ISSN (Online): 2455-3662
EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (IJMR) - Peer Reviewed Journal
Volume: 10| Issue: 11| November 2024|| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2013 || SJIF Impact Factor 2024: 8.402 || ISI Value: 1.188

QUALITY ASSURANCE INDICATORS AS PREDICTOR OF PRINCIPALS' ADMINISTRATIVE EFFECTIVENESS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ABIA STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted to examine quality assurance indicators as predictor of principals' administrative effectiveness in secondary schools in Abia State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study investigated the contribution of ***school leadership and instructional supervision*** *to 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 244 public secondary schools and 244 principals in Abia State covering three education zones in Abia State namely; Aba, Ohafia and Umuahia. Census technique was used to select all the 244 secondary school administrators for the study. The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire designed and administered by the researcher tagged: "Quality Assurance Indicators and Principals' Administrative Effectiveness Questionnaire (QAIPAEQ)." 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. The null hypotheses were tested at .05 level of significance using Simple Linear Regression analysis. Findings of the study revealed that* ***school leadership and instructional supervision*** *significantly predicts secondary schools' effectiveness in Abia State. Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that quality assurance indicators significantly predict principals' administrative effectiveness in Abia State, Nigeria. The study concluded that school leadership and instructional supervision are significant predictors of principals' administrative effectiveness. This means that effective school leadership which is characterized by clear vision, strong decision-making, and collaborative practices, combined with consistent instructional supervision, substantially enhances the ability of principals to manage school operations efficiently, support teachers, and improve student outcomes. Based on the findings, it was recommended that: Ongoing professional development programs should be provided for school leaders, focusing on instructional leadership, effective communication, and change management. This will enhance their capacity to foster a conducive learning environment and drive continuous school improvement.*

KEYWORDS: *Quality Assurance Indicators, School Leadership, Instructional Supervision as 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. Odigwe (2019) notes that an effective secondary school typically has a clear mission, high expectations, strong instructional leadership, regular monitoring of student progress, a safe environment, good academic performance, high tertiary enrollment, and a strong alumni network. Etor et al. (2019) further 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. Effectiveness is one key characteristic of the school system. The concept connotes the idea of an organization accomplishing its specific objectives (Ogonor & Omajuwa, 2020). Principals' administrative effectiveness is the capability of school leaders to

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efficiently manage and guide a school toward achieving its educational objectives and improving overall school outcomes. This effectiveness is determined by their ability to allocate resources, enforce policies, offer instructional leadership, uphold discipline, promote a conducive learning environment, support the growth of both staff and students, and maintain high academic standards. It also encompasses their skills in strategic planning, decision-making, and collaborating with stakeholders like teachers, parents, and the community to advance the school's mission. It is also the ability to accomplish school objectives as stated in the NPE (FGN 2013).

Administrative effectiveness in schools plays a vital role in boosting academic achievement, managing resources efficiently, cultivating a positive school environment, and improving teacher retention and development. Skilled administrators ensure the effective execution of instructional practices, make optimal use of resources, and create a nurturing atmosphere for both students and staff. 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).

The secondary school system in Nigeria, like other levels of education, faces numerous challenges that undermine its effectiveness. These issues include poor funding, deteriorating infrastructure, and inadequate human capital development. According to Olayemi (2001, p. 11) in Ugwu (2018), the decay of public schools in Nigeria is a major factor that led to the rise of private schools. Ahmed (2003) in Olanrewaju (2016) also highlighted that teaching and learning often occur in unfavorable environments, with insufficient materials, thereby obstructing the achievement of educational objectives. 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. The neglect of key aspects of teacher education has resulted in classroom underperformance. Obona et al. (2021) further noted the lack of emphasis on teacher development to expose educators to modern teaching methods, skills, and strategies, which is crucial for effective teaching but is often neglected, sometimes driven by bias. According to Babalola (2007) in Ugwu (2018), this situation has contributed to broader societal problems such as unemployment, a declining economy, moral decay, underqualified workers, poorly prepared secondary school graduates, and excessive reliance on developed Western nations. The overall learning environment in these schools does not seem to support the sustainability of the secondary education system.

In many schools in Abia State, for instance, it was observed that there are insufficient classrooms, staff offices, laboratories, workshops, libraries, and essential furniture like student seats and teachers' tables and chairs. Additionally, the facilities that do exist are often poorly equipped and poorly maintained, with broken floors, leaking roofs, and cracked walls, forcing teachers and students to work in harsh conditions. Furthermore, the researcher observed that many teachers exhibit a negative attitude towards their duties, including reluctance to prepare lesson notes, disregard for school rules, and other unprofessional behaviors. These conditions have led to widespread examination malpractices, poor literacy skills among students, and general inefficiency in the secondary education system. Educational administrators are tasked with ensuring the delivery of quality and efficient education. Quality assurance services, when effectively utilized, can significantly enhance their effectiveness in secondary schools, potentially leading to a complete transformation of the school environment. This underscores the need for school administrators to be actively involved in quality assurance processes.

Quality assurance involves planned and systematic actions necessary to ensure that a product or service meets established quality standards (Borahan & Ziarati, 2002, in Ogbonna, 2012). It is about implementing systems to assess the quality of work across all levels, providing feedback on strengths and areas for improvement, and taking corrective action when needed (Odigwe, 2019). Quality assurance involves meeting standards in resource usage and management, ensuring that the output meets expectations (Obona et al, 2024). The focus of quality assurance in education is on ensuring sound processes that result in high standards, targeting three key areas: input, process, and output. This approach helps identify potential issues in the educational process. There are various indices for school quality assurance. Adewale (2004) in Odigwe (2019) identifies factors such as the principal's instructional leadership, discipline, school climate, and school-community partnership programs as key elements of school effectiveness. For the purpose of this study, two quality assurance indicators will be examined namely school leadership and instructional supervision.

The leadership quality of a school administrator can significantly influence the effectiveness of the school system. Principals serve as role models that staff members look up to for guidance. According to Arop et al. (2019), the leadership traits of secondary school administrators or principals can either enhance or diminish teachers' job performance, as every action by the school head can either support or obstruct the school's development. Organizational success largely hinges on leadership. Boonla and Treputtharat (2013) describe leadership as the ability to use influence to guide decision-making and establish organizational goals. For a school leader (principal) to efficiently fulfill administrative tasks and achieve school goals, they must possess specific qualities.

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

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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.

There is no organization can operate efficiently without supervision. Ogonor and Omajuwa (2020) describe instructional supervision as an interaction between individuals aimed at improving teachers' instructional practices, which in turn enhances students' learning and contributes to both teachers' personal and professional growth. Supervision is essential for school administrators to uphold performance standards and achieve positive outcomes. It is a vital activity conducted by principals to enhance classroom instruction and ensure overall school effectiveness. Shuaibu (2016) found that supervision is crucial for achieving organizational goals and maintaining educational standards. Babatope and Alonge (2013) showed that in Ekiti Central Senatorial District, Nigeria, there was a positive relationship between principals' supervisory roles and teachers' motivation, with effective supervision directly influencing teacher motivation. 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.

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.

The literature review shows that numerous studies have examined various dimensions of quality assurance indicators and school effectiveness. Based on the findings of these studies, it can be inferred that there is a relationship between quality assurance indicators and administrative effectiveness. However, certain gaps were identified, which this study aimed to address. Most of the reviewed studies were conducted in foreign countries or regions quite different from Abia State. There appears to be no prior research in Abia State that investigated quality assurance indicators and principals' administrative effectiveness using the same approach and variables as this study. Therefore, this research was conducted to fill that gap in the literature.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Secondary education plays a crucial role in providing students with the knowledge, skills, and competencies necessary for academic, social, and economic success. To achieve these goals, secondary schools must effectively develop students' cognitive, affective, and psychomotor abilities. Society and parents expect schools to offer strong instructional leadership and a safe, conducive environment that promotes good academic performance in both internal and external examinations.

However, in many public secondary schools in Abia State, Nigeria, the researchers observed a significant decline in quality. Schools are plagued by a lack of basic teaching and learning materials, insufficient classrooms, inadequate seating, poor office conditions, and poorly maintained facilities such as laboratories, workshops, and libraries. Some schools have deteriorating infrastructure, including broken floors, leaking roofs, and cracked walls. In the few schools with available resources, maintenance is often neglected, creating an unconducive learning environment. Moreover, many teachers fail to uphold their professional responsibilities, and some principals neglect their supervisory roles. As a result, students resort to various forms of examination malpractice and demonstrate poor reading, writing, and communication skills. These shortcomings from students, teachers, and administrators contribute to the overall ineffectiveness of the secondary school system, preventing it from achieving its stated objectives.

Despite government efforts to improve teaching conditions, provide facilities, recruit teachers, and enhance supervision, the researchers noted an apparent lack of corresponding improvement in the administrative effectiveness of school principals. This inconsistency led the researchers to question whether quality assurance indicators have a significant relationship with principals' administrative

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PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The main purpose of the study was to examine quality assurance indicators as predictor of principals' administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Abia State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to examine if:

1. S**chool leadership** predicts principal's administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Abia State. significantly predict principal's administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Abia State
2. **Instructional supervision** predicts principal's administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Abia State.

STATEMENT OF HYPOTHESIS

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study.

1. **School leadership** does not significantly predict principal's administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Abia State.
2. **Instructional supervision** does significantly predict principal's administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Abia State.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The findings can help school administrators identify areas needing improvement, allowing them to make data-driven decisions to enhance education quality. This may involve implementing effective strategies, optimizing resources, and cultivating a positive school environment. For policymakers, the insights can be valuable in shaping and refining educational policies. The data can guide decisions on resource distribution, curriculum development, and teacher training programs, ensuring high standards across schools. Researchers can also use the findings as a foundation for further investigation into quality assurance and its impact on educational outcomes.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted correlational research design, and study area was Abia State. The population comprised 244 public secondary schools and 244 principals in Abia State covering three education zones in Abia State namely; Aba, Ohafia and Umuahia. Census technique was used to select all the 244 secondary school administrators for the study. The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire designed and administered by the researcher tagged: "Quality Assurance Indicators and Principals' Administrative Effectiveness Questionnaire (QAIPAEQ)." 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 researcher with the help of five trained research assistants. To do that, the research team visited each of the schools and sought for permission from the school authorities. Next, the consent of the respondents was sought and were also duly informed of the importance of the exercise and the need to provide honest responses to the instruments. The respondents were also assured that the data requested would be treated with total confidentiality and hence, 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 a computer spreadsheet program. The scoring of the questionnaire was done both for positively worded and negatively worded items. Thus 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. Simple Linear Regression Statistical technique was adopted in testing all the hypotheses at .05 level of significance.

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

Hypothesis One

School leadership does not significantly predict principal's administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Abia State. The two variables in this hypothesis are **school leadership** and principal's administrative effectiveness. Simple Linear Regression analysis was used to test the hypothesis and the result of the analysis is presented in Table 1. Table 1 showed that **school leadership** significantly predict principal's administrative effectiveness in Abia State as shown by the simple linear regression coefficient (R) of .723 and a coefficient of determination (R^2) of .523 obtained. The R^2 (R^2=.523) meant that the variable of **school leadership** contributed 52.3% of the total variance in principal's administrative effectiveness while the remaining percentage score 47.7% was predicted by other external factors outside **school leadership**. This showed that the independent variable (**school leadership**) significantly predicts the dependent variable (principal's administrative effectiveness), F264.894, p (.000) <.05. Referring to the coefficients in table 1, the unstandardized coefficient for **school leadership** is .712. This meant that for every point increase in principal's administrative effectiveness, there is .712 increase in **school leadership** scores from the questionnaire instrument used. Based on this result, the null hypothesis which stated that **School leadership** does not predict principal's administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Abia State, was rejected.

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Table 1

Summary of simple linear regression analysis showing the contribution of **school leadership** to principal's administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Abia State. (N=244)

Anova[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision
1	Regression	1267.621	1	1267.621	264.894	.000[b]	Rejected
	Residual	1158.063	242	4.785			
	Total	2425.684	243				

*Significant p<.05; R=.723; R^2 =.523; Adj. R^2=.521

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	5.094	.880		5.789	.000
	School leadership	.712	.044	.723	16.276	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Principals' administrative effectiveness
b. Predictors: (Constant), School leadership

Hypothesis Two

Instructional supervision does not significantly predict principal's administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Abia State. The two variables in this hypothesis are **instructional supervision** and principal's administrative effectiveness. Simple Linear Regression analysis was used to test the hypothesis and the result of the analysis is presented in Table 2. Table 2 showed that **instructional supervision** significantly predict principal's administrative effectiveness in Abia State as shown by the simple linear regression coefficient (R) of .827 and a coefficient of determination (R^2) of .684 obtained. The R^2 (R^2=.684) meant that the variable of **instructional supervision** contributed 68.4% of the total variance in principal's administrative effectiveness while the remaining percentage score 31.6% was predicted by other external factors outside **instructional supervision**. This showed that the independent variable (**instructional supervision**) significantly predicts the dependent variable (principal's administrative effectiveness), F524.937, p (.000) <.05. Referring to the coefficients in table 2, the unstandardized coefficient for **instructional supervision** is .597. This meant that for every point increase in principal's administrative effectiveness, there is .597 increase in **instructional supervision** scores from the questionnaire instrument used. Based on this result, the null hypothesis which stated that **instructional supervision** does not predict principal's administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Abia State, was rejected.

Table 2

Summary of simple linear regression analysis showing the contribution of **instructional supervision** to principal's administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Abia State. (N=244)

Anova[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision
1	Regression	1660.282	1	1660.282	524.937	.000[b]	Rejected
	Residual	765.403	242	3.163			
	Total	2425.684	243				

*Significant p<.05; R=.827; R^2 =.684; Adj. R^2=.683

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	7.789	.512		15.204	.000
	Instructional supervision	.597	.026	.827	22.911	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Principals' administrative effectiveness
b. Predictors: (Constant), I**nstructional supervision**

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DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The result of hypothesis one indicated that **school leadership** significantly predict principal's administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Abia State. This is likely because school administrators possess qualities that enable them to perform administrative tasks efficiently and effectively, 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 strength of this relationship aligns with Omar et al (2021) explored the effectiveness of principal leadership practices in secondary schools in Niger State, Nigeria. Multiple regression analysis showed that leadership practices accounted for 14% ($R^2 = 0.14$) of the variation in school effectiveness. It 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.

Similarly, Boonla and Treputtharat's (2013) study examined the relationship between leadership style and school effectiveness in schools under the Office of Secondary Educational Service Area 20. They found a positive relationship at a medium level. This is consistent with Alzubi's (2021) research, which investigated the relationship between principals' leadership qualities and their administrative performance as perceived by secondary school teachers in Irbid Governorate. The study revealed a significant positive correlation between principals' leadership qualities and the effectiveness of their administrative tasks.

The result of hypothesis two indicated that **instructional supervision** significantly predict principal's administrative effectiveness in public secondary schools in Abia State. The findings may result from the fact that quality supervision of instruction, as a crucial activity, is carried out by principals to improve classroom teaching and, consequently, enhance school effectiveness. This implies that effective instructional supervision is key to improving job performance. The findings align with those of Wabuko (2016), who investigated the influence of principals' supervisory practices on teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Lang'ata Sub County, Nairobi County. The study concluded that principals who consistently conduct lesson observations and hold model teaching sessions with teachers significantly influence teacher performance and, as a result, student performance.

Similarly, the findings are consistent with those of Ogonor and Omajuwa (2020), who investigated the relationship between principals' supervisory role performance and school effectiveness in Delta State public secondary schools. To carry out this study, three research questions were raised, two were answered, and one was hypothesized. The study, which was a descriptive survey using a correlational research design, revealed a high level of principals' supervisory role performance and school effectiveness, with a positive correlation between the two variables.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that school leadership and instructional supervision are significant predictors of principals' administrative effectiveness. This means that effective school leadership which is characterized by clear vision, strong decision-making, and collaborative practices, combined with consistent instructional supervision, substantially enhances the ability of principals to manage school operations efficiently, support teachers, and improve student outcomes. Therefore, when principals exhibit strong leadership skills and consistently supervise instructional activities, they are more likely to be effective in their administrative roles.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended that:

1. Ongoing professional development programs should be provided for school leaders, focusing on instructional leadership, effective communication, and change management. This will enhance their capacity to foster a conducive learning environment and drive continuous school improvement.
2. School administrators and supervisors should regularly conduct classroom observations and offer constructive feedback to teachers. This will help identify areas needing improvement and promote the adoption of best teaching practices.

CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

This study contributes to the body of knowledge by highlighting the critical impact of school leadership and instructional supervision on enhancing principals' administrative effectiveness. By establishing these factors as significant predictors, the research underscores the importance of developing leadership skills and robust supervision practices in school management. This finding provides educational policymakers and stakeholders with evidence-based insights, suggesting that investing in leadership training and structured instructional supervision can directly contribute to more effective school administration, ultimately leading to improved teaching quality and student performance educational institutions.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors are grateful to all the research assistants who assisted in the data collection and the respondents for providing the raw data used for analysis.

FUNDING

No external funding was received for this study. All expenses were cared for by the researchers.

ISSN (Online): 2455-3662
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DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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