public primary schools in Ebonyi State is not significant because the p-value are greater than 0.05. Therefore, the hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers' response on the extent to which funds sourcing serve as a quality assurance practice for quality education in public primary schools is not rejected.

$H0_2$: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the extent provision of infrastructural facilities serves as a quality assurance practice for quality education in public primary schools in Ebonyi State.

Teachers view on the extent provision of infrastructural facilities serves as a quality assurance practice for quality education in public primary schools were separated based on gender and were subjected to test of significant difference using t-test analysis. Summary of results are shown on table 4 below:

Table 4: Summary of t-test of Difference on the Extent Provision of Infrastructural Facilities Serves for Quality Education.

Items	Gender	N	Mean	SD	Df	T	P-Value	Decision
7	Male Teachers	159	2.20	0.67	358	1.960	0.051	Not Significant
	Female Teachers	201	2.34	0.69				
8	Male Teachers	159	2.22	0.59	358	0.463	0.644	Not Significant
	Female Teachers	201	2.25	0.74				
9	Male Teachers	159	2.13	0.50	358	0.577	0.565	Not Significant
	Female Teachers	201	2.10	0.58				
10	Male Teachers	159	1.95	0.53	358	1.021	0.308	Not Significant
	Female Teachers	201	2.01	0.63				
11	Male Teachers	159	2.53	0.51	358	.958	0.339	Not Significant

	Female Teachers	201	2.48	0.51				
12	Male Teachers	159	1.98	0.64	358	1.049	0.295	Not Significant
	Female Teachers	201	2.05	0.75				
13	Male Teachers	159	2.01	0.62	358	2.341	0.020	Significant
	Female Teachers	201	2.20	0.67				

Source: Researcher's Field Work 2024,

Result on Table 4 revealed that the difference between the mean ratings of male and female teachers' response on the extent provision of infrastructural facilities serves as a quality assurance practice for quality education in public primary schools is not significant, except for item 13 which recorded significant with a p-value (0.02) that is less than 0.05. This indicates that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the extent to which provision of infrastructural facilities serves as a quality assurance practice for quality education in public primary schools. Hence, the hypothesis is not rejected.

Findings

The findings from this study are as follows:

1. Headteachers adoption of funds sourcing practices for quality education in public primary schools in Ebonyi State was to a low extent. The test of the hypothesis revealed no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the extent funds sourcing serve as a quality assurance practice for quality education in public primary schools.
2. Extent to which infrastructural facilities provided as quality assurance practices for quality education in public primary schools was to a low extent. Significant @ $P < 0.05$

The test of the hypothesis showed no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the extent provision of infrastructural facilities serves as a quality assurance practice for quality education in public primary schools.

Discussion

Result of the study indicated that to a low extent, headteachers ensure that limited resources are supplemented through external aids in order to facilitate learning, fundraising approach recorded low extent, thus applicable to: empowering the community to actively participate in supporting school financial needs for better school development, diversifying fund sources through seeking funds from NGO in order to increase social mobility and to collaborate with industries for funding schools for effective development, all these recorded low performance of headteachers in carrying out the administrative functions; while the result of the hypothesis revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the extent to which headteachers adopt funds sourcing practice for quality education in public primary schools.

The result is in line with the findings of Sunday (2021) who observed that

administrative burdens, bureaucratic processes, and lack of expertise in grant writing or fundraising can further hinder headteacher's efforts to adopting effective funding sourcing practice. Additionally, lack of awareness about alternative funding sources such as community partnerships and corporate sponsorships can hinder them also. The finding is also in support of Rimm – Kaufman & Chiu, (2017) who found that quality result is hindered on limited funding, as quality education are constraints on resources for educational materials, teacher development, and extracurricular activities. Consequently, this leads to stagnation in the quality of education delivered, as headteachers may not be able to implement innovative programs or improvements that enhance student outcomes.

The finding that headteachers adopted fund sourcing practice for quality education was to a low extent, underscores a significant gap in their strategic engagement with funding opportunities. This could be attributed to various factors, including lack of awareness or training regarding potential funding sources, restrictive policies, or limited access to networks that facilitate fundraising.

The result of the study showed that headteacher ensures adequate provision of conducive classrooms for teaching effectiveness, provides adequate library facilities, promotes research and learning effectiveness, ensures availability of enough recreational facilities for improving critical thinking skills, ensures adequate staff offices for comfortable staff utilization, ensures the provision of assembly hall for better relationship and assists in the provision of toilet facilities for better health outcomes to a low extent. While the test of the hypothesis indicated that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the extent to which provision of infrastructural facilities serves as quality assurance practice for quality education in public primary schools.

This finding is in agreement with Alabi, (2018) who asserted that low extent of infrastructural provision for quality education, indicates that schools may not meet the necessary physical standards for effective teaching and learning. Factors contributing to this limitation could include inadequate government funding, poor policy implementation, and inadequate community involvement in school development projects.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings revealed a nuanced picture of regarding quality education. While the adoption of fund sourcing practices and the provision of infrastructural facilities for quality education were both identified as being at a low extent. This indicated strong commitment to resource management; despite the challenges faced in sourcing additional funding for infrastructural development. This indicates that while there may be limitations in external funding and infrastructure, headteachers are actively engaging in practices that

enhance educational delivery within their existing framework. There are therefore, needs for improvement on headteacher's capacity in fund sourcing and infrastructural facilities provision. Addressing these gaps will be essential for fostering an enriched educational environment that meets the needs of pupils and educators alike.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made;

1. Universal Basic Education Board should organize training sessions for headteachers on effective fundraising strategies, grant writing and partnership development with local businesses an d community organizations.
2. The school headteachers should ensure that adequate infrastructural facilities are provided in every public primary school since it serves as quality assurance mechanism that ensures quality education.

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