

The Relationship between Quality Assurance Practices and Principals' Administrative Effectiveness in Public Secondary Schools in Cross River State, Nigeria: Implication for Resource Allocation

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Abstract

The study was conducted to examine quality assurance practices and principals' administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Cross River State, Nigeria: Implication for resource allocation. Specifically, the study investigated the relationship between instructional supervision, school leadership and principals' administrative effectiveness. Two null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The design adopted for the study was correlational research design. The population comprised 297 public secondary schools and principals in Cross River. Census method was used to select all the 297 secondary school principals for the study. The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire designed by the researcher titled: "Quality Assurance Practices and Principals' Administrative Effectiveness Questionnaire (QAPPAEQ)." It was structured on a four-point Likert scale: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). The validity of the instrument was done by three experts from the Department of Educational

Management and the Department of Educational Foundations (Measurement and Evaluation Unit) University of Calabar. The reliability of the instrument was determined using the Cronbach alpha method, yielding coefficient values of 0.78 and 0.83, respectively. The null hypotheses were tested at .05 level of significance using Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis. Findings of the study revealed that instructional supervision and school leadership statistically relate to principals' administrative effectiveness. Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that there is a statistically significant relationship between assurance practices and principals' administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Cross River State, Nigeria. This indicates that principals who exhibit strong leadership skills and actively supervise instructional activities tend to perform better in their administrative roles. To address this, the study recommends that the Ministry of Education implement ongoing professional development programs aimed at enhancing principals' leadership and supervision skills. These programs should focus on modern supervisory techniques, leadership strategies, and performance evaluation to enable principals to apply quality assurance practices effectively and improve their administrative performance.

Keywords: Quality Assurance Practices, Instructional Supervision, School Leadership, Principals', Administrative Effectiveness, Secondary Schools.

Introduction

Secondary education is a crucial stage that comes before tertiary education. In Nigeria, its main aim is to provide students with a comprehensive education, equipping them with the knowledge, skills, and competencies needed for academic and social success as they move on to higher academic or vocational pursuits. Society expects secondary schools to

effectively develop students in cognitive, affective, and psychomotor areas. Etor et al. (2019) emphasize that students should acquire sufficient knowledge and skills by the time they leave secondary school to make them either employable or eligible for higher education. The effectiveness of secondary school education heavily depends on the administrative competence of principals, who are the heads of these institutions.

Principals' administrative effectiveness is the capability of school leaders to efficiently manage and guide a school toward achieving its educational objectives and improving overall school outcomes. Effectiveness as a concept connotes the idea of an organization accomplishing its specific objectives (Ogonor&Omajuwa, 2020). It is also the ability to accomplish school objectives as stated in the NPE (FGN 2013). Administrative effectiveness can be determined by many indicators such as the ability of school administrators to allocate resources, offer instructional leadership, enforce policies, uphold discipline, and promote a conducive learning environment. It can also be seen by their skills in planning, decision-making, and collaboration with staff, teachers, parents, and the community to advance the school's mission. Principals' administrative effectiveness is crucial in boosting academic achievement, and improving teacher retention and development. Effective administrators also strive to create an atmosphere conducive to teaching and learning. Furthermore, they actively engage with stakeholders, such as parents and the community, fostering collaboration and support for the school's objectives, all of which are essential for the school's overall success and seamless functioning (Bush & Glover, 2020; Leithwood& Sun, 2021; Mulford, 2019; Robinson et al., 2020; Bhengu & Naicker, 2021).

In Nigeria, secondary school administrators face myriads of challenges that hinder their effectiveness. Issues of

poor funding, deteriorating infrastructure, and inadequate human capital development are a few of these problems. Obona et al. (2021) observed that many secondary schools suffer from a shortage of qualified and competent teachers, largely because these teachers rarely have opportunities to attend professional development programs or teaching-related conferences. Ahmed (2003) in Olanrewaju (2016) mentioned that teaching and learning often occur in unfavorable environments. Furthermore, Obona et al. (2021) lamented the lack of emphasis on teacher development on modern teaching methods, skills, and strategies, which is crucial for effective teaching. This has led to broader societal problems such as unemployment and a declining economy (Babalola in Ugwu, 2018).

The situation in many public schools in Cross River State does not seem to enhance the attainment of the goals secondary education system. In most of the schools, the structures are dilapidated, facilities are poorly maintained. This forced teachers and students to work in harsh conditions as a result the teachers exhibit a negative attitude towards their duties generally. They are also among the factors responsible for the increase in cases of examination malpractices and poor performance of students academically. School administrators like such principals have enormous responsibilities on their shoulder. Among these is quality assurance. Quality assurance can enhance school effectiveness. This highlight the need for principals to be committed to ensuring effective quality assurance practices.

The aim of quality assurance practices is to strengthen input, process, and output processes. Quality assurance is defined by Borahan and Ziarati as cited in Ogbonna (2012) as the planned and systematic actions necessary to ensure that a product or service meets established quality standards. According to Obona et al (2024), quality assurance involves meeting standards in resource usage and management, ensuring

that the output meets expectations. This approach helps identify potential issues in the educational process. There are various dimensions of quality assurance practices. Some of these according to Adewale and Odigwe (2019) are, discipline, school climate, and school-community partnership programs. This study, however, examined two facets of quality assurance practices namely instructional supervision and school leadership.

Instructional leadership encompasses the practices and actions of school leaders, including principals and educational administrators, that directly impact the quality of teaching and learning in a school. Its primary goal is to boost student achievement by refining instructional practices, providing support for teachers, and fostering a positive learning environment. According to Ogonor and Omajuwa (2020), instructional supervision involves interactions among individuals aimed at improving teachers' instructional practices, which in turn enhances student learning and fosters both personal and professional growth for teachers. Supervision is crucial for school administrators to maintain performance standards and achieve positive results. It is a key responsibility of principals to improve classroom instruction and ensure overall school effectiveness.

School leadership encompasses the practices by which leaders, including principals and administrators, guide and manage schools to facilitate effective teaching and learning. This involves setting a clear vision and direction, fostering a positive school culture, and implementing policies that enhance student achievement. Key elements of school leadership include establishing an inspiring mission, strategic planning, instructional leadership to improve teaching practices, fostering collaboration among staff and the community, using data for informed decision-making, maintaining open communication with all stakeholders, and promoting cultural competence to

support diverse learners. Overall, effective school leadership is crucial for creating a productive educational environment and ensuring student success. The leadership qualities of a school administrator can significantly impact the efficacy of the school system, as principals serve as role models for staff, providing guidance. Arop et al. (2019) note that the leadership traits of secondary school administrators or principals can either enhance or hinder teachers' job performance, as the actions of the school head can either facilitate or obstruct the school's progress. The success of an organization heavily relies on effective leadership.

Instructional supervision and principal's administrative effectiveness

Instructional leadership is centered on the idea that effective school leaders actively promote and support high-quality instruction, which is critical for student success. No organization can function effectively without supervision. The study by Oguejiofor (2023) explored the relationship between principals' school supervision and effective school administration in public secondary schools in Rivers State. Guided by two research questions and hypotheses, the research employed a correlational design, involving a population of 286 principals, with a sample of 143 selected through simple random sampling. Data collection utilized two validated instruments: the Principals' Supervision Scale (PSS) and the Effective School Administration Scale (ESAS), which demonstrated internal consistency reliability coefficients of 0.78 and 0.83, respectively. Linear regression analysis addressed the research questions, while a t-test was applied to test the null hypotheses at a 0.05 significance level. The findings indicated a significant relationship between principals' supervision and effective school administration in public secondary schools in Rivers State.

Shuaibu (2016) found that supervision is crucial for achieving organizational goals and maintaining educational standards. Similarly, Torukwein and Lesi (2017) revealed a positive correlation between principals' supervisory techniques and teachers' job performance in Rivers State public secondary schools. Onyeike and Nwosu (2018) emphasized that instructional supervision is a key tool for managing teaching and learning, showing that principals' administrative and supervisory roles positively affected teachers' job effectiveness in Rivers State.

Alozie, Amadi, and Wey-Amaewhule's (2023) study investigated how principals' supervisory roles impact the effective administration of public senior secondary schools in ONELGA and Obio/Akpor Local Government Areas in Rivers State. Using a descriptive research design, a sample of 365 teachers and principals was selected from a population of 1,713 through multi-stage and random sampling. Data were collected via a 20-item questionnaire, validated and tested for reliability. Analysis using mean, standard deviation, and z-test revealed that principals' roles in monitoring, coordinating, leadership, and counseling significantly contribute to the effective administration of these schools.

Ogonor and Omajuwa (2020) also investigated the relationship between principals' supervisory roles and school effectiveness in Delta State, Nigeria. Using a correlational research design with a sample of 43 principals, the study revealed a high level of school effectiveness linked to effective supervisory practices. A positive correlation was found between principals' supervisory performance and school effectiveness. In Tanzania, Dafa, Muteti, and Mandila (2020) examined the effectiveness of school heads in practicing instructional supervision in Ilala Municipality. Data were collected through questionnaires and structured interviews, and analyzed using SPSS. The findings, presented through

frequencies and percentages, indicated that instructional supervision by school heads was perceived positively by teachers as being effective.

School leadership and principal's administrative effectiveness

Effective school leadership is crucial for fostering a positive school culture, motivating staff, and ultimately improving student outcomes. It plays a significant role in shaping the educational experience and ensuring that schools meet the needs of their students and communities. Opatunde and Oredein (2023) examined the relationship between principals' leadership styles and administrative effectiveness in public senior secondary schools in Oyo State, Nigeria. The study used a mixed-method approach, combining surveys and interviews, and analyzed data from 629 principals and 4,204 teachers. Results showed that principals exhibited a high level of administrative effectiveness, particularly in planning, coordinating, and supervising school activities, with overall weighted means of 3.47, 3.48, and 3.39, respectively. The findings highlight the significant impact of principals' leadership styles on fostering an environment that supports effective teaching and learning.

Omar et al (2021) explored the effectiveness of principal leadership practices in secondary schools in Niger State, Nigeria. The study surveyed 154 principals, 269 heads of departments, and 25 staff members from the Secondary Education Board. The findings indicated a high level of principal leadership practices and school effectiveness in the state. Multiple regression analysis showed that leadership practices accounted for 14% ($R^2 = 0.14$) of the variation in school effectiveness. In another study, Alzubi (2021) investigated the relationship between principals' leadership qualities and their effectiveness in performing administrative tasks, as perceived by secondary school teachers in the Irbid

Governorate. Using a sample of 120 teachers, the study revealed a significant positive correlation between principals' leadership qualities and their effectiveness in administrative tasks. Okere and Wike (2023) examined the administration of secondary education during economic decline and its impact on teachers' effectiveness in Rivers State. The study involved 16,680 teachers across 247 public secondary schools, with a sample of 613 teachers selected through stratified random sampling. Data was collected using the "Administration of Secondary Education in a Dwindling Economy Questionnaire" and the "Teachers' Effectiveness in Secondary Schools in Rivers State Questionnaire." The study found significant relationships between remuneration, promotion, learning facilities, and teachers' effectiveness in secondary schools in Rivers State.

Ossai (2021) investigated the relationship between principals' administrative strategies and students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Delta North Senatorial District, Delta State. Using a descriptive research design, the study sampled 200 teachers from 20 randomly selected secondary schools. Data were collected through a validated and reliable questionnaire titled Principals' and Administrative Strategies Questionnaire (PASQ). One research question and four hypotheses guided the study. Results were analyzed using simple percentages and Pearson's product-moment correlation. The findings revealed a significant relationship between principals' administrative strategies and students' academic performance.

The literature review indicates that numerous studies have explored various aspects of quality assurance indicators and school effectiveness. Based on the findings of these studies, a relationship between quality assurance indicators and administrative effectiveness can be inferred. However, certain gaps were identified, which this study seeks to address. Most

of the reviewed studies were conducted in regions outside of Cross River State or in contexts significantly different from it. Notably, no prior research in Cross River State has examined the relationship between quality assurance practices and principals' administrative effectiveness, particularly in relation to resource allocation, using the same approach and variables as this study. Therefore, this research was undertaken to fill that gap in the literature.

Statement of the problem

Effective administration in public secondary schools is characterized by efficient resource management, clear communication, collaborative decision-making, and a well-organized system that fosters academic excellence. When properly implemented, effective administration benefits teachers by providing them with necessary support and professional development opportunities, enhances staff productivity through streamlined operations, and improves students' learning outcomes by ensuring a conducive educational environment. Such leadership leads to a culture of accountability and continuous improvement within the school system.

However, it was observed that most public secondary schools in Cross River State suffer from ineffective administration. This is evident in poor resource allocation, weak staff coordination, lack of motivation among teachers, and a declining standard of education. The students, too, are affected by this situation, as they face inadequate learning facilities and inconsistent instructional quality. These administrative shortcomings have resulted in a drop in academic performance, low morale among staff, and frequent disputes between school management and employees. Despite various efforts by the state government to address these issues, including increased supervision, payment of monthly salaries and incentives, the problem persists.

Quality assurance practices, which focus on systematic monitoring and evaluation of educational processes, may provide a solution to this ongoing problem. Therefore, this study is set to investigate whether there is a relationship between quality assurance practices and principals' administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Cross River State, Nigeria.

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of the study was to examine relationship between quality assurance practices and principals' administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Cross River State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to investigate the relationship between:

1. Instructional supervision and principal's administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Cross River State.
2. School leadership and principal's administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Cross River State.

Statement of hypothesis

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study.

1. Instructional supervision does not significantly relate to principal's administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Cross River State.
2. School leadership does significantly relate to principal's administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Cross River State.

Significance of the Study

The findings can assist school administrators in pinpointing areas for improvement, enabling data-driven decisions to

enhance education quality. This could include implementing effective strategies, optimizing resources, and fostering a positive school environment. For policymakers, the insights can guide the development of better educational policies, particularly in resource allocation, curriculum design, and teacher training. Researchers may also use the results as a basis for further studies on quality assurance and its impact on educational outcomes.

Research methodology

The study adopted correlational research design, and study area was Cross River State. The population comprised 297 public secondary schools and principals in Cross River. Census method was used to select all the 297 secondary school principals for the study. The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire designed by the researchers titled: "Quality Assurance Practices and Principals' Administrative Effectiveness Questionnaire (QAPPAEQ)." The validity of the instrument was confirmed by three experts from the Department of Educational Management and the Department of Educational Foundations (Measurement and Evaluation Unit) University of Calabar. The reliability of the instrument was determined using the Cronbach alpha method, yielding coefficient values of 0.81 and 0.87, respectively.

To collect data, the instruments were administered to the respondents in the respective schools by the researchers with the help of 4 trained research assistants. To do that, the research team visited each of the schools and sought for permission from the school authorities. Next, the respondents were properly informed about the relevance of the exercise and the need to provide sincere responses to the instruments. The respondents were equally assured that all the data supplied is for research purpose and shall be treated with total confidentiality. They were advised to willingly respond to the items there-in and not to share opinion with anyone. At the end

of the process, copies of the instruments were all retrieved from the respondents.

The collected data were prepared on a person by item matrix using Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. The scoring of the questionnaire was done as follows: For positively worded items, the scale used to score each response was Strongly Agree (SA) 4 points, Agree (A) 3 points, Disagree (D) 2 points, Strongly Disagree (SD) 1 point. For negatively worded items, the scale used to score each response was reversed as follows: Strongly Agree (SA) 1 points, Agree (A) 2 points, Disagree (D) 3 points, Strongly Disagree (SD) 4 point. To analyze the data, each hypothesis used for the study was re-stated, both the independent and dependent variables were identified. Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis was adopted in testing all the hypotheses at .05 level of significance and the results are presented in tables.

Results

Hypothesis one

Instructional supervision does not significantly relate to principal's administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Cross River State. The two variables in this hypothesis are instructional supervision and principal's administrative effectiveness. The result of the data analysis is presented in table 1. Table 1 showed the correlation coefficients between instructional supervision and principal's administrative effectiveness. The correlation coefficient was statistically significant for principals' administrative effectiveness ($r = .70, p < .05$). Since $p(.000)$ is less than $p(.05)$, hypothesis one is rejected in terms of principal's administrative effectiveness. The result of the analysis implied that there is a statistical positive significant relationship between instructional

supervision and principal's administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Cross River State, Nigeria.

Table 1: Pearson product moment correlation analysis of the relationship between instructional supervision and principal's administrative effectiveness (n=297)

Variables	$\bar{X}$	S.D	r	Sig.
Instructional supervision	19.80	3.23		
Principal's administrative effectiveness	19.18	3.18	.70*	.000

*Significant at $p < .05$ $df=295$

Hypothesis two

School leadership does significantly relate to principal's administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Cross River State. The two variables in this hypothesis are school leadership and principal's administrative effectiveness. The result of the data analysis is presented in table 2. Table 2 showed the correlation coefficients between school leadership and principal's administrative effectiveness. The correlation coefficient was statistically significant for principals' administrative effectiveness ($r = .80$, $p < .05$). Since $p(.000)$ is less than $p(.05)$, hypothesis two is rejected in terms of administrative effectiveness. The result of the analysis implied that there is a statistical positive significant relationship between school leadership and principal's administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Cross River State, Nigeria.

Table 2: Pearson product moment correlation analysis of the relationship between **school leadership** and principal’s administrative effectiveness (n=297)

Variables	$\bar{X}$	S.D	r	Sig.
School leadership	19.20	4.37		
Principal’s administrative effectiveness	19.18	3.18	.80*	.000

*Significant at $p<.05$ df=295

Discussion of findings

The result of hypothesis one indicated that instructional supervision statistically relatesto principal’s administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Cross River State. One possible reason could be that effective instructional supervision provides principals with the necessary feedback and support to enhance teaching quality and learning outcomes. This ongoing evaluation allows principals to identify areas needing improvement, facilitate professional development for teachers, and foster a collaborative school culture, ultimately leading to better administrative practices and student success. The implication of this finding is that enhancing instructional supervision practices should be a priority for educational administrators and policymakers. By investing in training and resources for instructional supervision, schools can empower principals to take a more active role in promoting effective teaching and learning. This, in turn, can lead to improved educational outcomes, increased teacher satisfaction, and a more positive school environment overall.

The finding aligns with that of Oguejiofor (2023) who explored the relationship between principals' school supervision and effective school administration in public

secondary schools in Rivers State. Guided by two research questions and hypotheses, the research employed a correlational design, involving a population of 286 principals, with a sample of 143 selected through simple random sampling. The findings indicated a significant relationship between principals' supervision and effective school administration in public secondary schools in Rivers State. It agrees with that of Shuaibu (2016) who found that supervision is crucial for achieving organizational goals and maintaining educational standards. The findings is similar to that of Onyeike and Nwosu (2018) who emphasized that instructional supervision is a key tool for managing teaching and learning, showing that principals' administrative and supervisory roles positively affected teachers' job effectiveness in Rivers State. It is in tandem with Dafa, Muteti, and Mandila (2020) who examined the effectiveness of school heads in practicing instructional supervision in Ilala Municipality. Data were collected through questionnaires and structured interviews, and analyzed using SPSS. The findings, presented through frequencies and percentages, indicated that instructional supervision by school heads was perceived positively by teachers as being effective.

The result of hypothesis two indicated that school leadership statistically relates to principals' administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Cross River State. This is possibly because principals in these secondary schools adopt excellent leadership styles that enable them to perform administrative tasks efficiently and effectively, thus contributing to the attainment of school goals and objectives. This suggests that leadership qualities are key determinants of principals' administrative effectiveness in secondary schools.

The study finding is in agreement with that of Opatunde and Oredein (2023) who examined the relationship between principals' leadership styles and administrative effectiveness in public senior secondary schools in Oyo State, Nigeria. The findings highlight the significant impact of principals' leadership styles on fostering an environment that supports effective teaching and learning. It is similar to that of Ossai (2021) who investigated the relationship between principals' administrative strategies and students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Delta North Senatorial District, Delta State. Using a descriptive research design, the study sampled 200 teachers from 20 randomly selected secondary schools. The findings revealed a significant relationship between principals' administrative strategies and students' academic performance. The finding is in tandem with the findings of Okere and Wike (2023) who examined the administration of secondary education during economic decline and its impact on teachers' effectiveness in Rivers State. The study found significant relationships between remuneration, promotion, learning facilities, and teachers' effectiveness in secondary schools in Rivers State.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, the study concluded that there is a statistically significant relationship between quality assurance practices, particularly in the form of instructional supervision, and principals' administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Cross River State. This highlights that principals who demonstrate strong leadership skills and consistently engage in meaningful supervision of instructional activities are

more likely to excel in their administrative responsibilities. Effective instructional supervision serves a dual purpose: it not only improves the quality of teaching and learning but also nurtures a positive and supportive school culture. This, in turn, results in better student outcomes and a more cohesive educational environment. Moreover, maintaining high standards in instructional practices and providing consistent, constructive oversight are essential for successful school leadership. These practices help ensure that teaching methods align with educational goals, while also supporting the professional growth of staff members.

Implication for Resource Allocation

Understanding the relationship between quality assurance practices and administrative effectiveness especially instructional supervision and evaluation, are vital in improving principals' administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools. In Cross River State, the link between these practices and administrative efficiency has significant implications for resource allocation. Prioritizing investment in professional development programs for principals, providing advanced supervisory tools, and ensuring adequate human resources are key areas for resource allocation. These efforts enable principals to supervise instruction more effectively, manage administrative tasks efficiently, and enhance overall school performance.

Additionally, resources should be allocated to improving school infrastructure, which supports a conducive learning environment, and funding continuous quality monitoring through periodic evaluations and external audits. Collaborative efforts between stakeholders such as parents,

teachers, and educational bodies should also be supported, as this fosters a comprehensive approach to school management. By strategically directing resources towards these areas, public secondary schools can better implement quality assurance practices, leading to more effective administration and improved educational outcomes.

Recommendations

The study recommended that:

1. The Ministry of Education in Cross River State should implement ongoing professional development programs to improve principals' leadership and supervision skills. These programs should focus on modern techniques in supervision, leadership, and performance evaluation, equipping principals to apply quality assurance practices effectively and enhancing their administrative performance.
2. Educational authorities should allocate resources to provide schools with advanced supervisory tools like digital platforms for classroom observation, teacher performance tracking, and data analysis. These tools will help principals monitor instructional quality more effectively and make informed decisions to improve school administration and academic outcomes.
3. The government and school management boards need to invest in improving school infrastructure, including classrooms, offices, and learning facilities. A well-maintained environment will help principals perform their administrative duties, including effective instructional supervision, contributing to better educational outcomes.

Contribution to knowledge

This study contributes to knowledge by highlighting the critical role that effective leadership and supervision play in enhancing school administration and improving educational outcomes. Additionally, it emphasizes the importance of strategic resource allocations such as investing in professional development, supervisory tools, and school infrastructure in enabling principals to implement quality assurance measures effectively. By providing empirical evidence of these connections, the study offers valuable insights to policymakers and educational stakeholders on how targeted resource investments can strengthen school management and improve overall performance.

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