



## **Assessing Principals' Quality Assurance Strategies in Osun State Secondary Schools, Nigeria**

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This paper examined principals' quality assurance strategies in secondary schools in Osun State, Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select 10 male and 10 female principals, and 190 male and 190 female teachers. 'Secondary School Principal Quality Assurance Questionnaire' (SSPQAQ) and 'Students' Academic Performance Checklist' (SAPC) were used to collect data for the study. The instruments were validated, and test-retest method used to determine their reliabilities yielded 0.74 and 0.71 respectively. One main hypothesis and five operational hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used for data analysis. The study further showed that principals' gender and school location had no significant impact on students' academic performance. The implication of the findings is that 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. It is against this background that the paper concludes that quality assurance is a function for all stakeholders within the school system. Because it is a management function, the principal should coordinate teachers and other staff members to see that their activities are geared towards ensuring quality in the schools. As part of quality assurance strategies, the principal should recognize the philosophy of education in all aspects of school activities.

**Keywords:** Principals' Quality Assurance Strategies, Students' Academic Performance, Secondary School, Principals' Gender, School Location.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Concern about the quality of secondary education is on increase in Nigeria. It comes at a time of growing awareness of mass failure of senior secondary school students in public examination conducted by West Africa Examination Council (WAEC) and National Examination Council (NECO). Growing complaints by parents, heads of tertiary education institutions and employers of graduates of this level of education indicate that secondary school graduates are poorly prepared for the challenges ahead.

Quality assurance relates to the achievement of educational programme standards which are established by institutions, professional organizations, and government. Quality assurance mechanisms are the processes by which the achievement of these standards is measured. It is important to note that there is the absence of a common, formal and national system of accreditation for secondary education providers in Nigeria as each state controls its secondary school system. This makes it difficult to obtain a clear picture of how quality is being assured at both institutional and programme levels in the country. However, in Osun State, the responsibility of controlling and coordinating secondary schools is a function of the Teaching Service Commission (TESCOM) which implements policy formulated by the State Ministry of Education on quality assurance. All matters relating to ensuring quality places the school principal at the focal point. This is because quality assurance is a management function and the principal occupies a central position in the management of the school and therefore has responsibility for ensuring quality in the school. In fact, Ojo (1999) elucidated that school administration involves managing, administering the curriculum and teaching, pastoral care, discipline, assessment, evaluation and examinations, resource allocation, costing, planning, staff appraisal of relationship with the community, use of practical skills necessary for sustaining the policies of an organisation such as decision-making, negotiation, bargaining, communication, conflict handling, running meetings and so on. All these tasks according to Ekundayo (2010), can be reduced to the following: planning, organising, directing, supervising, and evaluating the school system. These are activities of the school principal who must ensure that they are all directed towards efficient and effective teaching and learning in the school so as to be able to produce quality outputs. To this end, a secondary school principal is seen as the one who strives to ensure that quality education is being provided in secondary schools. It is against this background that this study was carried out to examine the ability of the school principal to adopt quality assurance strategies in the achievement of the objectives for which secondary schools were established in Osun State.

#### **CONTEXT AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Quality, according to Webster's Seventh Collegiate Dictionary (1986), is a peculiar and essential character of an inherent feature; a degree of excellence; a distinguish attribute. Quality is concerned with how good or bad a product is. It is about the standard of something when compared with other things. It therefore presupposes that there is a standard set against which the outcome is compared (Ekundayo, 2010). Jaiyeoba and Atanda (2003) posited that quality is synonymous with standard, efficiency, excellence, relevance and worthiness. When applied to education, it is the success with which an institution provides educational environment which enables students to effectively achieve worthwhile learning goals including appropriate academic standard. Babalola (2004) sees quality assurance in education as a proactive means of ensuring quality of inputs, teaching-learning process, academic achievement of pupils and school environment before things get out of hands. In the same vein, Materu (2007) stated that quality assurance is a planned and systematic review process of an institution or program to determine whether or not acceptable standards of education, scholarship, and infrastructure are being met, maintained and enhanced. Quality assurance therefore has

to do with compliance with standards set in ensuring that schools achieve the objectives for which they are established. This is why Eshiwani (1993) and Digolo (2003) observed that the maintenance of factors such as curriculum, instructional materials, equipment, school management, teacher training and resources are some of the indicators of quality education. In addition Gogo (2002) reported that low performance could be attributed to inadequate finance which resulted to inadequate supply of teaching and learning materials and equipment. Olembo (1992) also suggested that provision of quality education requires that head teachers be involved in translation of education policies and objectives into viable programmes within the school; while Shiundu and Omulando (1992) emphasized that on a daily basis head teachers have the responsibility to ensure that teachers implement the set curriculum and that learning activities take place. Among the roles of a principal according to Ekundayo,(2010) is that of a curriculum and instructional supervisor which include obtaining and making available for teachers all educational information; visiting classrooms often to observe his teachers teaching; inspecting teachers' lesson notes and class registers, diaries and teaching aids and offering professional advice for their improvement. Effective performance of these duties could be influenced by a principal's gender and style of administration. In a study conducted by Clement (2010), it was found that female principals tend to be innovative, caring and democratic, while male principals were found to be independent and decisive in their styles of administration. He concluded that female principals are likely to be more effective. This implies that female principals are likely to impact more positively towards greater academic achievement.

Students' academic performance is a yardstick for determining the quality of education and this is influenced by many factors. Berhanu (2011) conducted a study on factors influencing students' academic performance in a metropolitan city of Pakistan. He found out that parents' education and socio-economic factors, and students' gender could affect the overall achievement of students. With the persistent poor academic performance of secondary school students in Nigeria today, there is a need to identify strategies which secondary schools principals need to adopt in their role as quality assurance agents in order to bring about improved performance in national examinations. One major way to control mass failure of secondary schools students in public examination is for the school principals to be alive to their responsibilities which are geared towards ensuring quality in the school system. This is because no matter the amount of money invested in the school system, if there is nobody to coordinate it for the achievement of the purpose for which schools are set up, then the investment becomes a waste. Premised on the above, this study, therefore aimed at examining possible strategies that could be put in place by the school principal to provide quality secondary education in Osun State.

### **Purpose of the Study**

This study was designed to achieve the following objectives:

1. To examine the opinions of respondents on the application of quality assurance strategies by secondary school principals.

2. To determine the application of quality assurance strategies between male and female principals.
3. To examine the application of quality assurance between public and private secondary school principals in Osun State.
4. To examine the relationship between principal's quality assurance strategies and student's academic performance in secondary schools in Osun State.

### **Research Hypotheses**

In order to guide this study, one main hypothesis and five operational hypotheses were formulated.

#### **Main Hypothesis**

Principals' application of supervisory, administrative and in-house capacity building strategies has no significant influence on quality of education in Osun State secondary schools.

#### **Operational Hypotheses**

1. There is no significant difference in the application of quality assurance strategies between male and female principals in Osun State secondary schools.
2. There is no significant difference in the application of quality assurance strategies between public and private secondary school principals in Osun State.
3. There is no significant relationship between principals' application of quality assurance strategies and students' academic performance in Osun State secondary schools.
4. There is no significant relationship among principals' gender, quality assurance strategies and students' academic performance in Osun State secondary schools.
5. There is no significant relationship among school location, quality assurance strategies and students' academic performance in Osun State secondary schools.

### **METHOD**

#### **Research Design**

The design of this study was basically correlation type of descriptive survey. It involved manipulation of independent variable to find its effect or outcome on the dependent variable.

#### **Sample**

The population for the study comprised of the secondary schools in Osun State, Nigeria. The target population were the senior secondary schools in the State. These schools cut across the three geo-political zones of the State. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select 10 male and 10 female principals, and 190 male and 190 female teachers, making 400 in all.

### Research Instrument

Two researcher-constructed instruments were used to gather data. These are “Secondary School Principal Quality Assurance Questionnaire” (SSPQAQ) and “Students’ Academic Performance Checklist” (SAPC). The SSPQAQ was a 16-item questionnaire that contain various strategies employed by principals in order to ensure quality in the school system. SAPC on the other hand was used to collect West Africa Examination Council’s (WAEC) Senior Secondary Certificate Examination results between 2009 to 2011. Both instruments were validated. Their reliability coefficients, determined through test-retest method, yielded .74 and .71 respectively. These coefficients show that the instruments could measure the intended traits. The research instruments were personally administered on the respondents by the researchers. Usable returns from the respondents were 325 copies of the instruments. Percentage, linear regression, Pearson Product Moment Correlation and t-test statistics were used to test the main and five operational hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

### FINDINGS

#### Main Hypothesis

Principals’ application of supervisory, administrative and in-house capacity building strategies has no significant influence on quality of education in Osun State secondary schools.

Table 1: Responses on Principals’ Supervisory Strategies

<i>Questionnaire Items</i>	<i>Yes (%)</i>	<i>No (%)</i>
Principal visits teachers to observe their process of teaching so as to render professional assistance	44.9	55.1
Principal supervises practical lessons	88.3	11.7
Principal supervises co-curricular activities	5.5	94.5
Principals supervises discipline	16.0	84
The Principal ensures the welfare of students	28.6	71.4
The principal carries out office supervision	28	72
The principal checks school records	78.7	21.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>41.4</b>	<b>58.6</b>

Results in Table 1 show that secondary school principals were rated low (41.4%) in carrying out supervisory functions while 58.6% of the respondents rated them “Yes” for not carrying out supervisory strategies.

Table 2: Responses on Principals’ Administrative Strategies

<i>Questionnaire Items</i>	<i>Yes (%)</i>	<i>No (%)</i>
Relates with host community for the provision of instructional materials	73.5	26.5
Provision of students personnel services	75.7	24.3
Provision of counselling services	76.3	23.7
Enjoins senior staff to duly supervise the activities of the students in the school and report back to him	98.2	1.8
The principal ensures proper maintenance of school plant	86.1	13.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>18</b>

Table 2 indicates that secondary schools principals in Osun State adopted various administrative strategies to ensure quality in the schools. This is because 82% of the

respondents agree that secondary school principals put in place some administrative strategies that ensure quality within the system in the State while 18% had negative opinions on this issue.

Table 3: Responses on Principals' In-house Capacity Building Strategies

<i>Questionnaire Items</i>	<i>Yes (%)</i>	<i>No (%)</i>
The principal organises at least once in a week a seminar/workshop to educate teachers on their expected roles in the school	36.6	63.4
The principal organises seminar/workshop for teachers to acquire new skills that make them improve on the job	36	64
The principal makes it compulsory for teachers to attend in-house seminar/workshop	22.4	77.6
The in-house capacity building programme is an avenue to gather information on the problem of teaching and learning in the school	16.9	83.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>72</b>

Table 3 shows that 72% of the respondents indicated that principals did not put in place any strategies on in-house capacity building for teachers while 28% agree with this.

**Research Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant difference in the application of quality assurance strategies between male and female principals in Osun State Secondary Schools

Table 4: Application of Quality Assurance Strategies by Male and Female Principals in Osun State Secondary Schools

<i>Responses</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t-value</i>	<i>P-Value</i>
Female Principals' Application of Quality Assurance Strategies	192	93.06	9.01		
Male Principals' Application of Quality Assurance Strategies	133	90.83	11.39	1.97	.049

\*\*p<0.05

Table 4 shows that there is a significant difference in the application of quality assurance strategies between male and female principals in Osun state secondary schools,  $t(323) = 1.97$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , as shown in Table 4.

**Research Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant difference in the application of quality assurance strategies between public and private school principals in Osun State secondary schools.

Table 5: Application of Quality Assurance Strategies by Public and Private Schools Principals in Osun State Secondary Schools

<i>Variable</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t-value</i>	<i>P-Value</i>
Private Schools	184	92.90	8.42		
Public Schools	141	91.17	11.89	1.54	.125

\*\*p>0.05

Table 5 shows that there is no significant difference in the application of quality assurance strategies between public and private secondary schools principals,  $t(223) = 1.54$ ,  $p < 0.05$ .

**Research Hypothesis 3:** There is no significant relationship between principal's quality assurance strategies and students' academic performance in Osun State Secondary Schools.

Table 6: Relationship between Principal Quality Assurance Strategies and Students' Academic Performance in Osun State Secondary Schools

Variable	N	Mean	SD	t-value	P-Value
Principal Quality Assurance Strategies	325	92.15	10.10	0.19	.000
Students' Academic Performance	325	57.55	8.78		

\*\* $P < 0.05$

Table 6 shows that there is a significant relationship between principals' quality assurance strategies and students' academic performance in Osun State secondary schools,  $r(648) = 0.19$ ,  $p < 0.05$ .

**Research Hypothesis 4:** There is no significant relationship among principals' gender, quality assurance strategies, and students' academic performance in Osun State secondary schools

Table 7: Regression results for Principals' Gender, Quality Assurance Strategies and Students Academic Performance in Osun State Secondary Schools

Variable	FC	FT	R	P-Value	B
Principal Quality Assurance Strategy	6.38	.38	.001	19.1	
Principal Gender				.664	.02

In Table 7, students' academic performance was regressed on principal quality assurance strategies and principal gender. These two predictor accounted for 4% of the variance in the academic performance,  $R^2 = .038$ ,  $F(6.384) = 6.384$ ,  $< .05$ . Principal quality assurance strategy ( $b = .19$ ,  $p = .001$ ) showed a significant effect on students' academic performance while principal gender ( $b = .02$ ,  $p = .664$ ) did not.

**Research Hypothesis 5:** There is no significant relationship between school location, principal quality assurance strategies, and students' academic performance in Osun State secondary schools

Table 8: Regression results for School Location, Quality Assurance Strategies and Students Academic Performance in Osun State Secondary Schools

Variable	FC	FT	R	P-Value	B
Principal Quality Assurance Strategy	7.13	4.2	.001	.19	
School Location				.203	.07

In Table 8, students' academic performance was regressed on principal quality assurance strategies and school location. These two predictor accounted for 4% of the variance in the academic performance ( $R^2 = .042$ ),  $F(7.132)$ ,  $p = .001$ . Principal quality assurance strategy ( $b = .19$ ,  $p = .001$ ) demonstrated a significant effect on student' academic performance while school location ( $b = .07$ ,  $p = .203$ ) did not.

## **DISCUSSION**

Table 1 showed that 88.3% of the respondents indicated that principals supervise practical classes in the school while 78.7% of the respondents indicated that the principals check school records. This might be because the supervisory functions constitute major functions of a principal. He must go round to see things for himself even if he wants to delegate other functions. In carrying out this, he must ensure that all aspects of the school system are given adequate attention.

In table 2, Principals were seen to be adopting administrative strategies to ensure quality in the school. Their duties include relating with the host community for provision of instructional materials (73.5%), provision of students personnel services (75.7); provision of counseling services (76.3%), delegation of authority (98.2%) and ensuring maintenance of school plants (86.1). These indicate that the secondary school principals attached importance to performance of administrative duties in the schools. Thus, the objectives for which the schools were established would be effectively achieved.

Table 3 indicated that principals have not been organising seminar or workshop in their schools. These programmes are meant to increase professional competence of teachers, which is a role secondary school principals must play to ensure quality in the schools. Therefore, the principal must not wait until the Ministry of Education and the Teaching Service Commission organise this kind of programme for their schools. The principal must use the little resources within the school to carry out this function because it affects positively the quality of teachers.

The results presented in table 4 implies that the ability of male and female principals to implement quality assurance strategies in Osun State secondary schools differs with female principals having the capability to employ more strategies of quality assurance than male principals. This is in line with the findings of Clement (2010). He stated that gender is more likely to affect the success of an organization in the twenty-first century and that new style of leadership is symbolized by the female principals. Compared to the past leadership style, it is more effective and has greater synergy, he concluded. Modern organization needs to be based on cooperation and team work. Also, good relationship should be built. Women are naturally fit for that leadership style because their emotional intelligence is critical to management of their schools and inspiring of teachers. Different qualities obtained by women are helpful for the organization to keep competitive.

In table 5, the results showed that there is no difference in the application of quality assurance strategies between public and private schools principals. Whether in the public or private school, principals adopt quality assurance strategies that are geared towards achieving the objectives for which schools are established. This is because a school principal is concerned with creating an enabling environment for the growth and development of his students by integrating human and material resources at his disposal in the school system.

Table 6 implies that the degree with which secondary school principals introduce quality assurance strategies in the schools system will influence students' academic performance.

Table 7 shows that the extent to which secondary schools Principals in Osun State were able to put in place some strategies to ensure quality will influence the performance of students. This means that Principal gender in the application of quality assurance strategies is not a determinant of students' academic performance in Osun State secondary schools.

The result presented in table 8 implies that school location (urban or rural schools) is not a determinant of students' academic performance. Ability of the school principal to adopt quality assurance strategies is likely to improve students' academic performance in the State.

### **CONCLUSION**

Quality assurance is a function for which all stakeholders within the school system must be involved. Because it is a management function, the principal must coordinate teachers and other members to ensure that their activities are geared towards quality service delivery. The principal must understand that, as part of quality assurance strategies, the philosophy of education has to be recognised in all aspects of school activities. Therefore, the administrative policies and programmes of the school must be designed with in-built quality system. This will enhance the achievement of the goals for which the schools are set up.

Modern administration is a matter of collaboration and cooperation. All concerned should not only have a share in it, but should be assisted to contribute their best to it. Everybody should be so intimately associated with it that he feels a sense of personal involvement. In order to get the best out of all concerned, everybody should be assigned the most befitting roles and responsibility. For these to be achieved, the principal must supervise the activities of subordinates regularly. He must put in place capacity building programmes that would improve professional competence of teachers. He must also ensure that his administrative styles are in line with the path towards achieving school objectives.

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**Turkish Abstract****Nijerya, Osun Bölgesi'ndeki Kamu Ortaokullarındaki Müdürlerin Kalite Güvence Stratejilerini Belirleme**

Bu çalışma Nijerya, Osun Bölgesi'nde müdürlerin kalite güvence stratejilerini incelemektedir. Bu çalışma betimsel bir tarama araştırmasıdır. Olasılıklı katmanlı örnekleme tekniği 10 tane erkek, 10 tane kadın müdürün ve 190 erkek, 190 kadın öğretmenin seçilmesinde kullanılmıştır. Çalışma için very toplama aracı olarak "Ortaokul Müdürleri Kalite Güvence Anketi" ve "Öğrenci Akademik Performans Kontrol Listesi" kullanılmıştır. Araçların geçerliği sağlanmış ve sırasıyla 0.74 ve 0.71 olan güvenirlik katsayıları için test-yeniden test metodu kullanılmıştır. Çalışmaya yön vermek için bir tane asıl hipotez beş tane de işlemsel hipotez oluşturulmuştur. Betimsel ve çıkarımsal istatistik verilerin analizi için kullanılmıştır. Çalışma müdürlerin cinsiyeti ve okulun konumunun öğrencinin akademik performansı üzerinde önemli bir etkisinin olmadığını göstermiştir. Bulgulardan yapılan çıkarımlar okul çıktısının üretiminde kaliteyi sağlayacak stratejileri uygulamada müdürlerin becerilerinin okulun etkililiğini belirleyeceğini göstermiştir. Bu mevcut bilgilere karşı olarak çalışma kalite güvencesini okulun bütün paydaşlarının bir işlevi olduğu sonucuna varmıştır. Bunun bir yönetim işlevi olmasından dolayı, müdür öğretmenleri ve diğer elemanları yaptıkları her işin okulda kaliteyi güvence altına alacak olarak görmelerini için koordine etmelidir. Kalite güvence stratejilerinin bir parçası olarak, müdür okul aktivitelerindeki tüm boyutlarda eğitimin felsefesini tanıyabilmelidir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Müdürlerin Kalite Güvence Stratejileri, Öğrencilerin Akademik Performansları, Ortaokul, Müdürlerin Cinsiyetleri, Okulun Konumu

**French Abstract****Assessing Principals' Quality Assurance Strategies in Osun State Secondary Schools, Nigeria**

Cet article a examiné les stratégies d'assurance qualité des principaux dans les écoles secondaires à Osun, au Nigéria. L'étude a adopté un design de recherche d'enquête descriptive. Technique d'échantillonnage aléatoire stratifiée a été utilisé pour choisir 10 masculins et 10 féminins principals, et 190 hommes et 190 femmes enseignantes. 'La Questionnaire d'Assurance Qualité des Directeurs des Écoles Secondaires'(SSPQAQ) et 'La Liste de Vérifications de la Performance Scolaire des Étudiants' (SAPC) ont été utilisé pour collecter des données pour l'étude. Les instruments ont été validés et la méthode du test-retest a été utilisé pour déterminer leurs fiabilités ont donné 0.74 et 0.71 respectivement. Une hypothèse principale et cinq hypothèses opérationnelles ont été formulés pour guider l'étude. La statistique descriptive et déductive a été utilisée pour l'analyse de données. L'étude a plus loin montré que le genre des directeurs et l'emplacement de l'école n'avait aucun impact significatif sur la performance scolaire. L'implication des découvertes est cette capacité des principaux pour mettre en place les stratégies qui assureraient que la qualité dans la production de production scolaire est un facteur critique dans la détermination de l'efficacité scolaire. C'est contre ce contexte que l'article conclut que l'assurance qualité est une fonction pour toutes les parties prenantes dans le système scolaire. Parce que c'est une fonction du management, le directeur devrait coordonner des professeurs et d'autres membres du personnel pour voir que leurs activités sont adaptées vers l'assurance de la qualité aux écoles. Dans le cadre des stratégies d'assurance qualité, le directeur devrait reconnaître la philosophie d'éducation dans tous les aspects d'activités scolaires.

**Mots Clés:** Stratégies d'Assurance Qualité des Directeur; Performance Scolaire des Étudiants; École secondaire; Sexe du Directeur; Emplacement de l'École

**Arabic Abstract**

تقييم إستراتيجيات ضمان الجودة للمدراء في مدرسة كسن الثانوية, نيجيريا

حيث كان بحث وصفي تضمنت 10 من الورقة تضمنت نوعية الأستراتيجيات في المرحلة الثانوية بولاية اسوان نيجيريا. جمعت المعلومات في المدرسة الثانوية الذكور + 10 من الأناث و 190 من الذكور المعلمين و 190 من الأناث المعلمات. حيث كانت فعالة وتم تحليل النتائج احصائياً أظهرت عامل الجنس في الدراسة حيث كان موقع المدرسة لا أهميه له بالتحليل ولم تظهر الدراسة أي تأثير بأتجاز الطلبة للمرحلة الثانويه، حيث أن النوعية بالانتاج معتمد على الجانب العلمي في تقرير الوزارات و أكدت الغاء النوعي للنظام في النظام بسبب نظام الإدارة و الجميع من المدرسين أكدوا على نوعية التعليم بالمدرسة أو جودة التعليم.