

Measures adopted by Principals in Public and Private Secondary Schools in Enugu State for Effective Evaluation of Students' Learning Experience.

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Abstract

The seeming decline in the quality of education in Nigeria necessitated this study on evaluation of students' learning experience measures in public and private secondary schools in Enugu State: implications for quality assurance. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. One research question guided the study while one hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance. The population of the study comprised 25,579 respondents made up of 8,362 teachers in public secondary schools in Enugu State and 17, 217 private secondary school teachers in Enugu State. The sample for the study comprised of 773 (382 public and 391 private) teachers. A researcher developed questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection. The instrument was validated by three experts, one in Educational measurement and evaluation, Department of Educational Foundation and the others in Educational planning and management, Educational Management and Policy Department all in the Faculty of Education Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The Cronbach's alpha method was used to determine the internal consistency of the items and it yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.76. The researchers with the help of eight research assistants distributed and successfully collected 773 copies of the questionnaire administered. The research question was answered using the mean, while the hypothesis was tested using z-test at 0.05 level of significance. It was found out among others that principals in public and private secondary school principals in Enugu State adopt adequate measures in the evaluation of students' learning experience. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended among others secondary school principals should introduce a special wear for the students during examination to make sure they don't bring in materials related to the examination.

Keywords: Evaluation of Learning Experience, Quality Assurance.

Introduction

Education is a tool for strengthening ones' intellectual power, building character, maintaining emotional balance as well as moral and cultural empowerment of individuals to bring about positive development in the society. The skills and potentials of individuals for self-reliance and actualization could be developed through education. However, there has been decline in educational quality in Nigeria. The decline in the quality of Nigeria's secondary school education system is evidenced by the persistence poor academic

performance of students in West African Examination Council (WAEC) and National Examination Council (NECO); the growing complaints by parents, Heads of tertiary educational

Unizik Journal of Educational Management and Policy (UJOEMP), Vol 7, No. 1, September, 2025. ISSN: 2276-7630

institutions and employers of graduates of this level of education also indicate that secondary school graduates are poorly prepared for the challenges ahead. Secondary school students always perform below average in both internal and external examinations such as the Senior school certificate examinations organised by the West African Examination Council (WAEC). The persistent decline in quality and poor academic performance of students in these external examinations appears worrisome most especially when viewed against the standard obtained in time past, when secondary school graduates in Nigeria used to be of high quality, evident in the excellent performance in external examinations and skills possessed by the graduates. This ugly trend tends to negate the objectives of secondary education (Post-Basic Education and Career Development) in Nigeria aptly spelt by the Federal government of Nigeria (FGN) (2013) which are to:

- a. Provide holders of the Basic Education 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, opportunities and future roles;
- c. Provide trained manpower in the applied science, technology and commerce at sub-professional grades;
- d. Develop and promote Nigerian languages, art and culture in the context of world's cultural heritage;
- e. Inspire students with a desire for self-improvement and achievement of excellence;
- f. Foster patriotism and national unity, with an emphasis on the common ties in spite of our diversity;
- g. 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 and
- h. Provide entrepreneurial, technical and vocational job specific skills for self-reliance, and for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economic development.

It is in recognition of these objectives that the various states in Nigeria commits her resources to ensure the provision of secondary school education for its citizens and also tailor their policies towards ensuring that it is made accessible to the generality of its citizenry.

The purpose of any of the three levels of formal education (Basic, Secondary or Tertiary) in Nigeria is to effect changes in children's behaviour by exposing them to relevant experiences through systematic

Unizik Journal of Educational Management and Policy (UJOEMP), Vol 7, No. 1, September, 2025. ISSN: 2276-7630

presentation of skills, attitudes, concepts and principles. Secondary school education is the concern of this study and is the form of education children receive after nine years of basic education and before the tertiary stage. Secondary education is concerned with the acquisition of fundamental principles and knowledge for the study of different disciplines at tertiary level of education (Ofojebe & Nnebedum, 2016). The importance of secondary education lies in its position both as the bridge between the basic and tertiary education and also as the agent for preparing individuals for useful living in the society (FRN, 2013). There are two categories of secondary schools in Nigeria; public and private secondary schools.

Public secondary schools are schools that are owned by the government and its agencies. Such schools are controlled and managed directly by public education authority, governing agencies or by a governing body (council, committees among others), most of whose members are appointed by public authority or are elected by public franchise (UNESCO, 2001). Private secondary schools, on the other hand, are schools owned, financed and managed by private individuals, missions, corporate organizations and non-governmental organizations (Anachuna & Obi, 2021). Private secondary schools, according to Etuk (2005), were set up for the reason of providing better teaching and learning conditions than that obtained in the public secondary schools. Irrespective of ownership, secondary schools have common objectives to achieve as enshrined in FGN (2013). Thus, ensuring that quality education is handed down to the students has become one of the pivot issues accorded priority in the recent educational reform going on worldwide (including Nigeria).

Quality education according to Mosha as cited in Ofojebe, Nwogbo and Anachuna (2015) is measured by the extent to which the training received from an institution enables the recipient to think clearly, independently and analytically to solve relevant societal problems in any given environment. Assuring quality in the Nigeria education system is therefore indispensable if excellence is required for the human resource base needed to catapult Nigeria into an enviable position it ought to occupy. Quality in education is a multidimensional concept which should embrace all functions and activities: teaching and academic programmes, research and scholarship, staffing, students, building, facilities, equipment, services to the community and academic environment (United Nations Educational Scientific Cultural Organization

(UNESCO, 1998). The concern about quality according to Maduewesi (2005) is uppermost in educational discourse all over the world. The stakeholders are committed to ensuring that educational

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institutions deliver what they should deliver and that what they deliver, produce desirable outcome. This brought about the concept of quality assurance at all levels of education in Nigeria.

Quality assurance is about consistently meeting product specifications or getting things right first time and every time and the ability of the institutions to meet the expectations of the users of human resources in relation to quality of skills acquired by their output (Ajayi & Akindutire, (2007), Ofojebe, Nwogbo and Anachuna, 2015). Ramom- Yusuf (2003) as cited in Omoregie (2008) posited that quality assurance in the secondary education embrace all its functions and activities such as; management, teaching and academic programmes, research and scholarship, students, buildings, facilities, equipment, services to the community and the academic environment. Tes (2003) maintained that quality could be measured by the percentages of passes in such external examination as Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE) and National Examination Council (NECO). Quality assurance according to Ofojebe. Nwogbo and Anachuna (2015) entails the means by which an educational system ensures that the services it provides remains relevant and appropriate to the needs of the society.

All matters relating to ensuring quality in secondary schools in Nigeria and indeed in other countries of the world place the school principal at the focal point. This is because quality assurance is a management function and the principal occupies a central position in the management of the school and therefore has the responsibility for ensuring quality in the school (Fassasi & Oyeniran, 2014). There is no common formal and national system of external accreditation for secondary education providers in Nigeria unlike such obtainable in universities through the National Universities Commission (NUC) that is in charged for ensuring quality university education through accreditation of universities among other functions in Nigeria. However, each State controls and ensures quality of her secondary school system through its agencies such as Enugu State Post-Primary School Management Board is charged with the responsibility of controlling and coordinating secondary schools and also implement policy formulated by the State ministry of education on quality assurance through its quality assurance unit. Anachuna and Obi (2021) maintained that the success or failure of any particular secondary school will be attributed to the principal. Azubuike (2009) also noted that the school principal as the administrative head is at the helm of implementation of education policies in his school. The principal is the person responsible for

administrative practices of the school using the resources at his disposal in such a way that the school's objectives are achieved. He performs managerial functions such as planning organizing,

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directing, coordinating, communicating and motivating both staff and students towards the realization of both instructional and educational objectives (Azubuike, 2009). From the forgoing, it is obvious that the principal is the one that will coordinate activities towards efficient and effective teaching and learning in the secondary schools so as to produce quality outputs through ensuring the application of adequate measures in the evaluation of students' learning experience which obviously has some implications on quality assurance.

The development and utilization of adequate measures in the evaluation of students' learning experience are critical to quality education everywhere in the world. Ofojeb, Nwogbo and Anachuna (2015) stated that to ensure quality secondary education, that there is need for principals to employ measures in the evaluation of students learning experience to ensure objective outcome. It is pertinent therefore for individual secondary schools to assess their own system and strive to set appropriate standards of their own towards the achievement of the stated objectives of secondary education in Nigeria. Garba (2011) maintained that the ability of secondary school principals to put in place measures that would ensure quality in the production of school output is a critical factor in determining school effectiveness. Such measures according to Mbakwem and Okeke (2007) include among others; ensuring teachers quality, evaluation of students' learning experiences, ensuring quality students' intake and quality and availability of facilities. Ofojeb, Nwogbo and Anachuna (2015) noted that for quality to be assured in any educational set-up like in secondary schools, there must be measures to be put in place to ensure effective evaluation of students' learning experience, one that will be devoid of malpractices.

Effective evaluation of students' learning experience is a very powerful tool towards quality assurance. There is the need to employ stringent measures in the evaluation of students' learning experience and thus a very powerful strategy towards quality assurance in secondary schools. Nkwocha (2004) defines evaluation as the use of various methods and sources to gather and estimate different types of information about a person, group or event in a comprehensive way. Evaluation of students learning experience in Nigerian secondary schools according to Ajuonuma (2007) is made up of continuous assessment and end of semester examination which account for 30 percent and 70 percent of the total score respectively. Secondary school principals in Nigeria to ensure quality education adopt different techniques in evaluation

of students' learning experience. The importance of ensuring quality in the evaluation of students at the secondary school level stems from the fact that it is an indispensable tool

Unizik Journal of Educational Management and Policy (UJOEMP), Vol 7, No. 1, September, 2025. ISSN: 2276-7630 for determining educational outcomes for the purposes of maintenance of standard, promotion, certification, placement, improvement, increased productivity, accountability, quality control (Ajuonuma, 2007). The extent to which these measures are adopted in public and private secondary schools in Enugu State is not known. Principals of public and private secondary schools seem not to be adequately discharging their duties as it should towards quality assurance. Going by the recent constant decline in the performance of students in internal and external examinations such as WAEC and NECO in the State, one begins to wonder what could be responsible for such scenario especially when the students seem to be doing well in internal or termly examinations. Could it be that the schools are no longer interested in quality assurance? Or could it be that the internal measures adopted by the principals of these schools in the evaluation process of the students' learning experience are faulty and inadequate? It is against this background therefore that this study was necessitated.

Statement of the Problem

The decline in quality of secondary education in Nigeria has been a source of worry to every well-meaning Nigerian. It appears that our secondary education is not discharging its obligation as expected, Studies and personal observations of the researcher have expressed sadness on the products of today's secondary education as they can neither usefully live in the society nor move into higher institutions without their parents' aid or forgery and other forms of examination malpractice. There is poor performance of students especially in external examinations. This poor performance and examination malpractice cases conforms with Ajayi (2002) and Omoregie (2005) who asserted that secondary education in Nigeria is riddled with crisis of various dimensions and magnitude all of which may combine to suggest that the system is at low quality. Principals in Nigeria secondary schools seem not be employing adequate measures in ensuring that students' learning experiences are well evaluate.

One may therefore begin to wonder what could be responsible for this persistent decline in the performance and quality of products produced in the present Nigeria secondary education system. Is it that the principals do not adopt adequate measures in the evaluation of students' learning experience towards quality assurance?

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to find out measures adopted by principals of public and private secondary schools in Enugu State in the evaluation of students' learning experience.

Research Question

The following research question guided the study:

1. What are measures for effective evaluation for students' learning experience adopted by principals in public and private secondary schools in Enugu State as rated by their teachers?

Hypothesis

The following hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There will be no significant difference in the mean ratings of teachers in public and private secondary schools in Enugu State on evaluation of students' learning experience measures adopted by their principals.

Theoretical Framework

The study was hinged on systems theory. According to Mukhopadhyay (2005), every educational institution is a dynamic system and must be seen in its own uniqueness and totality for management. In order to look into the aspect of quality of secondary school education, it is pertinent to understand the systems approach to education. A system is an organized, unitary whole composed of two or more interdependent parts (sub-system). The systems theory states that the school is made up of a set of distinguishable but interrelated and interdependent parts operating in a logical manner to achieve a goal. The theory argues that a system is viewed as a whole where changes in one part of the system affect the other parts and the entire system. The proponent argued that the whole is not just a sum total of the sub-

systems, but a holistic representation of the characteristics, what the whole can do, the sub-system cannot. School

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principals are alerted against analyzing educational problems in isolation, but encouraged to develop the ability for integrated thinking. The basic postulate of systems theory has it that as sub-systems are integrated as a whole and interrelated with each other, the position and function of each sub-system can be analyzed only in relation to other sub-systems and to the organization as a whole rather than in isolation. The school organization is not only an open system but it is also a one that perceives opportunities or threats from the outer environment and reacts appropriately towards the same.

This theory provides a base for this study in the sense that the educational institutions exhibit the behavior of an open system which has an environment that inputs some form of energy to the system, which undergoes transformation to give some outputs into the environment. This implies that the educational institutions (secondary schools inclusive) have an input sub-system, a transformation sub-system and an output system. Therefore, for secondary education to achieve its set goals, quality has to be maintained at the various sub-systems that make up the system, starting from the educational; inputs (teachers, students, instructional facilities), process (evaluation of students' learning experience) and output (graduates). This is in relation to ensuring quality in secondary education. The measures adopted by teachers and principals in the evaluation of students' learning experience will invariably affect the other sub-systems and the entire secondary education system as a whole as they are interrelated and interdependent on each other such that what affects one affects the other. Therefore, as a system, if the students are well evaluated, it will affect the quality of instruction which will in turn led to the production of graduates who are of high quality thereby leading to quality assurance.

Method

The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The study was carried out in Enugu State, Nigeria. Enugu State is one of the five States in the south-east geo-political zone of Nigeria. The population of the study comprised 25, 579,718 teachers (8,362 public and 17,217 private) in the 1,179 secondary schools (256 public and 923 private) in the six education zones in Enugu State. The sample for the study comprised of 773 public and private secondary school teachers in Enugu State (382 public school

teachers and 391 private school teachers). The sample was composed and drawn from the total population using Taro Yamen sample size Formular and composed in multi stages.

The instrument that was used for data collection was a structured questionnaire developed by the researchers. The questionnaire was titled “Questionnaire on Evaluation of Students’ Learning

Unizik Journal of Educational Management and Policy (UJOEMP), Vol 7, No. 1, September, 2025. ISSN: 2276-7630 Experience” (QESLE). The questionnaire was subjected to face validation using three experts who are lecturers; two in the Department of Educational Management and Policy and one from Measurement and Evaluation in the Department of Educational Foundations, all in the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The reliability of the instrument was established using the Cronbach alpha method to determine the internal consistency of the items, reliability coefficient of the instrument was 0.76. In line with Nworgu (2015) who maintained that items are considered reliable and desirable for consistency level if they yield a reliability coefficient of 0.60 and above, the instrument was therefore considered reliable. The instrument was administered to the respondents by the researchers with the help of 6 research assistants who are teachers in public and private secondary schools in Enugu State. The research question was answered using the arithmetic mean and standard deviation, while the hypothesis was tested using t-test at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the evaluation of students’ learning experience measures adopted by principals in public and private secondary schools in Enugu State?

Table 1: Mean Scores of Public and Private Secondary School Teachers on the Evaluation of Students’ Learning Experience Measures adopted by their Principals.

S/N	Items	Resp.	Mean	SD	Remarks
1	Provision of students’ photo album to be used in checking in students into examination halls during examinations.	Public	3.18	0.91	Agree
		Private	2.50	0.65	Agree
2	Moderation of examination question papers.	Public	2.61	0.86	Agree
		Private	2.60	0.81	Agree
3	Provision of adequate invigilators for examinations.	Public	2.77	0.79	Agree
		Private	2.61	0.93	Agree

4	Ensures adequate provision of examination halls.	Public	3.07	1.06	Agree
		Private	2.84	0.91	Agree
5	Ensures adequate provision of examination materials (e.g question papers and answer scripts).	Public	2.81	0.89	Agree
		Private	2.71	0.87	Agree
6	Providing an avenue whereby teachers discuss with students the feedback from their assessment of learning.	Public	2.56	0.73	Agree
		Private	3.17	1.01	Agree
7	Making provisions for students’ peer evaluation of their learning experiences.	Public	2.70	0.83	Agree
		Private	2.61	0.78	Agree
8	Making Provision for self-evaluation for students.	Public	2.46	0.69	Disagree
		Private	2.35	0.65	Disagree
9	Ensures adequate sitting arrangement during examinations.	Public	3.49	1.23	Agree
		Private	3.17	0.99	Agree
10	Preventing the students from entering the examination hall with electronic gadgets like mobile phones and sophisticated calculators.	Public	3.06	0.97	Agree
		Private	3.28	1.15	Agree
11	Ensures Provision of adequate security agents during examinations.	Public	2.31	0.60	Disagree
		Private	2.43	0.65	Disagree
12	Having a special/simple wear for the students during examination.	Public	2.03	0.51	Disagree
		Private	2.16	0.57	Disagree
Cluster Mean		Public	3.00	0.92	Agree
		Private	2.95	0.91	Agree

Data in Table 1 show the item by item analysis of public and private teachers' scores of the evaluation of students' learning experience measures adopted by their principals for quality assurance. From the analysis, both public and private school teachers agree on 8 items out of 11 items. The cluster means of 3.00 and 2.95 for both public and private teachers indicate that they agree on the evaluation of students' learning experience measures adopted by their principals for quality assurance. Furthermore, public school

principals adopt evaluation of students' learning experience measures for quality assurance more than their private counterparts. The standard deviation scores ranging from 0.51 – 1.23 and 0.57 – 1.15 for both public and private school teachers means that public and private school principals do not vary much in their adoption of evaluation of students' learning experience measures for quality assurance.

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Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of teachers in public and private secondary schools on evaluation of students' learning experience measures adopted by their principals.

Table 2: t-Test analysis of the Significant Difference Between Public and Private Teachers' Mean Ratings of Evaluation of Students' Learning Experience Measures Adopted by their Principals.

School Type	N	X	SD	Df	p-value	alpha level	Decision
Public	382	3.00	0.92	771	0.27	0.05	Not Significant
Private	391	2.95	0.91				

Result analysis in Table 2 showed non-significant difference between public and private teachers' mean ratings of evaluation of students' learning experience measures adopted by their principals for quality assurance. The analysis revealed that since the p-value of 0.27 is greater than 0.05 alpha level at 771 degree of freedom, the null hypothesis is not rejected. This means that there is no significant difference between public and private teachers' mean ratings of the evaluation of students' learning experience measures adopted by their principals for quality assurance.

Discussion of Findings

The discussions of the findings were done in relation to the issues in the study.

Evaluation of Students' Learning Experience Measures

The findings of the study revealed that public and private secondary schools in Enugu State adopt evaluation of students' learning experience measures for quality assurance. The measures include;

provision of photo albums for checking in the students into examination hall, provision of adequate invigilators, adequate provision of examination halls, and adequate sitting arrangement among others. Nevertheless, the study revealed that both private and public secondary schools in Enugu State do not have a special wear for students during examination, do not have adequate security agents during examination and are not making provisions for students' self-evaluation.

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Furthermore, the study revealed that public secondary schools adopt slightly more measures in the evaluation of students learning experience for quality assurance than the private secondary schools, though the difference is not significant. The importance of evaluation of students learning experiences at the secondary school level stems from the fact that it is an indispensable tool for determining educational outcomes for the purpose of maintenance of standard, promotion, certification, placement, improvement, increased productivity, accountability, quality control among others. In order to ensure that the above objectives are achieved, there is the need to ensure quality via employing various mechanisms in the evaluation of students' learning experience strategies in secondary schools. Fortunately, the findings of this study revealed that the measures of ensuring quality in the evaluation of students' learning experience for quality assurance were adequately adopted by public and private secondary principals in Enugu State. The employment of those measures towards quality in the evaluation of students learning experience for quality assurance in public and private secondary schools in Enugu State could be as a result of so many factors. The researcher is of the view that one of the reasons could be that majority of the principals are well trained on the techniques of ensuring quality in evaluation of students learning experience through examinations through their exposure to conferences, seminars and workshops. The principal also could be very much aware of the importance of evaluation of students learning experience and as such take it very seriously.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Secondary school principals should introduce a special wear for the students during examination to make sure they don't bring in materials related to the examination in the examination
2. Principals of secondary schools should ensure adequate provision of security agents to ensure that candidates do not engage in examination malpractice (internal and external examinations)

Conclusion

It can be concluded from the findings of this study is that both public and private secondary schools in Enugu State of Nigeria adopt adequate measures in the area of evaluation of students' learning experience. It can therefore be concluded that the adequate use of these measures has far reaching implications for quality assurance.

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