

Effects of School Variables on the Assurance of Quality Learning Outcomes in Schools

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Abstract. This study examines the state of school variables and their implications on effective performance of Quality Education Assurance Agency to enhance effective teaching and learning activities in schools below tertiary level. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. Respondents for the study consist of 60 principals and 540 teachers that were randomly selected using the multi-stage sampling technique from the entire population of 304 public secondary schools in Ondo State, Nigeria. Research instrument tagged, "Education Quality Assurance and School Variables Rating Scale" (EQASVRS) and Interview of Principals and Teachers' as Focus Group (PTFG) were used for data collection. The significance of the hypothesis, using chi-square statistics, was tested at $p < 0.05$ probability. The study reveals that there is gross inadequate number of teachers and other school variables like classrooms, libraries, laboratories and instructional materials which affects the level of curriculum coverage and the academic performance of secondary schools. Furthermore, the results show that there is significant effect of school variables on quality education assurance practice in schools ($\chi^2 = 2.255$ at $p < 0.05$) with the quality assurance practice ($\chi = 3.625$) and school variables ($\chi = 2.495$). This means that most school variables in secondary schools are in poor condition which reduces the impact of quality education assurance agency on school activities. The study concludes that for the education sector to enjoy the desired boost, especially in the students' academic outcomes, attention should not be limited to school supervision, but also ensuring that school variables are in good state and evenly distributed across schools.

Keywords: secondary education; quality assurance; school variables; student learning outcome

1. Introduction

Education is the greatest instrument for growth and development of any society or individual. In its true sense, Education has existed from time immemorial, with each human society and its peculiar world view. It has a set of enduring values that is shared by all its members. This world view and the constellation of shared values, influence the patterns of relationships within the community, the organization and the conduct of human affairs (Obanya, 2003).

According to Durosaro (2002), education involves the development of cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of an individual with a view to molding a total person that will contribute effectively to the development of the community and promotion of cultural heritage. In Nigeria, our traditional form of education, which predates Western type of education, was aimed at developing a total person through the cardinal goals of physical training, vocational training, community participation and promotion of cultural heritage. However, its main deficiency is in its inability to be empirically measured and cannot effectively groom an individual for the present day challenges.

The adoption of the Western Education system has been a driving force in ensuring qualitative and quantifiable education system and continuous participation of Nigeria in the global world. In this sense, according to Ayeni & Adepoju (2012), Education is considered a significant yardstick to human existence in this modern world and the means of actualizing human capital and national improvement. This emphasizes the importance assigned to quality and standards which involves quality learning, resource inputs, instructional process, teachers' capacities development, effective management, monitoring and evaluation, and quality learning outcomes in schools. The achievement recorded in the education sector is determined by the quality of human capital raised by the different education establishments.

Without mincing words, Education can be said to be the key to economic, scientific and technological development of any nation and a platform to ensure that the citizens are relevant in the global scheme of things; as crises in education would result in a failure of the country in every area of development. Hence, in a bid to ensure that the education system is crises free, that the standard of education is maintained and learners' achievement record is outstanding and consistently high in all schools, the need arose for the introduction of Quality Assurance process to the education system in Nigeria, with a view to ensure uniform standard and quality control of institutional activities through regular evaluation and continuous supervision of teaching and learning processes in schools.

Ascertaining the education provision standard is crucial to ensuring and maintaining credibility for programmes, institutions and national systems of education worldwide (Oyebade, Oladipo and Adetoro, 2006). Quality assurance is an education system contrived to enhance and develop the quality of institution's methods, and educational products and outcomes. Hayward (2001) in his view describes Quality Education Assurance as a systematic and planned review of schools process to assess whether the quality of knowledge and skills imparted, erudition and infrastructure are conformed to and sustained. Furthermore, It is also a means of ensuring that the standards of students' academic are clearly specified and attained in accordance with relevant standards national and internationally; that the quality of learning provisions are suitable and satisfies the yearning of the array of stakeholders and that the leadership and management of the schools are in tune with global best-practices.

Consequently, Quality Education Assurance is seen as a way schools assure the standards of education and the quality based on national and international educational provisions and guideline. It also provides clear directives and guidelines on the structures, roles and responsibilities of all parties in the educational system, in a bid to ensure greater academic achievements in schools. Obviously, its major difference from the old school inspectorate system is the participatory approach to evaluation process; as the concept of quality assurance process involves all stakeholders in the effective evaluation and monitoring of schools activities.

Quality Assurance process is continuous in nature and therefore, adopt stability of strategies (like the comparative analysis of external examinations annually, the formulation and implementation of the SDP), actions (monitoring with emphasis on the Whole School Evaluation) and efforts (involving the stakeholders in the monitoring of schools and the insistence on good leadership and management) is a prerequisite for quality in education. Hence, for the new system to remain relevant in the scheme of things, it MUST NOT revert to the Old Inspectorate method of Policing (FME, 2012).

In a bid to ensure that the process of Quality Assurance is not scuttled in the educational sector of the State, it is pertinent that its globally accepted principles are followed dogmatically. These principles include;

- Focus on the learner: the evaluator's concern should be more tuned to the learners than just highlighting the weaknesses of the teachers. E.g. checking the learner's notes and juxtaposing it with the scheme of work to know the actual work done, not concentrating on the teachers Lesson note; comparing the formed scheme of work with the approved curriculum to ensure uniformity; investigating within the learners to know the available learning equipment and how much use they are being put to etc.
- Leadership: ensuring the management teams of schools understand their roles and responsibilities in a way that will ensure the bonding of dreams, aims and approaches in the educational community.
- People's participation: ensure that the ember of the Public Private Partnership is fanned to flame. This can be achieved by enlightening stakeholders on what they stand to lose if everybody is not on top of their game. The SBMC and the PTA should know that they have a say in the day-to-day running of the school. Not just in the finances but in the way the lives of their children are being managed.
- Focus on tools: Evaluator's emphasis should be more on the available tools and how it can be deployed to get the best results. This does not stop the evaluators from writing a report to Government to intimate her with the level of decay in the system in a bid to ensure the tide is stemmed.
- Adopting decisions on the basis of fact: there is a need to ensure reportage is fact based, with unquestionable documents like pictures, voice recording etc. to authenticate claims. Judgment should also be done swiftly to ensure impunity is curbed in the system.
- Continuous improvement: Recognizing the commitment to respond to changing global needs of quality assurance systems in education.

- Shared benefit: Sharing management methods that bring result in some schools with others to ensure uniformity in the development of education in the state.
- Consistence with new steps: Making sure that the schools and Quality Assurance Agency, being in a dynamic and open ended process of continuing improvement, are committed to identify actions and issues to be addressed in future. That is, not getting stuck to a particular process of evaluation but allowing the process to evolve as dictated by circumstances (NQAAC, 2004).

The adoption of Quality Education Assurance system by the Federal Ministry of Education in 2007 and subsequent introduction by the Ondo State Government in 2010 is with a view to shifting from the old form of school inspection process to the new system of encompassing evaluation, that is channeled towards improving the school management standard, environment of learning, delivery of curriculum and learners' academic achievement through close and purposeful partnership between the management of the schools and relevant stakeholders in the education sector (School Based Management Committee (SBMC), Parent-Teachers Association (PTA), Old Students Association, Non-government agencies, Education delegacies, Communities, Ministries, School Board, Individuals and other social institutions. This becomes imperative as a strong, virile and responsive education structure is an enduring foundation that will enhance advanced skills, assure the development of desired human assets and sustained the academic benchmark, which will satisfy the yearnings of the community (parents) that serves as the primary customers to the school (Ayeni, 2012).

However, since the introduction of Quality Education Assurance into the Nigerian education system, the quality of learners' outcomes, as it relates with the suitable changes in skills, knowledge, values and attitudes as measured by different examination bodies, have not shown significant improvement as would be expected. (This study uses students' academic performance in external examinations as benchmark for the state education system; hence it is used to determine the worth of school output academically.) Following the trend of Nigerian learners' academic performance over the years, there has been continuous low academic performance in secondary schools. For instance, Ayeni and Afolabi (2011) outlined the performance of learners in the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination conducted by the National Examination Council (NECO-SSCE) in November/December, 2009, in which out of 234,682 learners presented for the examination, only 4,223 (1.8%) learners attained five credit passes including English and Mathematics, with 98.2% failure rate. Also in the West African Examinations Council (WASSCE) conducted examination in 2009 May/June Senior Secondary Certificate, only 25.9% of the candidates attained five credit passes including English and Mathematics. The same situation is repeated in 2010 May/June WASSCE, in which 337,071 (24.9%) learners attained five credit passes including English and Mathematics, out of the 1,135,557 candidates that sat for the examination.

In addition, only 31.0% of the 1,540,250 learners presented for the 2011 May/June WASSCE attained five credit passes including English and Mathematics in all subjects, out of the 1,135,557 learners that were presented for the examination. Furthermore, in the May/June, 2012 WASSCE, 649,156 (38.8%) of the 1,672,224 learners presented for the examination attained five credit passes in all subjects including English and Mathematics across the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory of Nigeria, while 617,736 (36.6%) of the 1,689,188 learners that were presented for the 2013 May/June WASSCE examination attained five credit passes in all subjects including English and Mathematics. Furthermore the recent 2014 May/June WASSCE, 529,425 (31.3%) of the 1,692,435 learners that were presented for the examination attained five credit passes in all subjects including English and Mathematics (Vanguard August 12, 2014). These results show consistent drop in the learners' performance over the years.

Similarly, the percentage of secondary schools learners that attained five credit passes in all subjects including English language and Mathematics in the West African Examinations Council (WASSCE) between 2007 and 2009 in the Senior School Certificate Examination in Ondo State ranged from 16.7% to 19.1%, and 30.17% in 2010, while 38.0% was recorded in public secondary schools in 2012. 33.5% in 2013 and 32.4% in 2014 (Ondo State Ministry of Education, 2014).

The consistent poor students' academic performance recorded over the years is considered an aberration and consequently frowned at by all education stakeholders, in view of the huge financial attention the sector enjoys in the recent times. Many factors are attributed as causes to the abysmal academic performance of students, out of which is the school variables; which determine the speed at which schools move.

School variables are those factors that contribute to the achievement of school objectives, or that may affect or cause changes in the overall school performance (Bulach, Malone and Castleman, 1995; Cruickshank, 1990). Connolly and McGrail (1978) also assert that school variables have enough impact on learning to warrant study and improvement in school. They stressed that school variables are those characteristics of the school like, school building, classroom, and teacher that appear to influence learning and that can be defined, assessed, and improved should weaknesses be detected. Bliss, et al. (1991) also, identified some variables related to learners' academic achievement. These variables include: orderly school climate, leadership expectations, regular supervision of instruction and assessment, parent and community involvement. Other variables considered germane for students' achievement include school-based management, staff stability, staff development, collaboration, time-on-task, and sense of mission. However, for the purpose of this study, school variables are limited to teachers, classrooms, library, laboratory and instructional materials in Ondo State Secondary schools.

1.1 Statement of Problem

The adoption of Quality Education Assurance into the Ondo state system of education is purposely to improve the already worsen standard of education. But despite its introduction, the situation has not improved as expected, but rather dwindles; the results of students in both internal and external examinations attest to this fact as identified above. However, there have been insinuations that the poor condition of the school variables such as class-teachers, classrooms, library, laboratories and instructional materials could be ascribed as factors that adversely affect the realization of the aims and objectives for establishing Quality Education Assurance. Hence, prevents the achievement of the objectives of quality education delivery in schools. The study therefore, intends to examine the state and standard of school variables, assess the implications of the shortage and neglect of school variables on the performance of Quality Education Assurance agency in the state.

1.2 Research Questions

The following research questions are formulated to guide the study.

- i. What is the level of availability of teachers and school infrastructure in Ondo State?
- ii. What are the effects of inadequate teachers and school infrastructure on school development?
- iii. What are the implications of the school variables to education quality assurance?

1.3 Research Hypothesis

H₀₁: There is no significant effect of teachers and other school variables on the performance of Quality Assurance Agency in Ondo State

2. Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design, involving both the quantitative and qualitative methods of collection and analysis of data from the respondents in a bid to identify solutions to the problems identified. The population for the study consisted of all principals and teachers in the 304 public secondary schools in Ondo state. The state is made up of five (5) educational zones, five (5) Local Government Areas (LGAs), one from each of the five educational zones was selected based on school population and location using stratified random sampling technique. Twelve public secondary schools were randomly selected from each of the selected Local Government Area, making sixty (60) secondary schools in all. The respondents include sixty (60) principals and five hundred and forty (540) teachers selected randomly from the secondary schools. The instruments for the study included self-developed questionnaires tagged: "Education Quality Assurance and School Variables Rating Scale" (EQASVRS) and Guide on principals and teachers selected for interview as Focus Group (PTFG). Three research questions were postulated and a null hypothesis was tested at $p < 0.05$ probability level of significance.

The instrument comprised four sections (A, B, C and D); the A part of the EQAVRS is related to the biographical data of the respondents. The B part of the EQASVRS has 14 items constructed to answer questions on the availability and adequacy of teachers and other school variables, the C part of the EQASVRS also has 7 items designed to assess the effects of teachers and other school variables on the development of the schools, and section D of the EQASVRS contained 6 items constructed on the impact of Quality Education Assurance Agency on school development. The instrument is structured in a 4-point Likert scale response format of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. The allocated values for the scale were 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively.

The construct and content validity of the instruments were determined through the use of expert judgment from the Faculty of Education, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife. Experts in Test and Measurement thoroughly inspected the instruments; their suggestions were implemented, this resulted to the deletion of unsuitable items from the instrument, after which the instruments were certified suitable for measuring the constructs it is designed for. Copies of the instrument were administered on the sampled principals and teachers after due permission was obtained from the principals in the respective schools. For easy distribution and collation of the questionnaires, one research assistant was engaged to facilitate the administration of the instrument. All the questionnaires were safely retrieved and completely filled without omission. Data collected were analyzed using percentages and chi-square analysis at 0.05 probability level of significance; using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 16.0.

3. Result

The outcomes of the analysis were presented according to the postulated research questions in such a way that the interrelatedness of the variables considered are explicitly described in the study, especially as they affect activities of Education Quality Assurance agency and the adequacy of school variables. The results presented in table 1 shows the staff strength of teachers and availability of infrastructure in schools. The table showed that over 90% of the sampled principals and teachers claimed that there is inadequate teaching staff in schools, and over 78% of the respondents claimed that there is shortage of teachers on subject basis in schools also, while over 77% of the respondents claimed that teachers were posted to schools based on the area of specialization, however, over 92% of the respondents claimed that distribution of teachers is not based on school quota, and over 85% of the respondents claimed that their school has no standardized and well furnished library, over 91% of the respondents disagreed that their school library is furnished with relevant and updated texts, and over 78% of the same respondents also disagreed that school library are managed by professional librarians whose duty is to take care of the libraries. Although, over 85% of the total respondents claimed that school libraries are accessible to all classes of students at all times. Yet, over 78% of the respondents claimed that schools maintain multipurpose laboratories, and over 86% of the respondents maintained that their schools have no standardized laboratories as they are poorly stocked. Also, over 86% of the respondents claimed that schools have inadequate number of classrooms for its learner's population, with over 93% disagreeing with the assertion that each class houses

between 30-35 learners. Furthermore, over 86% maintained that there is inadequate and mostly unrelated instructional materials for use in class, while below 28% claimed that instructional materials are regularly used during teaching in schools. This identifies gross inadequacies in the teaching staff and other school infrastructure. These variables among others determine the success of the education objectives, hence their shortfall only mean one thing; failure in the academic achievement of students, which is the main reason of bringing together all the variables.

Table 1: Staff Strength of Teachers and Availability of Infrastructure in Ondo State public schools (N=600)

S/N	Effects of inadequate teachers and schools' infrastructure	SA		A		D		SD	
		Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
1	There is inadequate teaching staff in my school	336	56.0	242	40.3	16	2.7	6	1.0
2	There is shortage of teachers on subject basis in my schools	288	28.0	305	50.8	7	1.2	0	0
3	Teachers posted to my school is based on the area of specialization	253	42.2	214	35.7	45	7.5	87	14.5
4	Teachers distribution is based on school quota	18	3.0	25	4.2	271	45.2	286	47.7
5	There is standardized and adequately furnished library in my school	0	0	85	14.2	195	32.5	320	53.3
6	The library in my school is furnished with relevant and updated texts	0	0	51	8.5	217	36.2	332	55.3
7	My school library is managed by a professional librarian whose main duty is to take care of the library	18	3.0	114	19.0	127	21.2	341	56.8
8	My school library is accessible to all classes of students at all times	0	0	86	14.3	404	67.3	110	18.3
9	My school maintains	0	0	130	21.7	256	42.7	214	35.7

	specialized laboratories								
10	My school has standardized laboratories and are well furnished	0	0	81	13.5	185	30.8	334	55.7
11	My school has adequate number of classrooms for its students population	0	0	81	13.5	292	48.7	227	37.8
12	In my school, each class houses between 30-35 students	0	0	37	6.5	256	44.8	279	48.8
13	My school has adequate and relevant instructional materials for use in class	0	0	79	13.2	237	39.5	284	47.3
14	Instructional materials are regularly used during teaching in my school	49	8.2	118	19.7	347	57.8	86	14.3

Table 2 presents the effects of inadequate teachers and school infrastructure on curriculum coverage. The table shows that over 82% of the respondents claimed that curriculum is not comprehensively covered in each academic year. Moreover, over 91% of the respondents claimed that teachers' workload is over average for most teachers, and over 88% of the respondents also maintained that students are not adequately familiarized with practicals in their subject. Furthermore, over 78% claimed that students' reading habit is low in schools. This implies that things are not really working in schools. If the curriculum which is designed to be covered within an academic year is not covered within the stipulated time, and the learners move to the next class, and it continues across classes, what miracle is expected to make such learners pass; even if a team of evaluators is stationed in the school?

Table 2: Effects of inadequate teachers and school infrastructure on school development (N=600)

S/N	Effects of inadequate teachers and schools' infrastructure	SA		A		D		SD	
		Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
1	The curriculum is always comprehensively covered every academic year	35	5.8	72	12.0	359	59.8	134	22.3
2	Teachers' workload is on the average for every teacher	0	0	50	8.3	369	61.5	181	30.2

3	Students are adequately familiarized with practical	0	0	70	11.7	366	61.0	164	27.3
4	Students' reading habit is high in school	49	8.2	79	13.2	324	54.0	148	24.7

Table 3 also presents the effects of inadequate teachers and school infrastructure on the academic achievement of students. The table shows that most of the respondents (46.5%) claimed that between 50% - 59% of the students that wrote the 2013 Junior School Certificate Examination (JSCE) passed in 5 credits and above including English Language and Mathematics, while 53.2% of the respondents claimed that only between 40% - 49% of the students that wrote West Africa Secondary School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) passed in 5 credits and above including English Language and Mathematics. Also, 46.3% of the respondents claimed that 40% - 49% of the students that wrote the internal examination conducted for SSIII students passed in 5 credits and above including English Language and Mathematics. This implies that the academic achievement of students is low which is not good for the future of the society.

Table 3: Effects of inadequate teachers and school infrastructure on Students' Achievement (N=600)

	Academic Achievement of students	Excellent %	Very Good %	Good %	Fair %	Poor %
5	Indicate students' achievement in 2013 JSCE, it is regarded as Excellent (5) 1f 75% or more obtained 5 credits and above including English Language and Mathematics; 60% - 74% Very Good (4); 50% - 59% Good (3); 40% - 49% Fair (2); below 40% Poor (1).	51 (8.5)	153 (25.5)	279 (46.5)	117 (19.5)	0 (0)
6	Indicates the students' achievement in 2014 WASSCE, it is regarded as Excellent (5) 1f 75% or more obtained 5 credits and above including English Language and Mathematics; 60% - 74% Very Good (4); 50% - 59% Good (3); 40% - 49% Fair (2); below 40% Poor (1).	0 (0)	20 (3.3)	18 (3.0)	319 (53.2)	243 (40.5)
7	Indicates the students' achievement in internal examination conducted for SSIII Students, it is regarded as Excellent (5) 1f 75% or more obtained 5 credits and above including English Language and Mathematics; 60% - 74% Very Good (4); 50% - 59% Good (3); 40% - 49% Fair (2); below 40% Poor (1).	20 (3.3)	123 (20.5)	125 (20.8)	278 (46.3)	54 (9.0)

Table 4 presents the impact of Quality Education Assurance on school development. The table shows between 27.5% - 66.8% of the respondents agreed that there is collaboration between the school and Area Quality Assurance office,

also between 44.2% - 50.2% of the respondents agreed that the recommendations given by the Q. Ed officers are helpful for improved teaching capacity, while between 33.8% - 46.2% of the respondents disagreed with the assertion that Quality Education Assurance Agents are not friendly in their interaction with teachers. Moreover, between 37.2% - 48.2% of the respondents agreed that school is regularly briefed on the outcomes of evaluation reports in the school, and between 43.7% - 56.3% of the respondents agreed that Q.Ed officers usually conduct follow-up on teachers based on their previous visit. Also, between 20.7% - 67.5% of the respondents agreed that the attendance of learners have improved significantly due to Q. Ed activities in schools, infact between 38.0% - 56.3% of the respondents categorically stated that the emergence of Q. Ed Agency has facilitated improved attitude to work by principals and teachers in school, also between 28.7% - 65.7% of the respondents agreed that principals and teachers are familiar with Q. Ed instrument for inspection, between 46.2% and 48.2% of the same population agreed that teachers' punctuality and regularity to schools have now improved. This implies that the Quality Education Assurance Agency saddled with the responsibilities to ensure uniform standard and quality control of institutional activities has been effective in its duties.

Table 4: Impact of Quality Education Assurance on school development (N=600)

S/N	Impact of Q.Ed on School Development	SA		A		D		SD	
		Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
1	There is collaboration between my school and Area Quality Assurance office	165	27.5	401	66.8	34	5.7	0	0
2	The recommendations given by the Q. Ed officers are helpful for improved capacity	301	50.2	265	44.2	34	5.7	0	0
3	Quality Education Assurance Agents are not friendly in their interaction with teachers	86	14.3	34	5.7	277	46.2	203	33.8
4	We are regularly briefed on the outcomes of evaluation reports in my school	289	48.2	223	37.2	88	14.7	0	0
5	Q.Ed usually conduct follow-up on teachers based on their previous visit	338	56.3	262	43.7	0	0	0	0
6	Attendance of learners have improved due to Q. Ed activities	124	20.7	405	67.5	34	5.7	37	6.2
7	The emergence of Q. Ed Agency has facilitated improved attitude to work by principals and teachers in my school	338	56.3	228	38.0	34	5.7	0	0
8	Teachers and principals are familiar with Q. Ed instrument for inspection	172	28.7	394	65.7	34	5.7	0	0

9	Teachers' punctuality and regularity to schools have now improved	289	48.2	277	46.2	0	0	34	5.7
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Table 5 presents the result of analysis conducted on the effects of school variables on Quality Education Assurance Agency performance in Ondo State. The study showed that the chi-square value of 2.255 at $p < 0.01$ is significant. Therefore, the hypothesis is sustained; hence there is significant effect of inadequacies of school variables on quality assurance practice. The mean score (2.50) for school variables is considered low, which implies that it is a clog in the wheels of progress in the education process. By implication, teaching and learning processes cannot be effective without adequate and evenly distributed teachers across schools and other school facilities that enhance effective teaching are important, students' academic achievement is dependent greatly on the adequacy of these variables for students to excel. However, a mean score of 3.63 was recorded on quality assurance practice in the state which implied that the level of performance is still below what is expected, if school variables had been on the high side.

Table 5: Effect of school variables on Quality Education Assurance Agency performance in Ondo State

Items	n	Mean	SD	χ^2
School variables	572	2.495	0.500	2.255
Quality Assurance Practice	600	3.625	0.485	

4. Discussion

The purpose of this study was to establish the effect of inadequacy of school variables on assuring quality in education practices in public Secondary schools. The finding reveals that there is gross inadequate teachers and other school variables like classrooms, libraries, laboratories and instructional materials in schools. This implies that most public schools are grounded and nonfunctional. An example of a public school with the students' population of five hundred, six classrooms without doors and windows, and ten teachers including the principal managing the school, the inadequacy is evident. This situation is synonymous to many public schools, especially in the rural areas. Findings show that out of the 304 public secondary schools in Ondo state, only 30 (9.08%) can boast of well equipped and adequately structured library (Education Quality Assurance Infrastructure Analysis, 2011; Focus Group). Most schools that claimed to have a library are in miserable state; some libraries are without furniture for students' comfort, some are without shelves for stockpiling of books resulting in haphazard arrangement of books, in some cases, books are kept on the floor in the principals' office or at a corner in the library. Even in some schools, the libraries are under lock and key to secure the books while

denying the willing learners access and opportunity to develop their capacities. Findings from the Focus Group also reveal that most learners in public secondary schools do not have the necessary prescribed textbooks. An average of 25-30 students out of 45 students in a class do not have Mathematics or English Language textbooks, while an average of 30-35 of 40 students do not have textbooks in Nigerian Languages, Physics, Chemistry, Economics, Geography, Account, Literature-in-English, Biology, Agricultural Science and Commerce. While an average of 35-40 out of 40 students will not have novels to read during break or at home. Both the principals and teachers sampled for discussion confirmed that instructional materials like printed materials, graphic representation like charts, maps, diagrams, motion pictures and audio recordings are not regularly used in most public schools, while instructional materials such as still pictures and concrete objects are not used at all. The reason attributed for this is that schools are not well funded to procure these items. Infact, some principals claim that the running grant is seldom released and when it is released, the enormity of the schools needs make it inconsequential. The moribund state of infrastructure in schools did not just occur in a day, it is due to long time neglect of updating school data; recruiting new teachers when some retired, or voluntarily leave the service and regular maintenance of infrastructure in schools.

At the inception of the Universal Basic Education programme (UBE) in Nigeria, Mohammed noted that the following additional personnel and infrastructure were required to beef up the smooth running of the programme in Nigeria then; teachers (1,307,836), classrooms (301,190), pupils furniture (445,379), libraries (33,727), workshop (33,727), laboratories (33,727), textbooks (96,545,388) and play equipment (130,485,756), but nothing was done until when the situation was almost beyond amelioration, Mohammed (2008).

The effect of these inadequacies on the curriculum coverage and students' academic performance is outrageous. Little can be expected of students who are not comprehensively groomed on the curriculum contents before sitting for examinations, with teachers who are over labored with excess workload due to shortage of teachers, and students who are hardly familiar with instruments in the laboratories. The situation is so bad that some students only have access to a standard laboratory while undergoing practicals in their final examination in secondary school; you see such students dancing around with burette, pipette, Bunsen burner, conical flask etc, since they are handling them for the first time. Some school libraries have become rest rooms, where students visit only to sleep; since there are no books or personnel to monitor activities going on in them. All these portend danger for the education system, if care is not taken.

All the aforementioned effects reduce what could have been a huge success of the Evaluative apparatus in the state. Despite the fact that the Agency is all over the state and is in schools more frequently than ever, little is observed to have been achieved in terms of students' academic performance in schools. The findings show that the inadequacies of school variable significantly affect the

productivity of the Agency, thereby reducing the desired impact on school improvement.

5. Conclusion

The study concludes that the consistent downward slide in the academic performance of students is largely attributed to the poor state of school variables. Quality Education Assurance Agency, although basically charged with monitoring and supervision of these school variables and reporting same to the Government, who has the prerogative to decide what to do with the reports. The Agency can perform its statutory duties better, if the school variables are adequate and in good condition. Adequate teachers, standard and well equipped libraries and laboratories, adequate and conducive classrooms and relevant instructional materials are actually the responsibility of the Government in conjunction with parents, philanthropists and education stakeholders within the school environment. Therefore, Government and other relevant education stakeholders should be proactive in ensuring adequacy of all school variables, as this will ensure that the transformational process improves logically and the overall students' academic performance since concentration on supervision alone cannot guarantee the educational goals the state needs.

5.1 Recommendations

Government should note that improving the standard of education is not limited to setting up an Agency to ensure quality control in schools, but ensuring that other school variables are also available and adequate. There should be regular recruitment of teachers based on subjects to fill in existing vacancies due to retirement. There should be constant maintenance of existing infrastructure and provision of standard and well equipped libraries and specialized laboratories in schools across the state where there is none. Government should collaborate effectively with parents, willing philanthropists and other education stakeholders in developing the education sector. Each local area should be encouraged to domesticate the schools to their peculiarity without compulsion. Also, the learners' academic performance should be regularly and comprehensively communicated to the parents and guardians of the learners by the school authority. This will sensitize and also encourage them to be more proactive in their responsibilities as it relates with the provision of the required textbooks and other learning materials for improved students' academic performance in schools.

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