



## The Administrative Strategies of Principals for Achieving Quality Assurance in Anambra State's Public Secondary Schools

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### ARTICLE INFO

*Keywords:* Education, Quality Education, Quality Assurance, Administrative Strategies

*Received :* 19, December

*Revised :* 20, January

*Accepted:* 28, February

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### ABSTRACT

This study examined the administrative tactics used by principals in Anambra State's public secondary schools to accomplish quality assurance. The study was designed as a descriptive survey. The study was led by three null hypotheses and three research questions. 267 principals from all of Anambra State's public secondary schools made up the study's population. The study employed the census sampling technique. The Principals Quality Assurance Strategies Questionnaire (PQASQ) is a structured questionnaire that the researchers created. Cronbach Alpha data were used to produce a dependability index of 0.84. To address the study issues, the mean and standard deviation of the obtained data were analyzed, and the null hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance using t-test statistics. The results showed that the planning, decision-making, and motivational techniques employed by principals at Anambra State's public secondary schools were not very important. The study came to the conclusion that in order to attain the quality assurance required to satisfy international standards, principals must improve their administrative techniques. Among other things, it was suggested that the government give public school principals opportunities for training to improve their administrative abilities in light of the findings.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Education is the aggregate of all the processes and means by which a person develops abilities, attitude, and other forms of positive behaviours and values in the society in which he lives. Education has been taken seriously as an acceptable qualification for good jobs and is critical in improving the quality of life of any nation and promoting rapid economic growth (Osegbue, et al., 2022). In Nigeria, public discussion and debates on education frequently focuses on the need for consistent improvement on the quality and standard of teaching and learning.

Every country in the world wants to increase its wealth, standard of living, and quality of goods and services for the citizens. To do this, it invests in human capital, which creates highly skilled, driven, creative, and productive people who can change the country. Making sure school administrators consistently maintain the quality of the education system and make improvements to it is one of the greatest ways to accomplish this. As the leader of the school, the principal is responsible for making sure that material and human resources are made accessible for continuous improvement in the quality of education (Abdulrahman, 2016).

The process of ensuring that instruction and learning in schools adhere to specific criteria is known as quality education. It is the degree to which educational programs, establishments, and services fulfill predetermined criteria, produce the intended learning results, and support students' success. According to Ugwulashi and Amaechina (2019), quality education consists of the pertinent, efficient, and fair learning opportunities required to set students up for success through quality control.

Quality education looks at the various aspects of production in education and how they meet predetermined standards and expectations (Nwite & Okpalanze, 2017). Therefore, quality as a holistic concept involves input, methodology, and output, as well as how well each of these elements is modified to meet predetermined educational goals. This is what is meant by quality in education. It is impossible to discuss the idea of quality in education in its entirety without mentioning quality assurance.

The tactics administrators employ to guarantee that learning objectives are met are referred to as quality assurance. According to Nwanga and Unachkwu (2019), quality assurance is the process of objectively tracking, evaluating, and reporting on the quality of every facet of school life in order to guarantee that acceptable standards are reached, upheld, and continuously improved. One of the main features of quality assurance is that it ensures the quality of educational output by preventing errors, subpar work, and waste (Nwaelehia, Nwogu & Doro, 2024). Quality in assurance in the context of this study, is a process of applying proactive measures geared towards the improvement of the quality of education system, process, and products, all of which is accomplished through effective administration of schools.

The management of a company, group, or institution's operations is called administration. Administration is the overarching formulation of policies, the establishment of main objectives, the identification of general aims, and the

establishment of administrative strategies, according to Uzoechina (2016). In order to accomplish organizational objectives, manage resources, and maximize performance, administrators employ planned activities and tactics known as administrative strategies.

According to Nzokurum and Agala (2019), administrative strategies are the culmination of a number of different strategies, such as staffing, decision-making, motivating, organizing, planning, stimulating, coordinating, and evaluating procedures that assist administrators in making use of resources to increase organizational productivity, efficiency, and risk management. Administrative strategies, according to this study, are deliberate actions meant to maximize organizational performance, distribute resources, and accomplish objectives through efficient management and decision-making. Planning, decision-making, and motivational techniques would be the only administrative strategies used in this study.

Planning strategies are intentional methods for reaching objectives and intended results. Planning, according to Egwu, Baseke, Mbah, and Emesiri (2020), is the process of deciding in advance what strategies and tactics a person, group, or organization will employ to accomplish its objectives. Due to the scarcity of resources in the majority of schools, the principal must establish sufficient plans in order to ensure the quality of instruction. Needs analysis, goal-setting, resource allocation, scheduling, prioritization, and contingency planning are all components of a planning strategy. In addition to helping the principal align goals and objectives, effective planning promotes cooperation by enlisting the support of more experienced specialists, fosters creativity, controls risks, and increases accountability. Furthermore, in their pursuit of quality for their school, principals should make sure that the planning strategy cycle is followed by setting objectives, analysing circumstances, creating action plans, carrying them out, and assessing the results. The principal uses planning techniques to aid in decision-making.

Since decision-making is a component of every administrative act, whether it involves students, staff, programs, or services, it is one of the most significant responsibilities of the school principal. The methodical techniques for choosing the optimal course of action are known as decision-making strategies.

In order to attain optimal performance and set goals, the principal and other top management members of the school are expected to make effective decisions about curriculum planning and implementation, goal setting, and the coordination of human and material resources (Ayeni, 2011). The principal when making decision, should be free of biases, assumptions, emotional influences, limited information, and group think, to prevent instructional performance of teachers' and students' academic performance from being affected (Aja, 2016).

Effective principals should be pragmatic in their decision-making and follows the process of clearly defining objectives, gathering relevant information, evaluating options, considering alternatives, weighing pros and cons, monitoring progress, and making adjustments. When principals make

effective decision, the system of operation is smooth and workers are motivated to put in their best.

Motivation tactics are methods for encouraging and motivating people to reach their objectives and perform better. Notably, teachers' dedication to their various responsibilities can be strengthened by the motivational techniques used by principals (Nwankwo et al., 2021). In general, motivated educators are more likely to raise student achievement, guarantee that educational programs are carried out, and advance their own happiness and well-being. Motivation is a psychological process that aims to enhance staff and students' functional performance, according to Tella and Aduramo (2016). Giving praise and acknowledgment, giving options and independence, creating a happy work atmosphere, acknowledging employees' and students' accomplishments, and offering chances for development are some motivational techniques.

The quality of secondary education must be prioritized because it is crucial for developing human capacity and because it provides Nigerian children with a window of political, economic, social, and technological opportunities. In carrying out his administrative duties, the principal of the school should employ a number of tactics to guarantee quality.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Statement of the Problem**

In order to achieve these basic goals, principals are expected to provide quality assurance by making appropriate planning and strategic decisions and utilizing both human and material resources to ensure the improvement of educational standards. Secondary education is essential for a Nigerian child's sound knowledge base, character development, and acquisition of functional skills and competencies needed for survival in this global and technological era.

Unfortunately, the researchers found that most public secondary school principals in Anambra State are in charge of maintaining poor school facilities (as evidenced by the dilapidated physical structures such as chairs, tables, blackboards, roofs, etc.); poorly planned educational instructions; poorly supervised internal and external examinations (which is why special centers are in place); massive failures in external examinations (WAEC, JAMB, and NECO); poor staff and student discipline (as evidenced by the fact that secondary school students, particularly day students, are seen loitering until 10am); and poorly planned curricula and extracurricular activities.

Similarly, data indicates that only 8,401, or 0.5% of the 1,989,668 enrolled candidates for the 2024 Joint Admission Matriculation Board (JAMB) exam, received scores higher than 300. However, 1,402,490 applicants, or 76% of all registered applicants, received a score lower than 200. Additionally, it has been noted that a significant number of pupils are switching from public secondary schools to private ones.

The gradual and steady decline in the quality of educational services provided by public secondary schools, as well as poor academic performance in recent times, has made one to begin to wonder if the principals are actually carrying out their functions towards ensuring that educational quality and

standards are assured. Thus, crux of this study is to examine the extent to which principals use administrative strategies for quality assurance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

### **Research Questions**

The study was directed by the following research questions:

1. How much do principals in Anambra State's public secondary schools employ planning techniques to ensure quality?
2. How much do principals in Anambra State's public secondary schools employ decision-making techniques to ensure quality?
3. How much do principals in Anambra State's public secondary schools employ motivational techniques to get quality assurance?

### **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. In Anambra State's public secondary schools, principals do not significantly employ planning techniques to accomplish quality assurance.
2. In public secondary schools in Anambra State, principals do not significantly employ decision-making techniques to achieve quality assurance.
3. In public secondary schools in Anambra State, principals do not significantly employ motivational techniques to accomplish quality assurance.

### **METHODOLOGY**

For this study, a descriptive survey design was chosen. The 267 principals (159 men and 108 women) of all public secondary schools located throughout Anambra State's 21 local government districts made up the study's population. Census sampling technique was used for the study as all the 267 principals were deemed appropriate and manageable size for the study. A well-structured questionnaire titled "Principals' Quality Assurance Strategies Questionnaire (PQASQ) was used for data collection.

The instrument has two sections, A and B. Section A elicited demographic data of the respondents, whereas section B had 15 item statements structured in three clusters I, II, and III which sought opinion of the respondents with regards to the administrative procedures they implemented to ensure quality. The questionnaire was responded to on a four-point scale of Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE), and Very Low Extent (VLE) with values of 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively. This implies that an item that has a mean greater than the cut-off points of 2.50 and below is regarded as the administrative strategies principals' do not use to assure quality standards in their school.

The instrument was validated by two experts, one expert in Educational Management while the other in Measurement and Evaluation, all from the Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam Campus. Cronbach Alpha statistics was used to estimate the reliability of the instrument, which yielded an index of

0.80. Five well-briefed research assistants assisted in distributing the equipment. 265 of the 267 instrument copies that were distributed were successfully completed and returned, accounting for 99.2% of the total, which was adequate for the study. The mean and standard deviation were used to analyse the data, and the t-test statistics at the 0.05 level of significance were used to assess the hypotheses.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Research Question 1:

How much do principals in Anambra State's public secondary schools employ planning techniques to ensure quality?

Table 1. Shows the Mean Rating and Standard Deviation Scores for the Degree to which Anambra State Public Secondary School Administrators Employ Planning Techniques to Ensure Quality

S/N	Item Description	Mean	Standard Deviation	Remark
1	Principal encourages innovation in planning to address emerging global challenges	2.25	0.42	LE
2	Effective delegation of duties	2.64	1.10	HE
3	Providing good channel of communication	2.54	1.05	HE
4	Plan for anticipated vacancies in the school	2.00	0.58	LE
5	Renovation of the school plant as at when due	1.86	0.97	LE

According to Table 1, the mean scores of 2.64 and 2.54 for items 2 and 3 are higher than the 2.50 criterion mean score that is utilized to make decisions. This suggested that a large portion of the items in question were planning techniques that principals employed to ensure the quality of their administration.

However, the mean scores for items 1, 4, and 5 are 2.25, 2.00, and 1.86, respectively. This suggests that principals only partially executed items 1, 4, and 5 for quality assurance.

### Research Question 2:

How much do principals in Anambra State's public secondary schools employ decision-making techniques to ensure quality?

Table 2. Shows the Mean Rating and Standard Deviation Ratings for the Degree to which Principals in Anambra State's Public Secondary Schools Employ Decision-Making Techniques to Ensure Quality

S/N	Item Description	Mean	Standard Deviation	Remark
6	Principal involve staff in decision-making	2.10	0.60	LE

7	Principal analyses relevant data before making significant choices	1.55	0.29	LE
8	Principal actively involve parents and guardians in decision-making processes	2.34	0.71	LE
9	Principal seeks feedback from students when making-decision	2.42	1.01	LE
10	Principal communicates the reason behind decisions effectively to parents before decisions are made	2.20	0.62	LE

Table 2 showed that all items 6-10 with mean scores 2.10, 1.55, 2.34, 2.42, and 2.20 and respective standard deviations of 0.60, 0.29, 0.71, 1.01, and 0.62 are all below the criterion mean score of 2.50. This implies that the items were implemented to a low extent in respect to the question items raised.

**Research Question 3:**

How much do principals in Anambra State's public secondary schools employ motivating techniques to achieve quality assurance?

Table 3. Mean Rating and Standard Deviation Scores on the Extent Principals' use Motivational Strategies for Achievement of Quality Assurance in Public Secondary Schools in Anambra State

S/N	Item Description	Mean	Standard Deviation	Remark
11	Principal acknowledges the efforts of staff regularly	2.41	1.00	LE
12	Principal provides opportunities for professional growth	2.10	0.60	LE
13	Principal fosters an inclusive school culture	1.98	0.99	LE
14	Principals encourages innovative ideas from teachers	2.21	0.62	LE
15	Principals shows empathy towards staff members	2.56	1.08	HE

Although items 11, 12, 13, and 14 had mean scores of 2.41, 2.19, 1.98, and 2.21, respectively, below the criterion mean score of 2.50, indicating a low extent in the use of the items raised, item 15 had a mean score of 2.56, above the criterion mean score of 2.50, signalling a high extent to the items raised (Table 3).

Hypothesis 1: Principals do not use planning strategies to a significant extent for achievement of quality assurance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Table 4. T-Test Analysis on the Extent to Which Planning Techniques are Implemented for Attainment of Quality Assurance in Public Secondary Schools in Anambra State

<b>Variables</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>t-cal</b>	<b>t-crit</b>	<b>Sign. Level</b>	<b>Decision</b>
Male Principals	157	2.34	0.71	263	4.00	1.96	0.05	Rejected
Female Principals	108	2.27	0.59					

Table 4 showed that the t-cal. value of 4.00 was greater than the t-crit. value of 1.96. The null hypothesis was thus disproved. This demonstrated that the degree to which male and female principals use planning techniques to achieve quality assurance in Anambra State's public secondary schools differs significantly. This suggested that there are gender differences in the planning methods used by principals in Anambra State's public secondary schools to achieve quality assurance.

Hypothesis 2: To accomplish quality assurance at public secondary schools in Anambra State, principals rarely employ decision-making techniques.

Table 5. T-Test Study of the Degree to which Anambra State Public Secondary Schools Use Decision-Making Techniques to Accomplish Quality Assurance

<b>Variables</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>t-cal</b>	<b>t-crit</b>	<b>Sign. Level</b>	<b>Decision</b>
Male Principals	157	2.42	1.01	263	2.20	1.96	0.05	Rejected
Female Principals	108	2.20	0.63					

Table 5 demonstrated that the t-critical value of 1.96 was less than the t-calculated value of 2.20. Consequently, the null hypothesis was disproved. This demonstrated a substantial difference in the mean evaluations of male and female principals about the degree to which quality assurance is achieved in public secondary schools in Anambra State through the use of decision-making strategies. This suggested that in Anambra state's public secondary schools, principals' motivational techniques for achieving quality assurance differ by gender.

Hypothesis 3: The mean assessments of male and female principals about the degree to which motivating techniques are used to achieve quality assurance in Anambra State's public secondary schools do not differ significantly.

Table 6. T-Test Study of the Degree to which Anambra State's Public Secondary Schools Employ Incentive Techniques to Accomplish Quality Assurance

Variables	No	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Sign. Level	Decision
Male Principals	157	2.20	0.63	263	0.63	1.96	0.05	Accepted
Female Principals	108	2.15	0.60					

Male principals scored 2.20 on average, with a corresponding standard deviation of 0.63, whereas female principals scored 2.15 on average, with a matching standard deviation of 0.60, according to Table 6. The crucial t-value, 1.96, was higher than the computed t-value of 0.63. Consequently, the hypothesis was approved. This implied that the mean evaluation of the degree to which motivating techniques are used to achieve quality assurance in Anambra State's public secondary schools does not significantly differ by gender.

The study's conclusions showed that principals in Anambra State's public secondary schools employ planning techniques to a remarkably low degree in order to accomplish quality assurance. This is the case because principals fail to promote innovation, prepare for expected vacancies, and routinely update school facilities – all of which have the potential to raise standards. This result is consistent with Abdulrahman's (2016) assertion that the majority of school principals do not carry out the necessary strategic planning necessary for providing high-quality services.

The results also showed that principals don't employ decision-making techniques very often. This is because the principals were not implementing all of the items that were addressed. According to the study, principals fail to actively involve parents in the decision-making process, analyse pertinent data before making decisions, solicit student input when making decisions that affect them, and explain the reasoning behind decisions to parents. Invertedly, it indicates that Anambra State's public secondary school principals are not dedicated to making important decisions that could support school excellence. The results also showed that principals don't employ decision-making techniques very often.

This is because the principals were not implementing all of the items that were addressed. According to the study, principals fail to actively involve parents in the decision-making process, analyse pertinent data before making decisions, solicit student input when making decisions that affect them, and explain the reasoning behind decisions to parents. Invertedly, it indicates that Anambra State's public secondary school principals are not dedicated to making important decisions that could support school excellence. However, if all stakeholders are involved, this study argues that critical decision-making processes will assist ensure quality in schools.

This is due to the fact that a supportive and inclusive learning environment that increases academic achievement depends heavily on the quality of the school. The item assertions demonstrated areas in which principals can excel in administrative duties, which will undoubtedly improve the standard of educational services provided by the school when used appropriately.

Furthermore, the study found that principals employ motivational techniques for quality control to a limited degree. The principals' answers to the item statements made make this clear. The majority of principals concurred that they do not often recognize employees' contributions or offer opportunities for professional development.

This result is consistent with Tonwe's (2019) observation that school principals fail to provide funding for their staff members' professional development, which hinders their ability to give their all in order to guarantee high-quality service delivery.

Lastly, the results of the hypothesis test showed that while there was no discernible gender difference in the strategies used for decision-making, there were differences in the planning and motivational tactics of principals.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

According to the study's findings, principals in Anambra State's public secondary schools employ planning, decision-making, and motivating techniques to a remarkably low degree. This implies that principals could not be applying these tactics successfully, which could impede schools' efforts to attain quality assurance.

The findings led to the following recommendations:

1. To improve their administrative abilities, the government ought to offer principals training opportunities.
2. Principals should create thorough plans that support the vision and goal of the school and ensure that they are updated on a regular basis.
3. When it comes to decisions involving the school's employees and kids, principals ought to promote a collaborative atmosphere.
4. Principals ought to put in place motivational techniques that honor employees' accomplishments.

## **FURTHER RESEARCH**

This research still has limitations so further research is still needed on this topic.

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