

# Standards in Senior Secondary Education: An Assessment of the Quality Control Guidelines in Edo State, Nigeria

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**Abstract** - *The study examined the existing guidelines used as quality control measures for enhancing standards in senior secondary education in Edo State. It used the descriptive survey design. The instrument used for the study was a questionnaire, while the population consisted of the 797 public and private senior secondary school Principals and the 198 members of the schools inspectorate team (inspectors) across the state. The purposive sampling technique was used to obtain 198 (25%) school principals and 50 (25%) schools inspectors in the state. The mean score and t-test were employed for analysis of the collected data. Some items which presently formed part of the guidelines were regarded as irrelevant while new items were proposed for inclusion in the guidelines.*

**Keywords** – *guidelines, control, measures, standards.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Quality as a concept is considered as baseline standard in education which can be measured in a scale of reference. It is an expression of standard or the means by which certain set of standards in education can be achieved. It addresses the issues of accountability in educational practices in terms of the use put to materials and personnel (Ebhoihimen & Okogie, 1998).

The need to make education accountable has subsisted over the years in Nigeria. This became self-evident in the mid eighties when the educational planners and policy makers came up with the idea of minimum standard (or basic requirements) in Nigeria schools. In backing up the idea, the Federal Government promulgated the National Minimum Standard and Establishment of Institutions Decree No 16 of 1985. The Decree provided the guidelines for Minimum Standards and for the evaluation of efficacy (Quality Control) in the schools (FRN, 1985).

In order to strengthen the quality control mechanisms, Maduwesi (2005) posited that all schools

in Nigeria including Edo State must attain essential minimum standards with respect to the issues involved in the following, among other things: staffing; Infrastructure, classroom size, laboratories, dormitories, staff quarters, administrative blocks; Library; Teaching, learning activities and instructional materials;

Quality control and assessment of instructional materials; and Co-curricular activities.

Since the early eighties when the minimum standard for ensuring quality assurance was set, a lot of changes have taken place in the Senior Secondary Education Sector in Nigeria. Today, issues in Senior Secondary Education include among others, computer Assisted learning programming in varieties of subjects, virtual library and classrooms, enrolment of under-aged into the system increase in the level of socialization and exposure as a result of modern information technology, reduction in parental attention for their wards (learners), cultism and violence among students, flare for materialism and ostentatious life style among the students, internet fraud, inordinate ambition among young Nigerians, influence of corruption in government and other social sectors on the students, frequent messages of prosperity by modern churches, particularly the Pentecostal types, increasing phenomenon of half backed teaching personnel in the schools and examination malpractices. It is to be noted that, as a result of the phenomenon of examination malpractices, many schools and science teachers have abandoned the tradition of teaching and preparation of students for terminal or final year examinations in the science practical. Consequently, science laboratories in school where they were available are no longer put into use as required by the approved guidelines.

There is also the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), part of which expects education to be provided for all (EFA) by 2015. By implication, the doors of schools are expected to be made opened and even wider than ever to allow for more learning

opportunities for prospective learners. Similarly, the schools are expected to “move out” of their “shells” to meet learners and their learning needs in their homes through the open and Distance Learning Programmes (DLP).

The prevailing issues in education as mentioned above are serious matter. They are serious enough to elicit the attention and re-thinking of educational planners and administrators alike, on what should now constitute the quality control measures for setting standard in Senior Secondary Education. As the education system is expected to respond to the dynamics of the society, so are guidelines for measuring its standard should respond to the changes in the system. To stick to the status quo; of confining quality control in education to the age-long guidelines earlier stated, could be counter productive in the circumstance.

## II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study aimed to determine the relevance of the existing guidelines used by school inspectors and administrators (principals) for carrying out quality control process for the attainment of better standards in senior secondary schools in Edo State. Specifically, to determine the relevance of the existing guidelines for quality control aimed at ensuring standards in Senior Secondary Education in Edo State; to identify which of the existing guidelines are the schools finding difficulties in terms of compliance; and to determine new guidelines which can be used as quality control measures for ensuring standards in Senior Secondary education in Edo State.

## III. METHODS

The design of the study was a descriptive survey. It gathered and investigated relevant data which described and interpreted the current state of the subject matter. The population of the study consisted of the 797 public and private senior secondary school principals and the

198 members of the schools inspectorate team (inspectors) across the state. The stratified random sampling technique was used to obtain 198 (25%) school principals and 50 (25%) schools inspectors. The stratified random sampling technique was used because the population of the study had already occurred in two strata; principals and inspectors. An instrument entitled; Relevance of Quality Control Guidelines Questionnaires (RQCGQ) was designed and used for data collection in the study: The questionnaire which was divided into three sections is a modified likert scale type: structured on four rating parameters as follows: below 2.50 – Very irrelevant less Easy or Strongly Disagreed; 2.50 – 2.99 = Irrelevant, Easy or Disagreed; 3.00 – 3.50 = Relevant Difficult or Agreed; and Above 3 .50 = Very Relevant, Very Difficult or Strongly Agreed.

Section A sought answer to the issues of relevance of the existing guidelines, while section B elicited responses on the difficulties encountered by the schools in complying with the guidelines. In Section C, new sets of items were proposed for inclusion to the existing guidelines for respondents to agree to or disagree with.

The designed questionnaire was validated with regard to its relevance to the purpose of the study by experts in the Department of Educational Administration and Foundations in the University of Benin, Benin City. Amendments were accordingly carried out in the instruments in line with the suggestions raised by experts. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained by using the Cronbach Alpha to calculate the internal consistency of the instrument. The result indicated 0.76 and was considered good enough for the study. The administration of the instrument was done with the aid of research assistants. Weighted mean score statistics was used for answering the research questions while t-test was used for testing of the hypothesis.

## IV. RESULTS

Table 1. Level of Relevance of the Existing Guidelines for Quality Control Measures in Enhancing Standards in Senior Secondary Schools in Edo State.

S/N	Item Description	Mean (x) of Group A (Principals)	Mean (x) of Group B (Inspectors)	Pooled X of Groups A & B	Decision
1.	Staffing:				
	(a) NCE as minimum qualification	3.50	3.50	3.50	Relevant
	(b) Teacher-Students ratio of 1:40	2.80	3.17	2.88	Irrelevant

Table 1 (cont). Level of Relevance of the Existing Guidelines for Quality Control Measures in Enhancing Standards in Senior Secondary Schools in Edo State.

S/N	Item Description	Mean (x) of Group A (Principals)	Mean (x) of Group B (Inspectors)	Pooled X of Groups A & B	Decision
2.	Infrastructures				
	(a) Classroom size	3.23	3.01	3.12	Relevant
	(b) Science Laboratories	3.51	3.50	3.5	Very relevant
	(c) Dormitories & Staff Quarters	3.24	3.22	3.44	Relevant
	(d) Staff common Rooms	3.50	3.50	3.50	Relevant
	(e) Play ground	2.90	2.85	2.88	Irrelevant
3.	Conventional Library	3.16	3.60	3.38	Relevant
4.	Teaching/Learning Activities and Instructional materials	3.33	3.50	3.42	Relevant
5.	Evidence of Co-curricular activities	2.90	3.41	3.16	Relevant

In table 1, the data show that the issue of teacher-student ratio of 1:40 in terms of staffing is irrelevant. Another item in the table which the respondents considered as no longer relevant was play ground with mean (2.88). Data in the table further showed that the other items; NCE as minimum qualification for teachers (3.50), classroom size (3.12), science laboratories (3.50), staff common rooms (3.50), dormitories and staff Quarters were rated as relevant. Science Laboratories with a rating of 3.51 was however singled out as very relevant.

Table 2. Level of Difficulties Encountered by the Schools while complying with each of the Guidelines

S/N	Item Description	Mean (x) of Group A (Principals)	Mean (x) of Group B (Inspectors)	Pooled X of Groups A & B	Decision
1.	Staffing:	3.50	3.49	3.50	Difficult
2.	Infrastructures	3.51	3.50	3.50	Very Difficult
3.	Conventional Library	3.50	3.50	3.50	Difficult
4.	Teaching/Learning Activities and Instructional materials	3.50	3.52	3.51	Very Difficult
5.	Evidence of Co-curricular activities	2.8	3.91	2.85	Easy

Data in Table 2 revealed that; compliance with specified guidelines or requirements for infrastructures, teaching/learning activities and instructional materials were very difficult with mean rating of 3.51 each. Other areas or items which the respondents identified as difficult during compliance were; staffing (3.50) and provision of library (3.50). According to the data in the table 2, compliance with the guidelines on co-curricular activities (2.85) was rather easy.

Table 3. Opinion of School Principals and Inspectors on “New items” for Inclusion in the Guidelines for Quality Control of Standards in Senior Secondary Schools.

Item Description	Mean (x) of Group A (Principals)	Mean (x) of Group B (Inspectors)	Pooled X of Groups A & B	Decision
<b>1. Staffing:</b>				
(a) Evidence of regular re-training of teachers accompanied with certificates of competencies	3.60	3.52	3.56	Strongly Agreed
(b) Promotion of teaching personnel based on certificates obtained in re-training programmes.	3.16	3.50	3.08	Agreed

Table 3 (cont). Opinion of School Principals and Inspectors on “New items” for Inclusion in the Guidelines for Quality Control of Standards in Senior Secondary Schools.

Item Description	Mean (x) of Group A (Principals)	Mean (x) of Group B (Inspectors)	Pooled X of Groups A & B	Decision
<b>2. Infrastructures:</b>				
(a) Evidence of maintenance and improvement on existing infrastructures.	3.65	3.60	3.61	Strongly Agreed
(b) Provision of individualized staff offices as replacement for pool of staff common rooms	3.52	3.58	3.53	Strongly Agreed
(c) Availability of computer assisted learning and Information Communication Technology (ICT) facilities.	3.62	3.60	3.61	Strongly Agreed
(d) Provision of E – Library	2.40	2.10	2.34	Strongly Disagree
(e) Availability of workshops/farms for practical lessons in Vocational and Entrepreneurial Studies	3.21	3.17	3.20	Agreed
(f) Provision of facilities for different Sports/Game as replacement for ordinary playground.	3.51	3.68	3.54	Strongly Agreed
<b>3. Administration:</b>				
(a) Evidence of zero tolerance, prevention and control mechanisms for cultism/violence by students in the school.	3.41	3.50	3.46	Agreed
(b) Evidence of high morality/discipline among staff and students as well as general school climate	3.16	3.60	3.38	Agreed
(c) Evidence of Parents/Guardians and Community participation in the management of the schools.	3.33	3.61	3.47	Agreed
(d) Operation of Junior and Senior Secondary schools in separate locations.	3.60	3.58	3.60	Strongly Agreed
(e) Compulsory boarding/on-campus residency for all students	3.24	3.37	3.27	Agreed
(f) Issue of students-teacher should be left for school management	3.41	3.49	3.45	Agreed

The data presented in table 3 revealed that the respondents agreed to all the items suggested for inclusion as new guidelines in the quality control process. The data in the table further indicated that; the respondents' agreement with regard to evidence of re-training of teachers in the service (3.56) evidence of maintenance and improvement on existing infrastructures (3.61), Provision of individualized offices as replacement for pool of staff common room (3.53), operation of junior and senior secondary schools in separate locations (3.60), and evidence of computer assisted learning and information communication technology (3.61) were in strong terms.

Table 4. Difference between the mean of Principals and Inspectors on New Items for inclusion in the Guidelines for Quality Control in the Senior Secondary Schools

Group	X	SD	NO	Df	r-cal	t-crit	Alfa level	Decision
A (Principals)	3.55	0.28	198	248	0	1.96	0.05	Accepted
Inspectors	3.62	0.31	50					

The data in table 4 indicate that the mean for the principals was 3.55 while that of the inspectors was 3.62. In the table, the result of the t-test analysis shows that the t-calculated (0) did not exceed the t-critical (1.96), hence the null hypothesis is accepted. In other words, there is no significant difference in the opinions of the school principals and inspectors on the suggested new items for inclusion in the Guidelines for Quality control for the enhancement of standards in senior Secondary Education in Edo State.

## V. DISCUSSION

The study has revealed that; it is no longer relevant to give considerations to issues such as teacher – student ratio of 1.40 as a guideline in the secondary schools. This is because the use of the guideline may not be applicable with regards to all the subjects taught in the school. At the senior secondary school level, students are given the opportunities to choose their subjects according to their ability and interest. Therefore, the use of the same teacher – students ratio in the sciences or vocational/Entrepreneurial subjects as in the arts, and social sciences would not yield desirable results. This finding supports Ehiorobo (2006), when he stated that there is no universality in class size and organization, as there are always situations which are determined by certain factors that the school authorities may not be able to control.

In the study, it was also shown that the inclusion of dormitories, staff quarters and playground are not relevant. In Edo State, most of the senior secondary schools no longer operate the boarding system. Therefore giving considerations to dormitories and quarters for staff in the school compound is unnecessary. In the same vein provision playground without organizing it in line with different sporting.

Difficulties were reported to have been encountered in the schools while complying with all the items in the guidelines except in the aspect of co-curricular activities. The ones in which difficulties were seriously encountered were the infrastructures, and teaching/learning activities. The reasons for the encountered severe difficulties in the two areas could be traceable to insufficient fund and the use of unmotivated, inexperience and half-baked teachers respectively. With low or no funds, provision of infrastructures becomes difficult. In the same vein, adequate organization of teaching/learning activities is remote with ill equipped teachers.

The findings of the study on the inclusion of some new items to form part of the guidelines were a

welcomed development. The respondents agreed to the inclusion of all the items suggested, particularly; regular re-training of teachers in service use of certificates obtained in re-training programme for promotion, and Computer Assisted learning and Information communication technology. The inclusion of the new items will serve as means for up dating the guidelines in tune with the present day realities. Similarly the re-training of teachers will assist in correcting the ills associated with the teachers being produced by the training institutions. What is more gratifying is the acceptance of the null hypothesis; an indication of unanimity of opinions of both principals and inspectors on the inclusion of the new items in the guidelines for measuring standards and quality of senior secondary schools in Edo State, Nigeria.

## VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study passed judgment on the relevance or otherwise of some items, which presently constitute the guidelines used in the quality control measures in the schools. It also sought for the inclusion of some new items. This is with a view to updating the guidelines currently in use to ascertain standard or quality control in the schools. To achieve success in the quality control efforts which are aimed at desirable and sustainable standards in education there is need for greater community involvement in the operations of the schools.

It is recommended that there is need for greater involvement of the parents /guardian and the communities in the operation of schools in the state. This should be with a view to assisting the schools in the provision and maintenance of infrastructures. It will also help the schools in obtaining the desirable moral tone and level of discipline.

Mentoring should be encouraged in the school system. In this regards, experienced and well trained teachers will be appointed mentors to assist in the training of teachers who are lacking in the teaching subjects and pedagogy on the job.

Providers of the global system mobile (GSM) network should be compelled/persuaded by the government to assist schools in their areas of operations with Internet out let facilities. With such assistance, it will be easy for the schools to be ICT compliance.

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