Principals and Parents Partnership for Sustainable Quality Assurance in Nigerian Secondary Schools

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Abstract. The paper examines the universal purpose and relevance of education in human capital development. It also highlights and discusses the thematic areas of quality assurance in relation to the trend, issues and challenges in the provision of secondary education. The systemic model that integrates the roles of both the principals and parents for meaningful partnership in strengthening institutional management and provision of resource inputs to facilitate effective teaching-learning process and outcome are well articulated. The study further examined the roles, mode of operations and implications of the partnership that exist between the school principals and the parents in quality assurance. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for data collection and analysis. A total of 150 participants comprised of 30 principals and 120 key members of the Parent-Teachers Association (PTA) completed the questionnaire titled “Principals and Parents Partnership in Quality Assurance Questionnaire” (PPPQAQ) in 30 public secondary schools using multi-stage sampling technique. Three research questions and one hypothesis were formulated. The simple percentage and mean scores were used to answer the research questions while Pearson correlation statistics was employed to test the hypotheses at p<0.05 level of significance. The result showed that the relationship between principals’ and parents’ roles was relatively low in quality assurance (r=-0.213, p<0.05). The partnership was effective in students’ discipline (73.3%), supervision of PTA’s projects (70%), and discussion of students’ academic performance (73.3%). The parents were inadequately involved (below 35%) in the development of school policies and work plan, selection of students’ text books, and monitoring and evaluation of educational programmes. The study concluded that sustainable quality assurance in secondary education is a function of close collaboration among education stakeholders, effective application of quality assurance model, strong political will of the government, and enabling policy by the Ministry of Education will ensure adequate participation by parents in quality assurance system. These guarantee stakeholders’ confidence and certainty that desired standards in educational provision for quality learning outcomes are achieved, maintained and enhanced in secondary schools.

Keywords: secondary education; stakeholders’ partnership; resource inputs; transformation process; quality assurance.

1. Introduction

The destiny of the nation and individuals is shaped in the classrooms through education which is the process of human capital development that involves the transmitting of knowledge, skills and values to ensure proper intellectual growth and character building for self-reliance of the individuals and overall national transformation. This underscores the provision of access to functional education as a fundamental human right of all citizens as provided by the 1948 United Nations Human Rights Act; also a great value has been placed on quality assurance in education by the international community, as an emerging policy perspective in the contemporary world which emanated at the World Conference on Education for All led by UNESCO in Jomtien, Thailand, in 1990. Representatives of the international community (155 countries, as well as representatives from 150 organizations) agreed that all countries should pay greater attention towards
improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all. This is to ensure substantial achievement of recognized and measurable learning outcomes in schools, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills (UNESCO, 2002).

UNESCO, in its 2005 world report on “Education for All. The quality imperative” recognizes that “...a more educated society may translate into higher rates of innovation, higher overall productivity through firms’ ability to introduce new and better production methods, and faster introduction of new technology”. However, to enable such evolution, new curricula must be defined, being dynamic and flexible to adapt to the new requirements of human capital empowerment for the global socio-economic development which involves both academic and industrial players in a real world context.

In a bid to improve the quality of life of the citizenry through the provision of basic and secondary education, the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Act 2004 of the Federal Republic of Nigeria stipulates free and compulsory nine years of formal schooling for all children of primary and junior secondary school age in Nigeria (UBE Act, May 2004). This Act seeks to reinforce the national primary education goals and set targets for attaining universal primary education within the global Education for All (EFA) and Millennium Development Goals (MDG) context by year 2015.

In the pursuit of quality education, the Federal Ministry of Education in Nigeria in 2008 made a paradigm shift from School Inspection (usually periodic, limited in practice and focused on defects identification/faults finding) to Education Quality Assurance, which is an evolving education policy reform initiative that focuses on continuous prevention of defects through holistic monitoring and evaluation process, aimed at improving the quality of school management, learning environment, curriculum delivery and pupils’/students’ learning achievement through the involvement of meaningful, close, strong and goal-oriented partnership between the school authority and other relevant stakeholders.

This implies that the issue of quality assurance in education is everyone’s responsibility (School Based Management Committee (SBMC), Parent-Teachers Association (PTA), Old Students Association, Non-government agencies, Communities, Ministries, School Board, Individuals and other social institutions). This is driven by shared vision of excellence, sincere efforts and skillful articulation, implementation and review of educational policies and programmes by the stakeholders to strengthen institutional management and assured quality education for the learners.

The study is significant now that a high premium is placed on quality assurance in education. It is envisaged that the outcome of the study will provide baseline information and appropriate strategies that can be adopted by school principals in collaborating and maintaining strong, dynamic and goal-oriented relationship with parents in managing the secondary school system to achieve sustainable improvement in students’ learning outcome.

The opportunities that are inherent in quality assurance-oriented school and parents partnership were further highlighted by Ayeni (2010) as follows: strengthening institutional management and school effectiveness; promoting community strong commitment to the provision of adequate teaching and learning materials/facilities, conducive working environment, staff and students welfare, and cordial interpersonal relationship; effective curriculum implementation and quality learning outcome in secondary schools.

2. The Need for Partnership between Principals and Parents for Quality Education

The synergy among stakeholders, especially between principals and parents is necessary because the school is a community asset and provision of quality education is a collective responsibility; it therefore becomes imperative for parents to invest in the training of their children to enable them achieve desired standard that will meet the expectation of the society. This collaboration is a building block for a virile, responsive and sustainable quality assurance system for human capital development (Ayeni, 2010; Federal Ministry of Education, 2009).

Developing partnership between the school principal and parents is a means of encouraging parents’ participation in schooling activities and not an end in itself. It is desirable because it has positive impact on students’ learning outcomes. The collaboration provides parents with opportunities to shape their children;
raise expectations and common goals among home, school and community; build mutual trust and confidence among all members of the school community; provide a variety of learning opportunities, materials and positive learning environments for all members of the school community; reduce the number of difficulties/challenges faced by students; and promote public education.

Sustainable quality assurance in an educational institution is made possible when every member of the institution contributes his/her quota to the quality process (Venkaiah, 1995; Zuhari & Suparman, 2002; Temponi, 2005). This is premised on the principle of Deming’s cycle of continuous improvement, which is fundamentally based upon Plan, Do, Check and Act cycle (PDCA). (Deming, 1986). This process provides a veritable platform for synergy between the principals and significant parents who are members of the school management board/school based committee to strategically articulate educational goals, programs and strategies; systematically monitor the implementation process; give feedback to those concerned to critically assess, evaluate and review the quality of resource inputs, teaching-learning process and students’ learning outcomes in line with the set standards.

Based on the evidences gathered, the gaps are identified in the key areas that need to be reviewed and improved upon in the course of implementing the plan. Interventions are provided in order to ensure that significant agreement exists between the original goals and what is actually achieved. This is carried out by formulating school improvement plan and acting on the plan full scale in a systematic process to prevent quality defects and facilitate better performance. The sustainable quality assurance process is depicted with the model below.

![Fig. 1: Quality improvement cycle. Adapted from Deming (1986).](image)

### 2.1. Quality assurance in education
Quality assurance in education is the efficient management, monitoring, supervision, assessment and reviews of the resource inputs and curriculum implementation process to produce quality learning outcome (product value) that meet set standards and expectations of the society. The thematic areas include: **quality of provision** (infrastructure and learning environment; curriculum and other related activities; teaching and learning; and care, guidance and support); **outcomes for learners** (learners’ personal skills and participation; achievement and standards); and **leadership and management**. The actualization of these key elements hinges on effective partnership between the principals and parents in providing the required resource inputs in form of human and material resources, facilities, finance, and development of positive corporate culture and ensuring effective control and improving the teaching-learning process for the purpose of raising the “product value” and learners’ potentials development to meet the prescribed standards and fulfill public accountability.

The quest for quality improvement in education service delivery and students’ academic performance has prompted the Ondo State Government to blaze the trail in the establishment of an autonomous Quality Education Assurance Agency in Nigeria; this is to carryout effective monitoring and evaluation of teaching-learning process and bring about consistent improvement in learning achievement and standards at the basic and secondary education levels.

### 2.2. Core values of quality assurance

Quality assurance oriented schools are characterized by core values and elements which were identified by UNICEF (2000) as: quality learners, learning environments, curriculum content, teaching and learning processes, and learning outcomes. In Nigeria, quality assurance values are categorized into seven thematic areas: quality of infrastructure and learning environment; curriculum and other related activities; teaching and learning; care, guidance and support; learners’ personal skills and participation; achievement and standards; and leadership and management (Federal Ministry of Education, 2010).

The interrelatedness and systemic operation of the thematic areas of quality assurance involves the combined efforts of significant stakeholders (principal, parents and community) in the formulation of school improvement oriented policies and objectives based on the overall national policy on education. This provides direction for effective management of the institution. It is the common responsibility of both the principal and the parents as commitment-holders to source for both human and non-human resource inputs (academic and non academic staff, facilities, and instructional materials) that will enable the school to vigorously pursue the educational objectives and meet its curriculum content task demand, social tasks, administrative and supervisory roles for an all-round development of the learners in academic, technical, vocational and social life skills.

In the pursuit of quality education, the commitment-holders maintain strong close contact, interaction and dependable synergy with the school authority. They also contribute resources to ensure that the school remains focus and effective in the implementation of the curriculum to achieve desired learning outcome. In a situation where the school is not fulfilling its purpose, the commitment-holders intervene by reviewing, restructuring, and refocusing the management strategies on prevention of defects in the transformation process so that quality education will be provided to enable students that do not perform well achieve good learning outcome. The operation of the systemic model of education quality assurance is illustrated in the diagram below.
2.3. Quality of infrastructural input

There is a general belief that the condition of school infrastructure has an important impact on teachers’ effectiveness and students’ academic performance. The facilities that are needed to facilitate effective teaching and learning in an educational institution include the classrooms, offices, libraries, laboratories, conveniences and other buildings as well as furniture items and sporting equipment. The quality of infrastructure and learning environment has strong influence on the academic standard which is an index of quality assurance in the school. For instance, Earthman (2002), reporting on California, revealed that comfortable classroom temperature and smaller classes enhance teachers’ effectiveness and provide opportunities for students to receive more individual attention, ask more questions, participate more fully in discussions, reduce discipline problems and perform better than students in schools with substandard buildings by several percentage points.
It is also not uncommon that facilities in most Nigerian public schools are dilapidated and inadequate to provide quality education service delivery (Sanusi 1998). For instance, Afolabi (2002), while reporting on Ondo state, mentioned that the classrooms in most of the schools were inadequate in terms of decency, space, ventilation and insulation from heat; the incinerators and urinal were not conveniently placed, and the school plant was poorly maintained; thus making the attainment of quality assurance almost impossible in secondary schools. This situation has been a source of concern to the school administrators, government and other stakeholders.

According to Fafunwa (2010), there is a big gap in quality, resulting from large number of students in crowded classrooms, using inadequate and obsolete equipment and with disillusioned teachers. These combined deficiencies perhaps constituted a major gap in the quality of learning infrastructure, thus, many challenges bear on teaching and learning that prevent the education system from getting the best out of its efforts to achieve the required level of attainment in teaching and learning activities in secondary schools.

2.4. Quality of curriculum input

Quality curriculum input refers to the whole course of studies and all the other experiences that are planned for the education of the learners in a school. The curriculum content must be well built and relevant to the socio-economic and cultural needs of the society (Moronkola, Akinsola, and Abe, 2000). The teachers are expected to have sound knowledge in their subject areas to be able to select appropriate learning objectives, facts and skills to be taught, and the instructional materials to be used. The teacher must have access to information which is up-to-date, reliable and relevant to the educational needs of students.

In an information age, the principals are expected to provide quality orientation for teachers towards keeping with the current thinking in curriculum planning by ensuring good organisation of the lessons with sequence, continuity and integration of concepts to facilitate systematic implementation and assessment of the curriculum to achieve the set goals. However, many principals and parents pay lip service to curriculum implementation as most learners are not provided with the required textbooks and learning materials to facilitate their understanding of the curriculum. Similarly, many teachers have limited knowledge of curriculum planning and delivery which has been partly responsible for the poor academic performance of students in secondary schools.

2.5. Quality of teaching and learning process

Teaching and learning is an organized instructional process that is consciously geared towards transforming and developing learner’s intellectual ability, skills and values to enable him/her function effectively and contribute positively to societal development. The quality process requires that the classroom instruction meets the set standards. The teaching approach that a teacher adopts is one factor that may affect students’ achievement and facilitates high standards of learners’ outcomes. The success or failure of students rests on the quality of instruction and not lack of students’ abilities to learn (Levine, 1985; Mills, 1991).

In order to ensure quality assurance-oriented teaching and learning processes, the teachers are expected to have in-depth knowledge of the pedagogy in their subject areas to be able to understand the effective ways of organising and presenting subject matter (objective statements, providing the right methods, learning experiences and learning resources), and evaluating teaching and learning activities in consonance with the set objectives. This is to determine the extent of changes in the behaviour of learners towards the direction of objectives considered desirable after a programme of curriculum and instruction. The evaluation process also helps the teacher in determining the strengths and weaknesses of the instructional techniques, and the variations in the achievement of individual students.

Effective teaching-learning process is no doubt the hub of students’ academic performance and leads to quality education in secondary schools. The teacher is expected to function effectively by demonstrating the following professional skills which are key issues in the quality of teaching and learning processes.

- Knowledge and understanding of subject matter
- Plan effectively, with clear learning objectives and suitable teaching strategies
- Show interest and motivates learners
- Challenge learners and promotes high expectations
Use relevant teaching materials and different teaching methods for effective learning
Make effective use of time and insist on high standard of behavior
Homework is used to reinforce and extend learning
Thorough and constructive marking of learners’ work
Use of assessment for lesson planning
Teaching materials match the learners’ level
Participation of learners during lessons
Learners acquire new knowledge and skills to develop ideas
Giving attention to independent and collaborative learning by learners

The materials which are related to the basic contents of a course or a lesson, helps indepth understanding of such a lesson by the students. A well planned and imaginative use of instructional resources which are educational inputs are of vital importance to the teaching of any subject in the school curriculum. The use of instructional resources would supplement inadequacy of books as well as arouse students interest by giving them something practical to see and do, and at the same time helping to train them to think things out themselves, in that they make the lesson attractive to them, thereby capturing their attention and thus, motivating and sustaining their interest to learn. This underscores the need for teachers to have adequate knowledge of instructional resource management in order to ensure effective teaching and practical learning of curriculum content in secondary schools.

However, Banjo (1987), posited that, adequate training of teachers in the latest methodology, to a large extent, determines how the learner learns during instructional activities. This viewpoint was further stressed by Maduekwe (2007) in a study on the strategies for teaching English lessons in Lagos, that in spite of the fact that most of the teachers have teaching qualifications, many of them do not have adequate knowledge of some grammatical concepts and they ended up imparting the wrong knowledge to their students. This situation is also a serious gap in the teaching–learning process in Ondo state as reflected in poor academic performance of students in West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) in which the percentage of students that obtained five credit level passes and above in subjects including English Language and Mathematics were 38.73% in 2012 and 29.92% in 2013 (Ondo State Ministry of Education, 2014).

2.6. Quality of learners’ achievements and standards

The quality of learners’ outcomes are the overall effects of the educational system, which are expressed in terms of desirable changes in knowledge, skills, attitudes and values of individuals as a result of their experiences in the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of learning over a period of study (Simkins, 1981; Tsang, 1988). The quality of students’ learning outcomes is directly dependent on the quality of teachers as demonstrated in their knowledge of the subject matter and capacities to effectively carry out instructional tasks with the ultimate aim of facilitating the learning of diverse students and raises achievement for all learners (Middlehurst & Gordon, 1995).

The assessment of students by teachers and other examination bodies (WAEC/NECO) occupy important positions in determining the quality of learners’ outcomes; consequently, the teachers’ instructional tasks have strong influence on students’ academic achievement. It is therefore imperative of the teachers and principals to ensure effective teaching and thorough supervision of instructional activities so that students’ learning outcomes can meet the set standards and satisfy the expectations of the society.

In Nigeria, the level of learning achievement of pupils is relatively low in the Monitoring of learning achievement for basic education carried out in primary schools by the Federal Ministry of Education in 2006. The national mean percentage scores recorded for primary four pupils were Numeracy (33.74), Literacy (35.05) and Life-skills (43.81) while the national mean percentage scores for primary six were Numeracy (35.73), Literacy (41.53) and Life-skills (25.42). The abysmal performance depicts a low level of human capital for sustainable national development.

Sequel to the above, there is a general public outcry about the standard of primary education and growing concern among the secondary school teachers that majority of the children transisting and entering their classrooms are not well prepared for learning success. There are factors such as inadequate teachers’
capacity development, shortage of learning resources, poor staff motivation, funding, weak institutional supervision and management that are affecting the quality of curriculum delivery and thus the attendant result of non-attainment of quality learning outcome and set standards in primary and secondary schools.

The trend in Nigerian students’ academic performance has shown continuous low academic achievement in secondary schools. For instance, Bello-Osagie & Olugbamila (2009) reported that in the 2009 November/December Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination conducted by the National Examination Council (NECO-SSCE) out of the total number of 234,682 Nigerian candidates who sat for the examination, only 4,223 obtained credit passes and above in five subjects including English and Mathematics, which is a 98.2% failure rate. Owadiae (2010) reported that in 2009 May/June Senior Secondary Certificate Examination conducted by the West African Examinations Council, only 25.99 percent of the candidates obtained credit passes and above in five subjects including English Language and Mathematics, while in the 2010 May/June WASSCE, out of the 1,135,557 candidates that sat for the examination, only 337,071 (24.94%) candidates obtained five credit level passes and above in subjects including English Language and Mathematics (Federal Ministry of Education, 2011b).

Furthermore, in Nigeria, the 2011 May/June Senior Secondary Certificate Examination conducted by West African Examinations Council shows that only 30.99% of the 1,540,250 candidates obtained credit level passes and above in five subjects including English Language and Mathematics, while in 2012 May/June WASSCE, 649,156 (38.81%) of the 1,672,224 candidates that sat for the examination obtained five credit level passes and above in subjects including English Language and Mathematics in the 36 states of the Federation and the Federal Capital Territory (Owadiae, 2011; Owadiae, 2012).

In the same vein, in Ondo State, the percentage of students who obtained credit level passes in five subjects and above including English Language and Mathematics in secondary schools in the Senior School Certificate Examination conducted by the West African Examinations Council (WASSCE), between 2007 and 2009 ranged from 16.7% to 19.1%, and 30.17% in 2010, while 38.73% was recorded in public secondary schools in 2012 and 29.92% in 2013. Similarly, the percentage of students who obtained credit level passes in five subjects and above including English Language and Mathematics in the Senior School Certificate Examinations (SSCE) conducted by the National Examination Council ranged from 3.2% to 27% between 2007 and 2009, while 27.37% was recorded in 2012 and 34% in 2013 (Ondo State Quality Education Assurance Agency, 2010; Ondo State Ministry of Education, 2012, 2014). The low level of students’ academic performance in Nigerian secondary schools is a reflection of gaps in resource inputs and quality of curriculum management. It is therefore important for the school principals to maintain and sustain effective instructional management towards ensuring good academic standard for students in secondary schools.

2.7. Leadership and management

Leadership is the process of developing useful ideas and a purposeful vision, operating by values that would make it possible to influence others to embrace those ideas and that vision in their own pattern of behaviour towards achieving goal-oriented decisions about human and other resources in an organization. Effective leadership ensures quality management in the process of coordinating the efforts and activities of other people to achieve set goals. The existence of an organisation and its success in terms of tasks accomplishment depends largely on the ability and readiness of the leadership to coordinate the activities of the top management group in formulating policies, objectives, plan activities, strategies and perform “thinking” function that ensures effective management and the attainment of the set goals.

The leadership and management roles of the principal in quality assurance process involves the linking of objectives, activities and strategies of different work units (departments or functional areas) in a systematic manner in order to allow a group of people whose capabilities complement one another to work together through collective efforts, actions and pooling of resources, which enable the school as an organization to provide the proper quantity and quality of products within the stipulated time frame for the accomplishment of the educational goals.

As the Chief Executive of the school, the principal must make it possible for staff to have access to suitable facilities of all kinds in order to discharge fully their responsibilities in achieving the educational objectives. The teachers must be well supervised and motivated in order to sustain their interest and make
them dedicated, committed, willing, enthusiastic and inspiring teachers. The quality of the supervision of teachers’ instructional tasks by the principal is an index of effective school management. Of all the major tasks of a school principal, none is as sensitive and as challenging as the one relating to the supervisory role and it is expected to be given the deserved attention in the scheme of things.

The principal ensures effective supervision by interacting academically and socially at a regular basis with teachers and students within and outside the classrooms. The primary aim is to monitor the implementation of curricular and ensure desirable increase in teachers’ capabilities, upgrade their conceptual knowledge and teaching skills, give them support in their work to facilitate better performance in teachers’ pedagogical practices and students’ learning outcomes in the school settings (Oyekan, 1997; Olagboye, 2004; Adetula, 2005).

Quality Assurance school principals established clearly defined goals for academic achievement; they concentrated their available resources and their operations on attaining the set goals by providing adequate time-table for teaching, routine check of lesson notes and subject dairies, observation of classroom instruction, continuously monitor students progress to determine whether their instructional goals are being met, provide feedback on students’ performance and reinforcement of students for excellent performance.

Quality Assurance oriented principals ensure good maintenance and appropriate usage of physical facilities, enforcement of discipline to engender peaceful atmosphere, capacity building of teachers for effective service delivery, provision of instructional facilities and materials, motivating teachers for optimum productivity and building synergy with relevant stakeholders to enhance quality teaching-learning processes (Ayeni, 2010). The emphasis being placed on quality assurance in instructional management and students’ academic standard makes the partnership between the school principals and parents to be very important.

2.8. Strategies to improve learners’ achievement and standards

The students are the focus of attention in any instructional programme and are not dormant in the quality assurance process as they are expected to attend classes punctually and regularly, possess necessary learning materials, develop good reading culture, participate actively in class exercises and take-home assignments, cultivate sustainable interest in co-curricular activities and demonstrate cordial and positive inter-personal relationships in order to achieve the expected learning outcome in schools (Ayeni, 2010).

The better the school, the better it can meet the goals that include equipping the students with desirable skills, knowledge and attitudes that enable them to achieve success and live in the society of knowledge. The teachers are expected to make teaching learners’ centred and create enabling environment for the students to interact with learning materials in order to concretize their knowledge and skills, as the teacher gives the desired attention to the following strategies while performing instructional activities.

- Monitoring learners’ class attendance and participation in learning process on daily basis.
- Checking learners’ written work on daily basis.
- Continuously monitor learners’ progress to determine whether their instructional goals are being met.
- Conducting periodic continuous assessment to ensure intellectual growth/development.
- Provide feedback on learners academic performance.
- Reinforcement of learners for excellent performance.
- Enforcement of school rules and regulations to ensure peaceful atmosphere.
- Encouraging parents to buy textbooks and other basic learning materials for their children to enhance learning.

2.9. Ensuring quality education through information and communication technology (ICT)

It is important to note that, in today’s world there is a great demand for learning. The knowledge of ICT is being emphasized as the effective vehicle for teaching and learning. With the global nature of the Internet, knowledge can more easily and effectively reach the mass population of students. The use of ICT promotes effective engagement of the learners, enhancement of learning, ease the use of teaching methods and materials to respond to students’ interests and needs; empowerment of the learners to control the learning schedule, and the pace of execution of the learning program; enables interactions between learners and materials, and learners and teachers by the usage of animation, image and sound together in the learning
process; abstract concepts that are difficult to understand can be solid and easy to learn by eliminating the limitations of conventional method of teaching and the constraints of time and space.

The study conducted by Ayeni (2010) on Ondo state secondary schools revealed that 54.2% of the schools lack well equipped computer laboratory. Consequently, many schools could not meet the ICT facilities required for effective curriculum delivery. This implied that only few secondary schools could achieve quality assurance in teaching and learning processes. This situation would no doubt cause students’ low academic performance. Hence, the need to further examine the adequacy, utilization and maintenance of ICT facilities with a view to advising stakeholders in education sector to improve on the provision, capacity utilization and sustenance of ICT facilities in secondary schools.

Ayeni and Ogunbameru (2012) found relatively low usage of ICT facilities (46%) in teaching and learning processes in Ondo State Secondary Schools as both teachers and students are constrained by inadequate ICT facilities to advance teaching and learning. This implies that teachers and students would have limited opportunities and capability in using ICT facilities to expand their knowledge and skills in curriculum instruction. Consequently the quality of education being given to learners would be inadequate and reflect in low outcome.

The major constraints perceived by teachers against effective utilization of ICT facilities for teaching-learning process at secondary school level include inadequate supply of computer hardware and software; irregular power supply; limited training opportunities for teachers; low level of institutional partnership with professional and corporate bodies for technical support; poor funding and maintenance. The principals interviewed said that computer education is at the low ebb, as many of the computer sets are not functioning due to long period of neglect caused by shortage of qualified teachers; and lack of funds to carryout maintenance services.

The challenges identified are inimical to effective teaching and learning processes; consequently, majority of the learners lack the knowledge of ICT in secondary schools, Strategies such as provision of alternative sources of power supply, capacity building for teachers, and adequate provision of ICT facilities and better management of available ICT facilities were identified as means to improve ICT facilities utilization in secondary schools.

3. Statement of Problem

The principals and parents occupy very important position that can be regarded as the primary stakeholders and their inter-relationship provide the unity of purpose, action, viable strategies and building block for sustainable quality assurance in secondary schools. The functional roles of the principals and parents involve the formulation of desirable school-based educational policies and achievable objectives from the national policy on education; initiating and designing the strategic work plan and strategies to achieve the set goals.

It is however uncommon to note from the general school administrative practice that many principals often sideline the parents by not giving the Parents-Teachers Association (PTA) the due recognition in the management of both human and material resources. This usually causes ill-feelings, suspicion and low commitment by the parents to the school programmes. The unhealthy relationship and inadequate involvement of parents in the school programmes and activities creates communication gap between the parents and school management, which also lead to low parental support for the students’ education. This has perhaps been responsible for systemic mal-functioning in the teaching-learning process in secondary schools.

The students have always been the victims of education policy gap and quality deficit as reflected by low performance in the Senior School Certificate Examinations which is often below 40% in Nigeria and 30% in Ondo State. Hence, the need to carry out this study to examine the roles, mode of operations and implications of the partnership that exist between the school principals and the parents towards achieving the desired educational goals in Ondo State which is the only State that operates an autonomous Quality Education Assurance Agency among the States in the South-West, Nigeria.

3.1. Research questions
• How effectively do principals perform their responsibilities and roles in quality assurance in secondary schools?
• How effectively do parents perform their responsibilities and roles in quality assurance in secondary schools?
• What is the level of relationship between principals and parents in the performance of their responsibilities and roles for quality assurance in secondary schools?

3.2. Hypothesis
Ho: There is no significant relationship between principals’ and parents’ partnership in secondary schools.

3.3. Methodology
The study adopted the descriptive survey design. With this design, both quantitative and qualitative methods which involve systematic and objective collection and analysis of data were used to elicit responses from the participants in order to find solution to the problems identified. The target population comprised principals and parents in secondary schools in Ondo state. The sample consisted of 30 principals and 120 key members of Parents-Teachers Association comprising chairmen, vice chairmen, secretaries and treasurers, the respondents were randomly selected from 30 public secondary schools, representing ten per cents (10%) of the total existing 305 public secondary schools in Ondo State. The secondary schools were selected from 3 Local Government Areas (LGAs) out of the existing three Senatorial districts in Ondo State (Ondo North, Ondo Central, and Ondo South), using multi-stage sampling techniques.

Research instrument titled “Principals and Parents Partnership in Quality Assurance Questionnaire” (PPPQAQ) and Interview Guide for Principals and Parents (IGPP) were used for data collection. The questionnaire (PPPQAQ) had 10 items developed by the researcher, which sought information from the school principals and parents on their responsibilities and roles in school management and learning activities. The instrument utilized a 5-point rating scale indicating strongly agree, agree, fairly agree, disagree, and strongly disagree with 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 rating points used to assess the level of principals’ and parents’ partnership for effective management and quality learning outcome in secondary schools.

The instrument was validated by two experts in the Department of Educational Management; Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko and the items were further subjected to meticulous vetting and review by Test and Measurement experts in the Department of Guidance and Counseling, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria which ascertained the suitability of the items on the instrument. The reliability coefficient of 0.82 was obtained, using Cronbach alpha, which ascertain the inter-item consistency. Finally, the instrument was administered through the help of two trained research assistants, while the researcher coordinated the administration and collation of completed questionnaires. Three research questions and one hypothesis were formulated. The simple per-cent and mean scores were used to answer the research questions, while Pearson correlation statistics was employed to test the hypothesis at p<0.05 level of significance; using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 16.0.

4. Results
The results of data analysis were presented in order of research questions and hypothesis while discussions of findings were carried out to examine principals’ and parents’ partnership in determining the level of their effectiveness in quality assurance policy management to achieve the desired learning outcome in secondary schools.

4.1. How effectively do principals perform their roles and responsibilities in quality assurance in secondary schools?
The analysis of data in table 1 on school principals’ perception on their roles and responsibilities reflects the following percentage points: Strongly Agree (10% to 73.3%), Agreed (13.3% to 50%), Fairly Agree (6.7% to 30%), Disagree (20% to 40%) and Strongly Disagree (13.3%) while the cumulative mean of 4.00 was recorded.
Table 1: Principals’ roles and responsibilities in quality assurance policy management (n=30)

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<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Principals’ Roles and Responsibilities in Quality Assurance</th>
<th>SA (%)</th>
<th>A (%)</th>
<th>FA (%)</th>
<th>D (%)</th>
<th>SD (%)</th>
<th>(\bar{X})</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Principals and PTA jointly determined the schools’ policy goals and objectives in every academic session</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>The principals and the PTAs jointly initiate and design schools strategic work plan</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>The principals and PTAs jointly identified education needs and select textbooks for students from the list prescribed by the Ministry of Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>The principals and PTAs jointly enforce discipline of students</td>
<td>4.67</td>
<td>4.67</td>
<td>4.67</td>
<td>4.67</td>
<td>4.67</td>
<td>4.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>The principals and PTAs jointly carried out periodic monitoring, evaluation and review of educational programmes and activities</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>4.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>The principals and PTAs jointly carried out the needs assessment to determine important school projects</td>
<td>4.43</td>
<td>4.43</td>
<td>4.43</td>
<td>4.43</td>
<td>4.43</td>
<td>4.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>The principals and PTAs jointly supervised physical projects</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>4.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>The principals and PTAs jointly held periodic meetings to discuss and solve challenges on students’ academic performance</td>
<td>4.67</td>
<td>4.67</td>
<td>4.67</td>
<td>4.67</td>
<td>4.67</td>
<td>4.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>The principals and PTAs jointly maintain cordial working relationship in all aspects of the school programmes</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>4.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>The principals and PTAs received adequate support from the larger communities on schools’ projects and programmes</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>4.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Cumulative Mean</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2. How effectively do parents perform their roles and responsibilities in quality assurance in secondary schools?

The analysis of data in table 2 on parents’ perception on their roles and responsibilities reflects the following percentage points: Strongly Agree (9.2% to 91.6%), Agreed (6.7% to 47.5%), Fairly Agree (1.7% to 25%), Disagree (4.2% to 51.7%) and Strongly Disagree (2.5% to 16.7%) while the cumulative mean of 4.18 was recorded.

Table 2: Parents’ involvement in quality assurance policy management in secondary schools (n=120)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Parents’ Roles and Responsibilities in Quality Assurance</th>
<th>SA (%)</th>
<th>A (%)</th>
<th>FA (%)</th>
<th>D (%)</th>
<th>SD (%)</th>
<th>(\bar{X})</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Principals and PTA jointly determined the schools’ policy goals and objectives in every academic session</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>4.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>The principals and the PTAs jointly initiate and design schools strategic work plan</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>4.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>The principals and PTAs jointly identified education needs and select textbooks for students from the list prescribed by the Ministry of Education</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>4.63</td>
</tr>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>The principals and PTAs jointly enforce discipline of students</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>4.63</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>The principals and PTAs jointly supervised physical projects</td>
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<td>4.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>The principals and PTAs received adequate support from the larger communities on schools’ projects and programmes</td>
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<td>4.63</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>4.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Cumulative Mean</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.18</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.18</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.18</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.18</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.18</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.18</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3. Relationship between principals and parents in the performance of their roles and responsibilities in quality assurance system in secondary schools.
The result presented in table 3 revealed that the calculated r-value (-0.213) was less than the critical value (0.258) at p<0.05 is not significant. Hence, the null hypothesis (Ho) is accepted while the alternative hypothesis (Ha) is rejected.

Table 3: Relationship between principals and parents in quality assurance system

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
<th>r</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principals’ Roles</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>4.000</td>
<td>0.58722</td>
<td>-0.213</td>
<td>0.258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTA’s Involvement</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>4.1833</td>
<td>0.56484</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Discussions

The extent to which the principals and parents had been performing their responsibilities and roles in quality assurance was investigated in the study. The ratings by principals in table 1, indicated that the mean ratings ranged from 2.67 to 4.67 with a cumulative mean of $\bar{X}$=4.00. Items 3 ($\bar{X}$=2.67), 2 ($\bar{X}$=3.23), 1 ($\bar{X}$=3.47) and 5 ($\bar{X}$=3.60) had the lowest rating while items 4 ($\bar{X}$=4.67), 8 ($\bar{X}$=4.67), 7 ($\bar{X}$=4.60), 9 ($\bar{X}$=4.60), 6 ($\bar{X}$= 4.43) and 10 ($\bar{X}$= 4.10) had the highest ratings. Thus, it could be deduced from the ratings that the major roles performed effectively by the principals were: enforcement of students’ discipline, review of students’ academic performance, supervision of physical projects, cordial relationship with the PTA, needs assessment of school projects and mobilizing the larger communities to support school projects. However, the roles that were least performed by principals were: involvement of the PTA in selection of students’ text books, development of schools’ strategic work plan, setting of schools’ policy goals and periodic monitoring and evaluation of educational programmes.

In the same vein, the ratings by parents in table 2, indicated that the mean ratings ranged from 2.45 to 4.90 with a cumulative mean of $\bar{X}$=4.18 Items 3 ($\bar{X}$=2.45), 2 ($\bar{X}$=3.31), 5 ($\bar{X}$=3.79) and 1 ($\bar{X}$=3.93) had the lowest rating while items 4 ($\bar{X}$=4.90), 8 ($\bar{X}$=4.90), 7 ($\bar{X}$=4.78), 9 ($\bar{X}$=4.63), 10 ($\bar{X}$=4.58) and 6 ($\bar{X}$=4.51) had the highest ratings. Thus, it could be deduced from the ratings that the major roles performed effectively by the parents were: enforcement of students’ discipline, review of students’ academic performance, supervision of physical projects, cordial relationship with the principals, mobilizing the larger communities to support school projects and needs assessment of the school projects. The roles that were least performed by parents were: involvement of the PTA in selection of students’ text books, development of schools’ strategic work plan, periodic monitoring and evaluation of educational programmes, and setting of schools’ policy goals.

The findings of the study also revealed a low significant relationship between principals’ and parents’ roles in quality assurance system in secondary schools. By implication, principals and parents are the primary stakeholders in the school system and their symbiotic working relationship is very germane for the attainment of educational goals. The mean score of 4.0 recorded on principals’ roles and mean score of 4.18 recorded on parents’ roles in table 3, implied that both the principals and parents worked in close concert in some of the key areas of quality assurance such as the enforcement of students’ discipline, review of students’ academic performance, supervision of physical projects, cordial relationship with the principals, mobilizing the larger communities and needs assessment of the school projects. This partnership promotes quality education in some of the secondary schools.

However, the percentage level of principals’ and parents’ partnership was very low and below 35% in some key areas of quality assurance, especially the development of school policies and work plan, selection of students’ text books, and monitoring and evaluation of educational programmes. These noticeable gaps constitute encumbrances to students’ academic performance. It could be inferred that many secondary schools are still striving to achieve quality assurance standard in school management, learning materials and students’ academic performance.

The in-depth interviews conducted with the principals revealed that the inconsistencies in government policies incapacitated the PTA in taking decisive decisions on challenges facing the schools in the areas of infrastructural facilities, learning resources and staffing which are very inadequate. In most cases, science subjects are taught in abstract due to lack of well equipped laboratories. Many schools are short-staffed. The
affected subjects were: English Language, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Computer Studies, Accounting, Physical and Health Education, Home-Economics, Fine-Art, Music, Wood works, Metal works and Auto Mechanics. Also, some teachers were overloaded and made to teach subjects outside areas of specialization since some of the teachers transferred were not replaced.

Many of the parents interviewed indicated that the roles of parents have not been properly defined by the government due to the free education policy in vogue. In most cases the administrative bureaucracy does not allow the PTA to collect fund beyond the official levy of six hundred naira (₦600.00) per student per academic session which has been considered inadequate for the management, regular maintenance and execution of the PTA projects in secondary schools. Consequently, there are shortages of infrastructure and learning resources. The class size was congested and ranged from 60-70 students per class in many schools. This constituted hindrance to effective classroom management and curriculum instruction.

The findings in this study further corroborate the assertion by Fafunwa (2010), that there is a big gap in quality, resulting from large number of students in crowded classrooms, using inadequate and obsolete equipment and with disillusioned teachers. These combined deficiencies constituted impediments to the full realisation of secondary education objectives in Nigeria. This has been partly responsible for the relatively low academic performance of students who obtained credit level passes in five subjects including English Language and Mathematics in the Senior School Certificate Examinations which is often below 40% in Nigeria. This phenomenon has become a source of concern for the stakeholders since no nation can rise above the quality of education that is provided for the citizens.

6. Conclusion

The paper concluded that the provision of quality education is a collective responsibility of stakeholders while the attainment of the educational goals in terms of students’ academic achievement and standards is undoubtedly determined by effective partnership between the principals and parents. This synergy is necessary to create conducive learning environment and promote empowerment of students for effective learning process and quality outcome. The inclusive management by stakeholders in education sector is necessary for a proactive periodic needs assessment to determine the existing gaps and make the needed adjustment in instructional facilities and manpower capacity for effective curriculum delivery.

6.1. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made to ensure sustainable quality assurance in secondary schools.

- There is the need for an inclusive management to foster the roles of both the principals and parents in strengthening institutional management and provision of resource inputs to facilitate effective teaching and learning outcome in secondary schools.
- The strong commitment and collaboration among stakeholders, driven by their unwavering interest and strong political will of the government, and enabling policy by the Ministry of Education would no doubt improve school management policy and engender quality assurance in secondary schools.
- The partnership among stakeholders in school management is necessary to further boost the institutional capacity in the monitoring, evaluation and review of educational programmes for better performance.
- The systemic model of quality assurance should be given more attention in order to bridge the gaps between parents and schooling activities. The involvement of parents is very germane to effective school management. This will provide adequate information about learners’ backgrounds, families’ socio-economic status, societal influence, public perceptions on activities and facilitate adequate support for school improvement.
- The working together of the school principals and parents is highly needed in order to generate robust discussion and holistic innovative ideas for the development of quality improvement policy that will stimulate, guide and sustain the efforts of the school management in the application of quality improvement strategies to achieve better educational resource inputs, process and output in secondary schools.
7. References


