

Quality Assurance Programme in Public Secondary Schools in Nigeria: Problems and Way Forward

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ABSTRACT

In order to realize quality secondary school education in Nigeria, the government established agencies and departments of supervision, inspection and quality assurance units and also came out with quality assurance programme. With all these ministries agencies and programmes, the quality of secondary school education keeps declining daily. This paper discussed the problems hindering the quality assurance programme in Nigerian public secondary schools. Secondary data were used to provide empirical support to every point raised in the paper. Inadequate funding, shortage of professional teachers, inadequate infrastructural facilities, poor supervision, corruption, weak school administrators, inadequate instructional materials, poor quality of primary School education, examination malpractice were identified as problems hindering effective quality assurance programme in Nigerian public secondary schools. Based on the literatures that were reviewed, the following recommendations are made: adequate funding, employment of professional teachers, provision infrastructural facilities, effective supervision, corruption eradication, appointment of competent school administrators, provision adequate instructional materials, improvement in quality of primary school education and prevention of examination malpractice in public secondary schools.

KEYWORDS: *Assurance, Public, Problems, Secondary Quality.*

Introduction

Historically, secondary education is of age in Nigeria, having developed alongside Western education, which was introduced by Christian missionaries in 1842 (Adesina, 1977; Ige, 2013, Edeh, 2021). Adesina (1977) and Edeh, (2021) reported that the first secondary school (CSM Grammar School, Bariga, Lagos) was established by Church Missionary Society in 1859. Since then, secondary school education have become part and parcel of Nigerian educational system. Secondary education is provided for children after primary education, that is, before tertiary education. It is aimed at developing a child better as primary education is insufficient for children to acquire literacy, numeracy, and communication skills (Edeh, 2021; Ige, 2011; Yusuf; 2009 & Ige, 2013). Secondary school education should be regarded as a strategy for effective and efficient social transformation at all fronts in independent African States. It must be understood that formal secondary school education is primarily the most significant of all national investments, it is a knowledge production centre, skills production system, as well as complex multi-layered system for social, political, cultural and economic development system (Edeh, 2021 & Nana, 2005). Apart from serving as the link between primary and tertiary education, it provides opportunity for a child to acquire additional knowledge, skills and traits beyond the primary level. According to Ige (2013), a major factor that

necessitates the acquisition of secondary education in Nigeria is that the education being provided at the primary level is proving to be insufficient for a child to acquire permanent literacy, communicative, and numeracy skills expected from him/her at the end of the training and not capable of impacting and developing knowledge, skills and attitudes essential for individuals to fit into society and be able to contribute productively to its development. The objective of secondary school education according to National policy on education (2013) include a. Provide holders of the Basic Education Certificate and Junior Arabic and Islamic Studies Certificate with opportunity for education of a higher level, irrespective of gender, social status, religious or ethnic background; b. offer diversified curriculum to cater for the differences in talents, disposition, opportunities and future roles; c. provide trained manpower in the applied sciences, technology and commerce at sub-professional grades; d. provide entrepreneurial, technical and vocational job-specific skills for self-reliance, and for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economic development; e. develop and promote Nigerian languages, art and culture in the context of world's cultural heritage; f. inspire students with a desire for self-improvement and achievement of excellence; g. foster patriotism, national unity and security education with emphasis on the common ties in spite of our diversity; and h. raise morally upright and well-adjusted individuals who can think independently and rationally, respect the views and feelings of others and appreciate the dignity of labour.

Adebayo, Oyenike, & Adesoji, (undated) observed that there is a general feeling that the quality of education in Nigeria is falling and can no longer cater for the needs of her people. Poor quality education have been identified as a major problem facing the public secondary in Nigeria (Ogunode, 2021), Ige, 2013, Atiga & Ogunode 2021). The secondary school education is not exempted from the problem of poor quality of education. In fact, the continuous poor performance of students yearly in external examination like NECO and WAEC attested to the fact of decline in the system. Ejeh (2019) posited that the deplorable condition of the Nigerian Secondary Education and Schools, calls for a concerted effort towards Education Quality Improvement. Based on this problem, this paper intends to examine the problem hindering quality assurance programme of public secondary school in Nigeria.

Concept of Quality Assurance and Quality Assurance Programme

Zelvys (2004) perceived that the concept of quality has been one of the most important concepts in contemporary educational terminology because of its variation in definition and concept. For instance, Middlehurst (2001) defines quality as a grade of achievement, a standard against which to judge others. By this conceptual understanding, it can be said that the emphasis on quality assurance is the training of personnel to enhance their performance in work places. Adebayo, Oyenike & Adesoji, (n.d) sees quality as the standard of a phenomenon when it is compared to other things like it: how good or bad something is, that is, to be of good/poor/top quality or of a high standard. In this context, it is associated with the 'monitoring and evaluation component of education' to see whether the outcome is good and of the intended standard. In view of this, topical issues in Nigerian education system today centre around the quality of education imparted to the citizenry and the relevance of that education to the life of the individual in particular and the nation in general.

Alele – Williams (2004) defines quality assurance in any educational institution as that which indicates the pre-eminence and special features that make the institution distinct from other forms of institutions. Mosha (1986) sees quality assurance on the other hand, as about consistently meeting product specification or getting things right the first time, and every time. Quality control, as defined by Olagboye (1997), is the arrangement made or the mechanism put in place to maintain the degree of excellence of a product or service. Applied to education, it means, the mechanism by which an education system ensures that the service it delivers or intends to deliver serves the purpose for which it is intended. It focuses on the means by which an educational system ensures that the service

it provided remains relevant and appropriate to the needs of society. It involves a series of operational techniques and activities which include all the actions taken in order for the quality requirement to be met.

Quality Assurance programme refer to all policies and laws enacted to ensure quality education is attain in the educational institutions. Some of the quality assurance programme in Nigeria include establishment of quality assurance institutions, policies and action documents. Oderinde (2004) listed two aspects of quality in education, which are both internal and external. The internal aspect is the implementations of the school objectives while the external aspect deals with the implementation of national objectives which are pre-requisites to the achievement of quality in any educational institution. Middlehurst (2001) views the scope of quality assurance as including the following dimensions:

- a. Regulation (legal frameworks, governance, responsibilities and accountabilities etc.)
- b. Educational process (admissions, registration or enrolment, curriculum design and delivery, support for leaving, assessment, etc.)
- c. Curriculum design and content (validation and approval frameworks, levels and standards etc.)
- d. Learning experience (consumer protection, students experience, complaints and appeals etc.)
- e. Outcomes (qualifications, certificates, transcripts, security, transferability, recognition/ currency and value etc.).

Some of the quality assurance institutions established in Nigeria according to Edeh, (2021) include:

1. National Board for Educational Measurement Board (NBEM)
2. National Business and Technical Education Board (NABTEB)
3. Nation Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education (NMEC)
4. National Commission for Nomadic Education (NCNE)
5. Nation Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE)
6. National Examination Council (NECO)
7. National Universities Commission (NUC)
8. West African Examination Council (WAEC)
9. Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB)
10. National Teachers Institute (NTI)
11. Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC)
12. Education Trust Fund (ETF)
13. National Institute for Nigerian Languages (NINLAN)
14. National Institute for Educational Planning and Administration (NIBPA)
15. Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC).

3Also, quality assurance unit, department were established by different state government to help improve the school supervision, inspection and ensure quality assurance in all the secondary schools in their respective states across the country. Ogunode, Adah, Pako & Audu (2020) posited that the performance of these departments and units in the Ministries of education both at the Federal and state is poor and ineffective. For examples in Ondo State, the operational capacity of the Inspectorate

Service Department of the Ministry of Education was at the lowest ebb, absolutely weak, ineffective and unproductive due to long periods of neglect. Consequently, the inspectorate output could no longer maintain the natural minimum standard of education in schools. The result is a large scale abysmal performance of students at both external and internal examination that portray glaringly nonachievement of the quality assurance in teaching and students' learning outcome in schools (Mimiko, 2010). This weakness led to the establishment of quality assurance/monitoring and evaluation agencies in many states in Nigeria to ensure effective monitoring and evaluation of education which is the key to achieving delivering of quality education in all the educational institutions. Monitoring and evaluation were identified as important school management functions, necessary for ensuring effective and efficient schools.

Fasasi (2006) opines that quality assurance in the education sector should be to ascertain the standard of educational inputs such as students, facilities, and curriculum and education policy and to ensure that proper monitoring and evaluation are undertaken by school managers so that proper processing of inputs would be undertaken in the school system to transform them into the required outcome.

There are many indicators of quality assurance programme, some of them according to Edeh (undated) cited Madani (2019) who listed factors that determines quality education to include:

Quality Learners: The learners are considered as the core, while setting on educational policy with the attempt to ensure its quality. Thus, it is said that the quality of learning is and must be at the heart of EFA" (UNESCO, 2000).

Good Health and Nutrition: Physical and psychological health always affect the students' cognitive developments and academic performance especially in their early childhood lives (Micain & Mustard, 1999). This means that the issue of poverty must be taken into consideration in the quest for quality education. Initiating programmes to address poverty is important. For instance, promotion of home grown school feeding programme of the Federal government in Nigeria

Family Support for Learning: Parents background level of education plays an important role in students' educational quality. Financially, parent's income and social status highly affect the decision of children enrolment in schools especially in developing countries (Caroon & Chau, 1996). Academically, Williams (2000) revealed that children with poor educated parents have achieved three times lower scores or grade repetition and compared to those with parents with some secondary schooling.

Regular Attendance for Learning: It is said that regular school attendance and constant exposure to curriculum influence students' achievement levels. Students who regularly attend classes tend to perform better.

Early Childhood Psychological Development Experiences: Early childhood exposure to experience and interactions positively affect their cognitive and psychological developments. Williams (2002) revealed that a child's attendance to daycare, accompanied with higher levels of parental involvement is associated with higher performance in primary schools.

Quality Learning Environments: Quality learning environments highly influence the quality of learning, and are made up of physical, psychosocial and service delivery elements.

Class Size: This has to do with pupil - teachers ratio. Nigeria has not attained the ratio of 20, 35 and 40 in the pre-primary and secondary schools respectively.

Quality of School Facilities: School facilities such as conducive learning class rooms, teaching aids, constant electricity supply among others are supposed to be available to support quality improvement in education. These facilities are in short supply in almost all African countries.

Peaceful Safe Environments, especially for Girls: A non-discriminatory climate within schools and classrooms is critical, when creating a quality-learning "environment. Gender and race equality among other factors have combined to improve quality of education. The case of the abduction of Chibok girls in 2014 in Nigeria, banditry, terrorism and other criminal activities across African countries impede quality of education. Jennifer & Brian (2018) found that future physician practices and even the clinical outcomes experienced by their patients are strongly influenced by the quality outcomes achieved in the training environments where they learn. **Interaction between School Infrastructure and Quality Dimensions:** The location and conditions of schools regarding buildings quality including the maintenance and availability of basic equipment; such as furniture, textbooks, laboratory, and clean water supply. Students do not have to leave school premises for their primary needs that have impact on the quality of teaching and learning.

Inclusive Environments: Reduction of all types of discrimination; such as gender, ethnic, social, and economical discrimination, is critical for the enhancement of educational quality.

Teachers' Behaviours that affect Safety: Teachers' behaviours have a massive effect on learning environments and students participation. Learning cannot take place, when the basic needs of survival and self protection are threatened. Verwimp (1999) found that increase in students' withdrawal rates relates to fear of teacher harassment, violence, and lack of discipline. This finding still affects education quality today.

Effective School Discipline: This has to do with school rules. Improving quality of education requires setting of classroom rules and school policies that have been agreed among students, teachers. This must be followed with adequate administration of rewards and punishment in order to make such discipline in place, and reinforcement of overall positive behaviour.

Quality Content: This area is concerned with list skills, life skills curriculum mainly focuses on students' attitudes, behavioural change, and values; student-centered, non-discriminatory, standards-based curriculum structures - there has to be in place a curriculum of important areas of knowledge and individual difference. Literacy a quality education must achieve the main goal of education which is mastery of literacy skill, which is the basic ability to read and write.

Uniqueness of Local and National Content: It is said that the local and national values of every region are usually incorporated within its curriculum. The content includes central subjects; such as, mathematics, science, life skills, literacy, and social studies that are usually standardized. These subjects share minimum variations to assure high quality acquisition (Mandani, 2019). Others include quality process, teacher competence, teacher feedback mechanisms, etc.

Other indicators according to (Adebayo, Oyenike & Adesoji,(n.d) include:

- **Learners:** their entry behaviours, characteristics, and attributes including some demographic factors that can inhibit or facilitate their learning;
- **The teachers:** their entry qualifications, values, pedagogic skills, and professional preparedness.
- **The teaching/learning process:** including the structure of the curriculum and learning environment
- **Flow of operational fund:** its adequacy and regularity. The interplay of these and other related factors will go a long way to determine the outcome of any educational programme. Quality assurance in the secondary system implies the ability of the institutions to meet the expectations of the users of manpower in relation to the quality of skills acquired by their outputs.

Quality Assurance Challenges in Public Secondary schools in Nigeria

There are many problems preventing quality assurance programme in Nigerian public secondary schools. Some of them include; inadequate funding, shortage of professional teachers, inadequate infrastructural facilities, poor supervision, corruption, weak school administrators, inadequate instructional materials, poor quality of primary School education and examination malpractice.

Inadequate Funding

Inadequate funding of public secondary schools in Nigeria is preventing quality assurance programme. Funding is very important in quality assurance programme in secondary schools. Adequate funding is needed to procure the human and materials resources required to ensure quality in the secondary school education system. Among the resources needed for the effective administration of the educational sector, funding has been identified as an indispensable instrument. This is because funding serves as the life-wire for the management and administration of most sectors of the economy including the educational sector. It is based on this fact that UNESCO recommended that 26% of the annual budget of any nation should be set aside for the administration and management of the educational sector (Nwafor, Uchendu, & Akani 2015; Odia & Omofonmwan, 2007). Ige (2013) opines that the importance of adequate funding in educational development cannot be overemphasized. No organization can carry out its function effectively without adequate financial resources at its disposal. Ogunode (2021); Ige (2013) and Obe (2009), observed that without adequate funding, standards of education at any level shall be tantamount to a mirage, that is, building castles in the air. Money is important in a school because it is used to construct buildings, purchase needed equipment, pay staff salaries and allowances, maintain the plants and keep the services going. In Nigeria, secondary education derives its major fund from the annual allocation to the education sector. Unfortunately, allocation to the education sector on which secondary education depends has been consistently low in spite of the strategic role of the sector in the training of manpower for the development of the economy Ige, 2013, Ogunode (2021; Ike, 2016;). The poor funding of secondary school education is responsible for the poor implementation of quality assurance programme in the public secondary schools.

Shortage of Professional Teachers

Shortage of professional teachers and low quality of teachers is another problem hindering quality assurance programme in the public secondary schools in Nigeria. Teachers are the fulcrum on which the lever of educational system rests (Ige 2013; Achimugu, 2005). Apart from students, they are the largest and most crucial inputs of educational system who influence to a great extent the quality of educational output (Ige, 2013; Fadipe, 2003). Atiga & Ogunode (2021) observed that teachers are the implementers of school curriculum. Their functions include to teach, prepare lesson note and lesson plan, to evaluate the students, sets exam questions and marks answer sheet. Their functions also include providing leadership in classes, perform academic services, relate with parents on feedback on students' progress and sometime carry students for excursion with school permission. The teachers are very important factors in the management of educational institutions especially the secondary schools. The teachers' roles cannot be replaced in delivering of teaching programme. It is unfortunate that as important as the teachers to achieving the objective of secondary school management that many public secondary schools do not have adequate professional teachers. The scarcity of professional teachers is more pronounced in the sciences programme (Aiyedu & Ogunode 2021). Ike (2017) pointed out that the problem is no longer that of unavailability, but that of instability. This does not help the development of the education system. Because of the comparatively poorer conditions of service of teachers in the Nigeria society, the tendency for many teaching in the nation's school today, as was the case with their predecessors in later colonial and

independent Nigeria, is to use the teaching profession as a stepping stone to other highly esteemed and more attractive jobs. In consequence, teaching is gradually becoming a profession for fresh graduates of universities and colleges of education who are ready to call it quit, without provocation, as soon as they find greener pasture elsewhere. From time to time, therefore the teaching staff in Nigeria educational institutions is usually unstable. Consequently, the teaching, learning process installed everywhere. Ike (2017) also, posited that despite the fact that most of the schools lack basic learning facilities and a complete set of teachers, in some cases, a school with the services of an English Language teacher will lack that of a Mathematics teacher. This is the more reason why one may not have the gut to quarry the mass promotion syndrome being practice in schools because the system itself in not balanced. This action directly and indirectly is reducing the quality of the system. Ogunode (2021; Ike (2017, Ige (2013) reported shortage of teachers in public secondary schools in Nigeria.

Inadequate Infrastructural Facilities

Inadequate infrastructural facility is another challenge preventing quality assurance programme in public secondary schools in Nigeria. Nwafor, Uchendu, & Akani 2015 cited Sullivan and Sheffrin (2003), who sees infrastructure as products, services and facilities that are needed for an institution to function. It therefore means that the ability of the school system to achieve her objectives depends on the availability of these products. Infrastructures are very important for learning to take place in any educational institution. Eseyin, Okafor and Uchendu (2014) stated that “Infrastructures play a significant role in the provision of quality education in any nation”. They aid in the dissemination, assimilation and transmission of knowledge. However, when funds are not available for the provision and maintenance of these facilities, it could result into a dilapidation of existing structures as a result of wear and tear and lack of maintenance. Nwafor, Uchendu, & Akani (2015) posited that availability of facilities such as libraries, laboratories, workshops, comfortable hostels etc are necessary for a productive learning. These facilities make it easier for teachers and students to carry out their basic responsibilities in the school. Students need learning materials to learn well while the teachers also require teaching aids to be effective. However, in a situation where these facilities are not available for self development, the performance level of both teachers and students will be very low. This is because teachers and students will have more idle time than productive time. The implication is that study periods will reduce and learning outcome will be low. A school with inadequate classrooms and facilities such as chairs, lockers, libraries, textbooks, laboratories, workshop will be uncomfortable for pupils/students to learn. Unfortunately, there are inadequate infrastructure and facilities in many secondary schools in Nigeria (Ige, 2013; CBN, 2010). Ike (2017) concluded that for effective teaching and learning, well equipped laboratories and subject rooms are needed; but the truth is that a major of Nigerian secondary schools today lack these essential facilities. Many schools and colleges have buildings that the call libraries, but most of these are not equipped with essential books and current journals and magazines. Also, many schools and colleges do not have science laboratories while a good number of those that have, do not possess the basic tolls or equipments as microscopes, dissecting instruments and specimens. Also, many schools do have “special rooms for teaching such basic subjects as history, geography and French. In such a situation as this, the teachers cannot put in their best; and the students, too, cannot teaching-learning process is stalled and the overall development of the children, within the school system is retarded. Ike (2017) observed in a majority of Nigeria secondary schools, the classroom accommodation is grossly inadequate. As a result of the large enrolments in these schools, the classrooms are usually overcrowded, with up to sixty or more students receiving instructions in classroom designed for only thirty or, forty students. In most cases, the chairs and desk are not enough; you see them sharing chairs, standing up, or sitting on windows or broken desk! When students are overcrowded like this, there is a stalling of the teaching-learning process and a disruption of the children’s mental activity,

„a situation that generally militates against effective teaching and intellectual development the children. Ogunode & Agor (2021) concluded that inadequate funding of secondary schools, poor infrastructural facilities planning, poor qualities of infrastructural facilities, institutional corruption, ineffective monitoring and evaluation of infrastructural facilities, increased in student population, damages of facilities by students of secondary school are causes of inadequate infrastructural facilities in Public Secondary Schools in Nigeria.

Inadequate Instructional Materials

Inadequate instructional materials for the implementation of curriculum is affecting the quality assurance programme of public secondary schools. Slavin (2010), observed that a well planned and imaginative use of visual aids in lessons should do much to banish apathy, supplement inadequacy of books as well as arouse student's interest by giving them something practical to see and do, and at the same time helping to train them to think things out themselves. Instructional materials helps to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Okhakhu, Oladiran, & Omoike, (2016) did a study to find out the effects of instructional resources on the academic achievement of secondary school students. The findings showed that instructional resources play a significant role in enhancing performance of students in schools. Furthermore, the results revealed that schools with adequate quality of teachers and enough instructional material resources showed superiority in academic achievements test than schools without adequate teacher quality and instructional material resources. As seen in the findings from this research, it could be easily concluded that the main reason for lack of proper use of instructional materials in the secondary schools is the lack of users' education.

Poor Supervision

Poor supervision of public secondary schools is another big challenge to the quality assurance programme. When institutions established to ensure supervision, inspection and quality control are weak and unable to carry out their function, the outcome would be poor supervision of instructions.

Ogunode & Ajape (2021) observed the present situation shows that instructional supervision of education at every level of education is weak. Educational supervision in the Nigerian educational system has not received maximum attention from the government. Reports from researchers on the level of instructional supervision on the Nigerian educational system are not encouraging. Ezekwensili, (2007), observed that in many schools there are lack poor or ineffective supervision of personnel and instruction materials. Ogunode & Ajape (2021) identified the following challenges; inadequate funding, shortage of professional supervisors, inadequate supervision materials, political instability, and policies instability, poor capacity development of supervisors, corruption, inadequate transportation facilities and insecurity problems.

Weak school administrators,

Atiga & Ogunode (2021) submitted that weak managers appointed by the government to manage various educational institutions especially the public secondary schools are also major problem preventing effective management of public secondary schools in the Country. Many of these school managers do not have the right leadership skills and leadership qualities to ensure effective management of schools. Some of these school managers do not possess the human relationship skills and team work skills to allow them manage the various teachers under them. The inability to effectively manage the teachers and coordinate them well definitely will lead to management failure and school failure.

Poor Quality of Primary School Education

Another challenge to quality assurance in the Nigerian public secondary schools is the poor quality of primary school students that are promoted to the secondary schools in Nigeria. Ogunode (2020)

submitted the quality of public primary school education is poor. Ige (2013) stressed that many people are contending that Nigeria's primary education can no longer provide the expected literacy and numeracy skill for its clients. World-Bank (2017) observed that the quality of basic education, measured in terms of student learning outcomes, is low in Nigeria. According to international standards, children who have completed grade 3 are expected to be fully literate. Yet in Nigeria only 66 percent of public school students can read at least one of three words and 78 percent can add single digits after completing grade 4 (2015 NEDS). In terms of variation across the States, a test administered to grade 4 pupils as part of the 2013 Service Delivery Indicator (SDI) Survey produced an overall low score of 32 percent, with the two southern states leading the ranking (59 and 54 percent) and the two northern states with significantly lower scores (23 and 20 percent). In addition, pupils in private schools significantly outperformed those in public schools. Poor learning also results in low pass rates at the end of secondary school: 31 and 39 percent of registered students passed the 2014 and 2015 West Africa Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE), respectively. Unfortunately, the recruitment of many low quality outputs of primary schools into secondary creates stress for teachers who have to double their effort to teach the students effectively. Reports (Ige, 2013; Adeyemi and Ige, 2002; Omoregie, 2005), however, confirm the poor quality of secondary schools' students and outputs in Nigeria, which reflects in increasing failure in examinations, particularly the Senior School Certificate Examinations,

Corruption

Corruption is another biggest challenge hindering the effective management of public secondary schools in Nigeria. No any meaningful management of education can take place under a system full of corruption. Corruption is capable of destroying the educational institution if not tackled. (Ogunode, 2021) observed that institutional corruption is another problem facing the administration of secondary schools in the country. Funds released by the government for the administration of the schools some time ended up in the private hands. Funds meant for the capital and recurrent services in the secondary schools are been diverted by the officials of the ministries. Funds budgeted for different programme in the ministries are been diverted into private banks. Many public funds meant for the development of education in Nigeria are diverted and mismanaged. Nwafor, Uchendu, & Akani (2015) submitted that corruption as a social problem that is affecting most of the sectors in Nigeria. The educational sector has also not been left out of the misappropriation and underutilization of funds set aside for the improvement of the education system. Ayobami (2011) pointed out that corruption can be systematic in nature but in a long run will affect the whole life of an institution or society. Corruption can therefore limit the goals of an institution thereby resulting to wastages. Some of the funds made available for the provision of quality education are sometimes diverted for selfish use while in other cases, the budget for the educational sector are misappropriated. This has given rise to the inadequacy of funds for managing the secondary level of education (Nwafor, Uchendu, & Akani 2015).

Prevalence of examination malpractice

The high rate of examination malpractices in Nigerian public secondary schools is a problem to the attainment of quality assurance programme in the public secondary schools across the federation. Ige (2013) cited Duyilemi (2003) opined that examination is the most difficult hurdle which all categories of pupils and students have to scale over at one time or the other in educational institution. The fear of examination is thus the beginning of wisdom for pupils and students. The fear has been leading many pupils and students into indulgence in examination malpractice. In Nigeria, examination malpractice is now 'a demon with more than a thousand faces' due to its persistence in spite of efforts at curtailing it. Although the menace is not peculiar to secondary education only, it is a fact that secondary education has over the years been recording significant share of it.

Unfortunately, as a result of the prevalence of examination malpractice at the secondary level, many low quality candidates are now in tertiary institutions in Nigeria (Ige 2013; Ajeyalemi, 2002). Olamouisi (1998) lamented that the universities and other tertiary institutions are complaining that those candidates admitted on the basis of high grades in the Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE) are being withdrawn due to academic incompetency and the resultant inability to understand lectures.

Way Forward

Based on the literatures that were reviewed, the following recommendations are worthy of note for the achievement of quality secondary education: adequate funding, employment of professional teachers, provision infrastructural facilities, ensure effective supervision, fight corruption, appoint competent school administrators, provision adequate instructional materials, improve the quality of primary school education, prevent examination malpractice in public secondary schools.

1. The government should be committed to the adequate funding of secondary education through appropriate budgetary allocation for the sustenance of secondary education in the country. The government should consider an upward review of the educational budget to meet up with the 26% allocation recommended by UNESCO and above.

2. The government should employ more professional teachers. This will help to reduce the high students-teacher ratio in the classes.

The government should come up with welfare packages to motivate teachers and prevent them from leaving the educational institutions especially the secondary schools.

3. The government should provide adequate infrastructural facilities like chairs, table, desks, water, electricity, ICT facilities, classrooms, administrative offices, libraries, laboratories and whiteboard.

4. The government should provide adequate instructional materials to public secondary schools. This will help to improve the quality of secondary school education.

5. There is need to arrest the increasing trend in examination malpractice in schools. Secondary schools' administrators should investigate any reported case (s) of this menace and ensure that those involved are punished to prevent others from indulging in it in future. Teachers should however be committed to teaching so that students can acquire deep knowledge that will enable them pass examination without recourse to malpractice. Educating and re-orientation of teachers, parents and students on the need to discourage examination malpractice in schools.

6. The government and Ministry of education should set up a supervision team to inspect how school managers disburse the funds assigned for different activities in the school. This will help to reduce the issue of misappropriation of school funds by school managers.

7. Quality of primary school education should be improved upon by providing adequate funding and procurement of all human and materials resources for the sector.

8. The government should strengthen the supervision of public secondary schools by provide the supervision agencies with needed human and materials resources needs to supervise the schools effectively.

9. The government should appoint competent and capable school managers to manage the public secondary school across the country.

Conclusion

The secondary school education is one of the most important educational system because of it position of linking the basic education to the tertiary education. So, the quality of such important

educational system should not be played with. In order to improve the quality secondary school education in Nigeria, the government established agencies and departments of supervision, inspection and quality assurance units and also came out with quality assurance programme. With all these ministries agencies and programmes, the quality of secondary school education keeps declining daily. Inadequate funding, shortage of professional teachers, inadequate infrastructural facilities, poor supervision, corruption, weak school administrators, inadequate instructional materials, poor quality of primary School education, examination malpractice were identified as problems hindering effective quality assurance programme in Nigerian public secondary schools and to address these problems, the following recommendations were made: adequate funding, employment of professional teachers, provision infrastructural facilities, effective supervision, corruption eradication, appointment of competent school administrators, provision adequate instructional materials, improvement in quality of primary school education and prevention of examination malpractice in public secondary schools.

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