



Total Quality Management Strategies And School Administrators' Performance In Public Senior Secondary Schools In Port Harcourt Metropolis Of Rivers State

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between total quality management strategies and school administrators' performance in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted a correlational research design. The population of the study comprised 2,055 respondents consisting of 105 principals and 1,950 teachers from the 35 public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis. 835 respondents consisting of 33 principals and 802 teachers were drawn through stratified random sampling technique for the study. The instruments for data collection were self-structured questionnaires titled "Total Quality Management Strategies Questionnaire" and "School Administrators' Performance Questionnaire". The instruments were validated by two experts in the Departments of Measurement and Evaluation and Educational Management. The reliability of the instrument was determined using test-retest method to achieve a reliability index 0.81 using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. The research questions of the study were answered using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient while the null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance by the application of t-ratio test to the PPMCC index with a critical t-value of ± 1.96 . The findings of the study showed that employees' involvement and benchmarking have a significant positive relationship with school administrators' performance in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State. It was therefore recommended among others that school administrators should involve employees in administrative work of their schools in order to achieve the secondary school goals.

Keywords: Total Quality Management, Employee Involvement, Benchmarking

INTRODUCTION

The core objectives of every organization across the globe is to produce goods and services without zero-defect, and to keep their customers satisfied, while increasing organizational profitability. These objectives border on concern for quality of goods or products produced by an organization. It is most applicable to service rendering organizations, wherein, the need to improve on quality and timely delivery with effective and efficient use of resources is pivotal to organizational success and growth.

The school is one of the service oriented organizations which is normative in nature. This quality of a school as a social organization demands that the ingenuity of teachers should be duly recognized by school administrators by involving them in decision making, task and responsibilities in the school to achieve the secondary school goals; which are preparing individuals for higher education and self-reliance. These goals can be better actualized using Total Quality Management strategies.

The concept of Total Quality Management (TQM) was advocated by Deming in the late 1950s in the United States of America, which was embraced by Japanese firms to recover her economy after the Second World War (Zakuan, Munianay, Mat-Saman Aviff, Sulaiman & Jallil, 2012). In recent times however, it is adopted in the educational system of countries of the world to achieve effective school administration and the delivery of quality education. This is as a result of the fact that investment in human capital development is fundamental to the development of every organization as well as nations of the world, as it does not only to ensure steady economy but organizational growth, and better standards of living of a country's citizenry (Sallis, 2012). Observations show that human capital development cannot be achieved in isolation without governments' intervention at all levels of education to provide quality education for her citizenry for enhanced cognitive development of both pupils and students in the primary and secondary schools.

Abu, Zamab and Anjain (2012) defined Total Quality Management as a system of management practice that is based on the principle that every member of staff in an organization must be committed to maintaining high standards of work performance in every aspect of the organization's operations. This implies that TQM entails organization wide effort which ensures employees continuous improvement on their competencies to provide on demand, the services that are particularly needed by the customers. Oakland as cited in Arora (2008) conceptualized Total Quality Management as a way of managing to improve effectiveness, flexibility and competitiveness of a business. In view the above, TQM as a strategy calculated to enhance the school administrator's performance through his/her functions of: programme planning and policy formulation; provisions of funds and facilities maintenance, personnel training/development, improvement of instructional programmes and provision of instructional materials, provision of students personnel services and creation of a good school community relationship. These functions are meant to promote effective work performance thereby achieving delivery of quality education to students in the public senior secondary schools.

The application of TQM as a strategy for effective and efficient administrative performance has become necessary especially in an era of intense competition among private and public secondary schools. Private secondary schools are almost taking over the public secondary schools because they are more customer focused in academic and non-academic activities of the school. Also bench-marking is taken seriously to avoid other schools taking over their students in the competitive business arena.

In recent times the education sector views quality education as a major concern of stakeholders and the pressure and demand for achieving the best in quality education delivery is really increasing in the education sector (Sallis, 2012). Therefore, stakeholders in the education sector are seriously perceived to advocate for the implementation of total quality management by school administrators in order to provide strategic management in school administration. More so, it is believed that quality education in public secondary schools can be rendered to the students if school administrators employ certain Total Quality Management strategies (Kosiowski, 2016; Oduweriye, Sotoluwe & Kayode, 2012).

The onus of achieving quality education in public senior secondary schools lie on the school administrators as superintendents of schools who oversee the day to day running of school affairs to ensure that schools function effectiveness and efficiently. In collaboration, Abu, Zaman and Anjain (2016) defined a school administrator as the highest ranking staff of a school or officer who oversees the daily activities and operations of the school and performs specific administrative duties and responsibilities such as providing leadership and direction in time of crisis and carry out optimistic visions for the future of the school, keeps school programmes running smoothly and provides budgets, logistics schedule, disciplinary actions, evaluations and public relations, ensures that the school follows regulations set by local, state and federal authorities and receives reports from teachers, academic advisors and custodial workers. The various functions of the school administrator makes him/her the individual with the sole responsibility of achieving quality education delivery through properly coordinated total quality management strategies.

The components of total quality management which any school administrator must concentrate on to ensure administrative performance as stated by Yang (2015) include: ethics, integrity, trust, training,

teamwork, leadership, recognition and good communication. Thus, these components provide the platform for school administrators to effectively discharge their duties. However, total quality management strategies that are employed to achieve enhanced administrative performance and deliver quality education include such strategies as employees' involvement, customer focus, continuous improvement and bench-marking. Employee involvement has to do with the process of creating an enabling environment or avenue for teachers to be involved in the affairs of a school setting such that their involvement will create an impact on the decision making process and actions that affect their job. It is one of the most important TQM strategies that enhance the administrative performance of school administrators as well as bring about quality education delivery. Bench marking as a Total Quality Management strategy deals with evaluating the activities of other administrators with a view to serving as a reference point/standards that should be adopted and maintained in schools to achieve secondary school goals.

The study therefore examined how employee involvement and benchmarking as Total Quality Management strategies are correlates of school administrators' performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Employees' Involvement and School Administrators' Performance

Employee involvement focuses on creating an atmosphere, environment, opportunity, avenue and condition whereby employees (teachers, students and parents) have roles to play in the decision making process and actions that affect their jobs, studies and endeavours (Denga, 2018). Ebong and Agabi (2016) in their opinion stressed that employee involvement in achieving total quality management is not the goal, as practiced in many organizations, it is rather an administrative management leadership and strategy about how school administrators allow employees to contribute to the improvement and the ongoing success of their work organization. Without employee involvement, school administrators cannot succeed in achieving their multifarious functions. Thus, the involvement of employees in the school administrative process serves as grease in the administrative wheel of the school and the entire education process to achieve school goals in record time.

Involvement of employees increases ownership and commitment, retains the best employee (teachers) and fosters an environment in which teachers choose to be motivated and contributing (Nwaugwu, 2015). These attributes of ownership and commitment are bound to enhance the school administrators' performance.

Administrators cannot be everywhere at the same time always, therefore, to achieve effective result in administrative process, the employees must abide by the rules put in place in the schools and see if the students and colleagues are following and observing them. Where and when there are no rules and regulations regarding issues of specific characters, the employees are at liberty to use their moral and social discretions to make decision to keep subordinates as well as students under control. In a more democratic setting, administrators can also receive suggestions from subordinates, consider them and make corrections where necessary before pronouncing them as rules or regulations guiding actions of individuals. Oduwaiye, Sofoluwe, and Kayode (2012) asserted that the principal and staff must be retrained in new methods of school based management, including group dynamics, consensus building, and collaborative styles of decision making. All stakeholders on the school's team must realize that improvements in student achievement will create higher levels of responsibility, not less responsibility.

With participation in work decisions, employee involvement is evident as it encourages employees to express their views by making valuable contributions. Consultative participation practices render a lesser level of employee influence than employees who merely participate in work decisions. Thus, employee involvement in decision making helps administrators to achieve quality actions, taking in emergency situations in the absence of the school administrator and on trivial issues that do not need the presence of top management.

Employees have the ability to share information that can lead to improve performance either at the individual or organizational level with the aid of information technology in organizations in many ways

as communication and information technology have created new opportunities for organizations to build and manage involvement process where members collaborate, utilize technology across space and time to accomplish important organizational tasks (Shaker & Yahya, 2011). According to Fernandez and Moldogaziov (2013) employee involvement was conceptualized as an approach that consisted of practices that aim at sharing information.

Benchmarking and School Administrators' Performance

School benchmarking is a process carried out within a school setting to examine the performance of one school against the other. It is an attempt to set a standard or point of reference against which things may be compared (Abu, Zaman & Anjain, 2016). In the same vein, Koslowski (2016) defined bench marking as the evaluation of something by comparing it with a standard. Vinni (2011) noted that bench marks may be drawn from a school administrator's own experience or from the experience of others or from legal requirements. He/she does so by assessing, appraising, evaluating or comparing the success situation of other schools with his or her school so as to know what others are doing to improve the quality of education offered to beef up his or her undertakings with a view to having a competitive edge over other schools. In giving credence, Yang (2015) noted that bench marking involves assessment, appraisal, valuation, comparison and the estimation of the worth of quality of education of one school against another taking note of input, process and outcome for the purposes of making judgment, taking correction and take to new ways of doing things to achieve greater result.

Bench marking ensures that quality education is achieved by school administrators. In agreement, Zobaida (2018) emphatically asserted that bench marking concentrates on key processes such as introducing new teaching methods, use of new teaching aid, adopting the most appropriate teaching methodology, and adopting the appropriate administrative techniques in order to improve administrative performance. The school administrator is therefore duty bound to excel in his/her functions when the itemized indices of benchmarking are cooperatively achieved by both teachers and the school administrator with an aim of adding value to students' academic performance in public secondary schools.

Bench-marking in secondary schools is feasible when there is a cordial teacher-student relationship, efficient and effective teachers, deliberate instructional resources and deliberate recruitment and selection processes in place in the school system. Years of teaching experience by older teachers show that a cordial relationship between teachers and students foster students' academic performance. This is because of the trust and confidence built by both parties. Students confidence in their teachers make them ask questions freely in class that are answered by their teachers. Teachers show of *in-loco parentis* also come to play in addressing both academic and ethical issues that border on students misdemeanor and courage to live in moral rectitude in a morally depraved society.

Teachers who avail themselves of professional development programmes viz: West African Examination Council and National Examination Co-ordinations for making examination scripts learn how to mark and score appropriately based on where a tick is expected and unexpected. Over the years such teachers have a rich library of marking schemes that make them have good lesson notes/plans for their students. Teachers collaborate in these sessions and garner a lot of teaching experience thus making their schools have a competitive edge over other schools especially new and inexperienced schools. Recruiting and selecting excellent educators are important drivers of a functional educational system that prepare students with complex needs to participate in today's knowledge – driven economy. It is therefore mandatory that the overall aim of recruiting processes should be to obtain at minimum cost the appropriate number of qualified teachers required to satisfy the human resource needs of public senior secondary schools. The principal's purpose of recruiting is to attract sufficient, suitable and potential teachers to apply for vacancies in the school system while selection activities by comparison is to identify the suitable applicants and persuade them to accept position's in the school as teachers (Amie-Ogan, 2015). From the foregoing, recruitment and selection aid in putting the appropriate teaching staff in the right position as the right time to function most efficiently and effectively to achieve educational goals viz

primary, secondary and tertiary education goals. Hence, enabling the school administrators to enhance academic performance in their schools.

Statement of the Problem

The goal of achieving qualitative education as contained in the National Policy on Education, (2013) cannot be realized without applying the principles and techniques of Total Quality Management (TQM) for effective school administration. Lack of TQM to effectively enhance and boost the school administrative performance has posed greater challenges to the school administrators from performing efficiently and effectively as there are no supportive Parents Teachers Association in most public senior secondary schools to deliberate on issues with school management to chart on ways forward for their wards and children's educational concerns. It's absence in public senior secondary schools also stalls effective involvement of teachers in ensuring that the WAEC and NECO New Syllabuses are intentionally covered for students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. In agreement, Daily posting (2019) unequivocally stated that poor preparation of students for external and internal examinations has resulted in massive examination malpractice in schools.

These indices mentioned above tend to scuttle quality education delivery. Hence, this study investigated total quality management strategies and school administrators' administrative performance in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine total quality management strategies and school administrators' performance in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. examine the relationship between employees' involvement as a total quality management strategy and school administrators' performance in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State.
2. determine the relationship between benchmarking as a total quality management strategy and school administrators' performance in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt metropolis of Rivers State.

Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between employees' involvement as a total quality management strategy and school administrators' performance in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State?
2. What is the relationship between benchmarking as a total quality management strategy and school administrators' performance in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State?

Hypotheses

- Ho₁ There is no significant relationship between employees' involvement as a total quality management strategy and school administrators' performance in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State.
- Ho₂ There is no significant relationship between benchmarking as a total quality management strategy and school administrators' performance in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State.

METHODOLOGY

The correlational research design method was adopted in this study. The population of the study comprised 2,055 respondents which included 105 principals and 1,950 teachers from the 35 public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis. A sample size of 835 respondents consisting of 33 principals and 802 teachers was derived using the stratified random sampling technique. Two questionnaires were used for data collection titled "Total Quality Management Strategies Questionnaire (TQMSQ) and "School Administrators' Performance Questionnaire (SAPQ)". The instruments had two (2) sections, sections A and B. Section A dealt with demographic information while Section B had 10

questionnaire items. The instrument was validated by two experts in the Departments of Educational Management and Measurement and Evaluation. The reliability of the instrument was determined using test-retest method and a reliability index of 0.81 was obtained using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient for the correlation of scores. The research questions were answered using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) while the null hypotheses formulated were tested using t-transition at 0.05 level of significance

RESULTS

Research Question 1: *What is the relationship between employees’ involvement as a total quality management strategy and school administrators’ performance in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State?*

Table 1: Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient on the Relationship Between Employees’ Involvement (EI) as a Total Quality Management Strategy and School Administrators’ Performance (SAP) in Public Senior Secondary Schools.

Variables		EI	SAP
EI	Pearson Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.538**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	835	835
SAP	Pearson Correlation Coefficient	.538**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	835	835

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Researchers’ SPSS Data output (2021).

Table 1 showed the responses to questionnaire items 1-5 on employees’ involvement and school administrators’ performance. The result above showed a moderate and positive relationship between employees’ involvement as a total quality management strategy and school administrators’ performance in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State with a Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient value of .538**.

Research Question 2: *What is the relationship between benchmarking as a total quality management strategy and school administrators’ performance in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State?*

Table 2: Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient on the Relationship Between Benchmarking (B) as a Total Quality Management Strategy and School Administrators’ Performance (SAP) in Public Senior Secondary Schools.

Variables		B	SAP
B	Pearson Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.881**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	835	835
SAP	Correlation Coefficient	.881**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	835	835

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Researchers’ SPSS Data output (2021).

Table 2 revealed the responses to questionnaire items 6-10 on benchmarking and school administrators’ performance. The result showed a high and positive relationship between benchmarking as a total quality management strategy and school administrators’ performance in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State with a Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient value of .881**.

Hypotheses

Ho₁ There is no significant relationship between employees’ involvement as a total quality management strategy and school administrators’ performance in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State.

Table 3: Summary of t-test Transition on the Significant Relationship Between Employees’ Involvement (EI) as a Total Quality Management Strategy and School Administrators’ Performance (SAP) in Public Senior Secondary Schools.

Variables	N	Df	PPMCC	t-cal.	t-crit.	LS	Decision
Employee Involvement	835						
		833		18.26	±1.96	0.05	Ho ₁ : Rejected
			.538**				Significant Difference Present
School Administrators Performance	835						

Source: Researchers’ SPSS Data output (2021).

Table 3 above displayed the t-test Transition summary on the significant relationship between employees’ involvement as a total quality management strategy and school administrators’ performance in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State. The result on table 3 showed a t-test transition value of 18.26 which was greater than the t-critical value of ±1.96, at 0.05 level of significance and 833 degree of freedom. Therefore the alternative hypothesis was upheld which stated that there is a significant relationship between employees’ involvement as a total quality management strategy and school administrators’ performance in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State.

Ho₂ There is no significant relationship between benchmarking as a total quality management strategy and school administrators’ performance in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State.

Table 4: Summary of t-test Transition on the Significant Relationship Between Benchmarking (B) as a Total Quality Management Strategy and School Administrators’ Performance (SAP) in Public Senior Secondary Schools.

Variables	N	Df	PPMCC	t-cal.	t-crit.	LS	Decision
Benchmarking	835						
		833	.881**	28.85	±1.96	0.05	Ho ₂ : Rejected
							Significant Difference Present
School Administrators Performance	835						

Source: Researchers’ SPSS Data output (2021).

Table 4 above displayed the t-test Transition summary on the significant relationship between benchmarking as a total quality management strategy and school administrators’ performance in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State. The result showed a t-test transition value of 28.85 which was greater than the t-critical value of ±1.96, at 0.05 level of significance and 833 degree of freedom. Therefore the alternative hypothesis was upheld which stated that there is a significant

relationship between benchmarking as a total quality management strategy and school administrators' performance in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Findings on research question 1 on table 1 revealed that there is a moderate and positive relationship between employees' involvement as a total quality management strategy and school administrators' performance in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State with a Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient value of .538**. Hypothesis 1 on table 3 also showed a positive significant relationship between employees' involvement and school administrators' performance in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State with a t-test transition value of 18.26 which was greater than the t-critical value of ± 1.96 . The above findings agree with Ebong and Agabi (2016) who noted that employee involvement in achieving total quality management is an administrative and management as well as leadership philosophy and strategy about how school administrators are most enabled to allow employees to contribute to continuous improvement and the ongoing success of their work organization.

Findings on research question 2 on table 2 revealed that there is a high and positive relationship between benchmarking as a total quality management strategy and school administrators' performance in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State with a Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient value of .881**. Hypothesis 2 on table 4 also showed a positive significant relationship between benchmarking and school administrators' performance in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State with a t-test transition value of 28.85 which was greater than the t-critical value of ± 1.96 . The above findings are in tandem with Vinni (2011) who noted that bench marks may be drawn from a school administrator's own experience or from the experience of others or from legal requirements and that it is necessary to assess, appraise, evaluate, value, compare the success situation of other schools with your work, so as to know what to do that others are not doing to improve the quality of education offered.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that employees' involvement and benchmarking as total quality management strategies have a significant positive relationship with school administrators' performance in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. School administrators should involve teachers adequately in school work and provide appropriate educational resources in order to achieve the secondary school goals.
2. School administrators should implement benchmarking in their schools through the introduction of new teaching methods, instructional materials and adopting appropriate administrative techniques in order to remain relevant in the public secondary school system.

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