

**ASSESSMENT OF SOME QUALITY ASSURANCE INDICES IN THE MANAGEMENT  
OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN RIVERS STATE.**

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***ABSTRACT***

*The study was conducted to assess some quality assurance indices in the management of public and private primary schools in Rivers State. To guide the study, two specific purposes, research questions and null/hypotheses respectively were formulated. The survey research design was adopted for the study. The population comprised consisted of all the 87,501 head teachers, teachers and parents of primary six pupils. A sample size of 20 respondents was selected using stratified random sampling techniques. The researcher developed instrument entitled: 'Quality Assurance Indices of Public and Private Schools' Questionnaire (QAIPPSQ) to generate data for the study. The instrument was validated by a specialist in early childhood education and an expert in test and measurement. Cronbach alpha technique was used to obtain a reliability coefficient ranging from 0.70 to 0.89. Mean and standard deviation and 2-Way ANOVA were used for result analysis to test the hypotheses. The findings of the study reveal a significant difference in educational qualifications of private primary schools over public primary schools and joint decision-making pattern in public schools over the private primary schools. It was recommended that head teachers and teachers educational qualification need to be enhanced by training and retraining of teachers and sponsoring them for higher educational qualifications. The increase in knowledge will help to contribute to quality management in schools.*

**Introduction**

Quality assurance is the application of management concept that focuses on the collective efforts of all school administrators or managers (Ministry of Education, UBEB, headteachers, teachers and parents) on satisfying societal expectation by continually improving the quality of education for the pupils in the management of primary schools (public and private) (McCormicks, 2003). Quality assurance seeks means of developing competitive advantage through continuous improvement in its performance in all spheres of its operations. The task of achieving quality assurance includes identifying and solving any problem that militates against quality delivery. Such a problem solving approach will be directed at taking preventive measures

against wastage. Prevention and continuous improvement are therefore the basis of quality assurance aimed at the achievement of National Policy on Education (Lawal, 2006).

Enaowho (2003) has shown that the concept of quality assurance can be viewed from two perspectives, internal (within the system) and external control measures, checks and balances by regulatory agencies. Hence, supervision is not done with proper accountability by the state regulatory agencies. Furthermore, head teachers and class teachers are not supervised in the classroom while teaching by the regulatory agencies. Also, regulatory agencies only inspect private schools rather than supervising teachers and checking pupils' notebooks in the classrooms. Quality assurance encourages effective participation by all, effective and result-oriented decisions are based on data analysis and correct information. Agih and Christian-Epe (2004) had argued that, in most of the schools, decisions are not usually arrived at based on facts and that selfish interest beclouds their decision making process. Therefore, government and major stakeholders such as the private sector and the public do not involve teachers and parents in decision-making concerning the schools. This has resulted to lack of accurate and timely data, which has long been the bane of policy formulation and management of our primary education system in the state.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The Ministry of Education and Universal Basic Education Board (UBEB) oversee the general development of the public and private primary schools. However, their effectiveness in the performance or the execution of these responsibilities is questionable since, there is the public perception that the quality of education offered is low. Also the standards of education have dropped due to reasons attributed to shortages of human and material resources because of under-funding in education. The teachers are no longer committed in discharging their duties due to lack of financial incentive, promotion and the required recognition as moulders of human beings etc.

The school environment is generally not conducive to learning due to the physical condition of most school and lack of teaching and learning amenities. The classrooms are overcrowded causing discomfort. Among all, placing non-professionals at the helm of affairs, for example, placing lawyers, engineers and medical doctors as commissioners and permanent secretaries of Ministry of education, bastardized the educational systems as against the principles of quality assurance. The drive to provide a lasting solution to these problems has motivated the researcher in carrying out this study on the assessment of some quality assurance indices in public and private primary school system in Rivers State.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the assessment of some quality assurance indices in the management of public and private primary schools in Rivers State. In specific terms, the study intended to:

1. Examine the educational qualification of head teachers, teachers and parents in public and private primary schools in Rivers State.
2. Examine the pattern of decision-making process in public and private primary schools in Rivers State.

### **Research Questions**

1. What are the educational qualifications of head teachers, teachers and parents in public and private primary schools in Rivers State?
2. What is the pattern of decision-making process in public and private primary schools in Rivers State?

### **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses, tested at 0.05 level of significance, were formulated for this study

1. There is no significant difference in the educational qualifications of head teachers, teachers and parents in public and private primary schools in Rivers State.
2. There is no significant difference between decision-making patterns of public and private primary schools in Rivers State.

### **Literature Review**

#### **Educational Qualification of Teachers in Public and Private Primary Schools**

In quality assurance indices, Ngoka (2001) identified teachers' qualifications as one of the factors affecting the quality of education in Nigeria. In his view he saw education as a management product, which its quality is determined by the teachers. Primary school teachers must be really trained with relevant qualifications in primary education till the last decade of the twentieth century, primary school teachers in Nigeria were produced by Teacher Training Colleges. Nigeria's National Policy of Education in Section 9, sub-section 61, makes reference to standards in teacher education as an ultimate expectation. It is expected that only candidates whose minimum qualification is WASC or its equivalent will be admitted into colleges of Education, and that the NCE will ultimately become the minimum qualification for entry into the teaching profession.

Lassa (2004) observed that the Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE) is a sub-degree but a highly qualitative professional diploma in teacher education, obtained after a three-year full-time programme in Colleges of Education. It is therefore a higher quality and specialized teacher's certificate than the Teachers' Grade Two certificate that it is expected to replace. The establishment of the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) in 1989 as a supervisory body for teacher education in Nigeria, saw the beginning of consistent and deliberate thrust towards actualizing the policy on the NCE qualification becoming the minimum certificate for entry into the teaching profession in Nigeria (Uzodinma, 2003).

The National Primary Education Commission personnel audit in 1996 showed that only about 39% of all teachers in primary schools in Nigeria possess the NCE and higher qualification. However, it projected that with about 31,563 Grade II teachers enrolled in 1997 in the Distance Learning NCE programme and another 25,596 enrolled in the sandwich programmes of the various Colleges of Education, it is expected that by the year 1998, the proportion of qualified teachers holding the NCE and above, who are serving in our primary school sector would be somewhere around 78% of those in service. Lassa (2004) concluded that in spite of this promising enhancement of teacher quality in Nigeria, there are indications of faulty implementation in replacement of grade II Certificate with the NCE, as the minimum qualification.

According to the Federal Ministry of Education report (FME 2006), it was discovered that nearly all issues, whether related to goals, learning achievement, organization of

programmes or performance of the educational system are related to the role of teachers. These include their behaviour, performance, remuneration, incentives, skills and how they are used by the system. Therefore, teacher production should be based on a sound philosophy, and on such rationale that should guarantee the acquisition of necessary knowledge components and professional skills which will enable pre-service teachers educate the pupils. (This expectation is very critical, not only to the quality of teacher education, but equally to the very survival of the various disciplines in the curriculum of education.

According to Lassa (2004), the philosophy for the production of teachers in Nigeria is anchored on five objectives of teacher education as enshrined in the National Policy on Education. These are to:

- (i) produce highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of our educational system;
- (ii) encourage further the spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers;
- (iii) help teachers to fit into the social life of the community and society at large and to enhance their commitment to national objectives;
- (iv) provide teachers with intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment and to make them adaptable to any changing situation not only in the life of their country but in the wider world;
- (v) enhance teachers' commitment to the teaching profession.

Lassa (2004) stressed that these national objective could be reduced into three major attributes to be achieved in the making of an effective teacher. These are the:

- i. possession of a body of knowledge and understanding;
- ii. possession of professional skills and techniques;
- iii. possession of positive personal qualities.

These three attributes are interrelated and possessing one is more often than not enhanced by the possession of the others. Teachers are the pivot for the implementation of any education policy. For teachers to be effective, they should be adequate in numbers, well motivated, qualified and competent, both professionally and academically in skills of learning and teaching and have opportunities for various forms of relevant in-service training (Emenajo, 2003).

### **The Patterns of Decision-making in Public and Private Primary Schools**

Quality assurance management encourages effective participation by all. This gives everybody a sense of belonging. Effective and result-oriented decisions are based on data analysis and correct information. Agih and Christian-Epe (2004) had argued that in most of the schools, decisions are not usually arrived at based on facts. Selfish interest beclouds their decision making process. To the scholars, the democratic style in decision making is very important. Therefore in a typical school setting, all the teachers and other relevant persons should be involved in the administration of the school.

Decisions are made everyday, and it is described as intelligently processing information that will result in rational decision making. Scheerens. (1989) identified that in quality assurance, the head teacher, understates the responsibility of making rational choices by being logical and consistent in a decision manner. Decision making is not specifically reserved for the head teacher; it is done daily by everyone. Decision making is a part of everybody's daily routine. Shared decision-making in quality assurance is an effort to transform conventional school

organizations into learning communities by giving all participants the power to improve teaching and learning. Local stakeholders are also empowered to make decisions that involve all parties affected by the teaching and learning process. According to Abolade (1999) shared decision-making supports and value high level of involvement throughout these learning communities. The focus is on a process that supports new approaches to teaching and learning. Each participating learning community will have a site leadership team with parents, teachers, support staff, pupils (at the middle and high schools), community members, and the head teacher. The site leadership team will create a flexible and equitable learning environment based on the needs of the pupils. It will assume authority, responsibility, and accountability for the education of its pupils working within the parameters of state and federal law and district policy.

Communication is a crucial component of shared decision-making. The site leadership team has the primary role in communicating with the learning community. Design teams are formed to study focus areas identified through needs assessment by the site leadership team. As schools grow in their ability to use shared decision-making, existing committees are integrated into the decision-making process. The shared decision-making process is ongoing and cyclical in nature. It involves the following steps;

- i. A needs assessment is completed by the site leadership team.
- ii. The site leadership team determines design teams and committees to address focus areas of need. The site leadership team determines the make-up of design teams and committees.
- iii. Design teams and committees research best practices and review the literature to develop action plans to address focus areas of need.
- iv. Action plans are presented by the design team or committee to the site leadership team.
- v. If approved, the action plan is forwarded to the school-as-a-whole for discussion and approval. If not approved, the design team is given further direction by the site leadership team for further study and planning.
- vi. If approved by the school-as-a-whole, the design team implements the action plan. Assessment of the action plan is the responsibility of the design team and is presented at the appropriate time to the site leadership team.
- vii. The School Improvement Plan is a reflection of the needs assessment completed by the site leadership team, the action plans approved by the school-as-a-whole, and the assessments completed by design teams. The assessments then become a part of the next cycle for school improvement in the needs assessment phase.”

Decision making is more than randomly choosing an option, but a cognitive process or a thought-out process to achieve rational decisions. A successful decision making process involves rationally analyzing the problems to achieve the most efficient choice that will compliment the situation. According to Ekum (2006), the premise behind rationality in the school is based on the notion that reasonable people will respond to their environment by assessing known facts, estimating possible outcomes, and weighing those outcomes against their respective costs. Decision making process differ from one level of administration to another, however, they all share common responsibility; rational choices that are consistent, and “value-maximizing choice within specified constraints.

### **Research Method**

### **Research Design**

The descriptive survey design method was used for data collection for the study. This design was used to seek the opinions of head teachers, teachers and parents of primary six pupils in public and private primary schools and tried to compare whether there is a difference in the methods of application of quality assurance indices in the administration of public and private primary schools in Rivers State.

### **Description of the Area of Study**

The study was conducted in Rivers state which is one of the thirty-six states of Nigeria.

### **Population of the Study**

The population of this study consisted of all the 87,501 head teachers, teachers and parents of primary six pupils.

### **Sample and Sampling Technique**

Twenty (20) out of the 23 Local Government Areas of Rivers State were randomly selected and all other indices equally taken from the private and public primary schools for purposes of effective comparison. The stratified random sampling technique was used for the selection. A total number of 40 schools were used for the study comprising 20 public and 20 private primary schools respectively. The total sample consisted of 1,240 respondents.

### **Instrumentation**

The instrument used for data collection for the study was survey questionnaire tagged 'Quality Assurance Indices of Public and Private Schools' Questionnaire (QAIPPSQ). It is a structured form of questionnaire design to cover all the variables and topic.

### **Validity of the Instrument**

To determine the content validity of the instrument, the researcher gave the instrument to two specialists in early childhood education and the researcher's supervisor to examine the items and statements, clarity of meaning and language. Based on the contribution of the researcher's supervisor and experts, the researcher made the necessary corrections.

### **Reliability of Research Instrument**

The Cronbach Alpha reliability technique was used to determine the reliability of the instrument which ranged from 0.70 to 0.89. The obtained reliability coefficient for the Cronbach alpha technique on the variables show that they meet these criteria as the obtained values were substantially high enough to justify the use of the research instrument.

### **Administration of Instrument**

The questionnaires were distributed to all the 40 head teachers, 600 teachers in their various schools and parents of primary six pupils. The pupils were properly briefed so that they could explain the questionnaire to their parents at home.

### **Method of Data Analysis**

In analysing the data generated from the study, information gathered was compiled and tallied, frequency counts, percentage, mean and standard deviation and 2-Way ANOVA were used for result analysis.

### **Data Analysis**

#### **Research Question One**

What are the Educational Qualifications of head teachers, teachers and parents in public and private primary schools in Rivers State?

**Table 1**

**Percentage responses of head teachers, teachers and parents on educational qualification in public and private primary schools.**

		Below 1 <sup>st</sup> Degree		1 <sup>st</sup> Degree		Postgraduate	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
Head teachers	Public	8	44.4	10	55.6	-	-
	Private	1	5.3	10	55.6	8	44.4
Teachers	Public	192	68.1	60	21.3	30	10.6
	Private	113	40.1	116	41.0	53	18.9
Parents	Public	243	87.4	35	12.6	-	-
	Private	169	60.8	109	39.2	-	-

Table 1 shows that 44.4% of public primary schools head teachers have educational qualification below first degree, 55.6% have first degree and none had postgraduate degree. While 5.3% private primary schools head teachers has below first degree, 55.6% have first degree and 44.4% have postgraduate degrees. While 68.1% public primary schools’ teachers have below first degree, 21.3% have first degree and 10.6% have postgraduate degree. 40.1% of teachers in private schools have below first degree, 41.0% have first degree and 18.9% have postgraduate degree. While 87.4% of parents of public primary schools have below first degree, 12.6% have first degree and none had postgraduate degree. While 60.8% of parents of private primary schools have below first degrees, 39.2% have first degree and none had postgraduate degree.

**Research Question Two**

**What is the pattern of decision making process in public and private primary schools in Rivers State?**

**Table 2**

**Mean and standard deviation of head teachers on patterns of decision making process in public and private primary schools.**

		Head teachers					
		Public			Private		
Decision Making Items		N	$\bar{X}$	Sd	N	$\bar{X}$	Sd
1.	You are invited for meetings on decision-making with UBEB/Ministry of Education	18	2.28	0.42	19	2.60	0.696
2.	You involved teachers in decision-making	18	2.17	0.42	19	1.63	0.696
3.	You involved parents in decision-making	18	2.94	0.421	19	1.37	0.696

Table 2 above shows that the mean score for public primary schools’ head teachers involvement in decision-making by UBEB/Ministry of Education is 2.28, head teachers

involving teachers is 2.17 and head teachers involving parents is 2.94. UBEB/Ministry of Education involve private primary schools' head teachers for decision-making is 2.60, head teachers involving teachers as 1.63 and head teachers involving parents is 1.37.

**Testing of Hypotheses**

In order to test the hypotheses, chi-square and 2-Way ANOVA were used to test the data generated to determine whether there is significant difference in the indices used in public and private primary schools or not.

**Ho<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the educational qualifications of head teachers, teachers and parents in public and private primary schools.

**Table 3**

**Chi-square on Educational qualification of head teachers in both public and private schools.**

		Education qualification			Total
		Below first degree	First degree	Postgraduate	
School Type	Private	1(4.5)	10(10.5)	8(4.0)	19
	Public	8(4.5)	11(10.5)	0(4.5)	19
Total		9	21	8	38
		Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	
Pearson Chi-square		13.492 <sup>a</sup>	2	.001	
Likelihood Ratio		17.336	2	.000	
No of Valid Causes		38			

Significant at  $P < 0.05$

a. 4 cells (66.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.00  
There is significance difference among the school types and educational qualification of the head teachers at  $P < 0.05$ .

**Ho<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant difference between decision-making patterns of public and private primary schools in Rivers State.

**Table 4**

**2-Way ANOVA statistical analysis of difference between decision making patterns of public and private primary schools.**

Variation of Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
School type	3.113	5	0.623	2.575	0.095
Decision making	4.891	2	2.445	10.113	0.004
Error	2.418	10	0.242		
Total	126.501	18			

Table 4 above shows the result of decision making patterns between public and private primary schools in Rivers State. Statistical analysis was done using a 2-way ANOVA to determine the involvement of head teachers, teachers and parents. There is significant differences among the school type and funding methods at  $F = 2.575$  and  $F = 10.113$  respectively. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected, placing the public primary school higher in the decision making with UBEB/Ministry of Education as against private primary schools.

**Discussion of Findings**

**Educational Qualification for Head teachers, Teachers and Parents**

The result of this hypothesis indicates a significant difference or variation in educational qualifications of head teachers, teachers and parents in public and private primary schools. Generally, from the respondents, private primary schools’ head teachers, teachers and parents have the highest educational qualification although public schools’ head teachers and teachers

have basic educational qualifications. Interestingly, this findings is in-line with the factors of quality assurance and this is supported by Ngoka (2001) who identified head teachers and teachers' educational qualification as one of the factors affecting the quality of education in Nigeria.

### **Decision Making**

The study result shows that government, (UBEB/Ministry of Education) invited only public schools head teachers for decision making. It was also noticed from the analysis of the result that decision-making was not effectively done. The responses showed that most of the schools' decision making were taken by only head teachers or proprietors, either on selfish interest or ignorance. Government does not involve private schools in the course of decision-making; rather public schools are occasionally invited for meetings. This agrees with the findings of Onuka (2006) who observed that the application of decision-making in education at the primary school level was yet to gain much attention. He further explained that, the human and public relations of some head teachers and teachers are not yet fully in conformity with the quality assurance indices principle of customer centeredness being the pupils.

### **Conclusion of the Study**

Quality assurance indices means the application of management concept, that focuses on the collective efforts of all school administrators or managers (Ministry of Education, UBEB, head teachers, teachers and parents) on satisfying societal expectation by continually improving the quality of education for the pupils in the management of primary schools. The study investigates the application of quality assurance indices in public and private primary schools in Rivers State. Findings reveal a significant difference in educational qualifications of private primary schools over public primary schools and joint decision-making pattern in public schools over the private primary schools.

### **Recommendation**

1. Head teachers and teachers educational qualification need to be enhanced by training and retraining of teachers and sponsoring them for higher educational qualifications. The increase in knowledge will help to contribute to quality management in schools.
2. Decision-making should start with the pupils and teachers in the classroom. Pupils opinions should be sought, the teachers in turn should take the various opinion of pupils in the classes to staff meeting with head teacher, head teacher in turns to Zonal UBEB/Ministry of Education and finally the decision should be taken to State Ministry/UBEB for final decision-making. Since the opinions of all are involved, this will enhance effectiveness in the school administration.

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