

**PRINCIPALS' SCHOOL SELF-ASSESSMENT PRACTICES FOR
SECONDARY SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT IN AWKA EDUCATION
ZONE OF ANAMBRA STATE**

NONYE IFEDIORAH OKEKE

**Department of Educational Foundations,
Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam Campus,
Anambra State, Nigeria
ifedinoke@yahoo.com**

&

CHIMAA OKAFORCHA

**Department of Educational Foundations,
Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam Campus,
Anambra State, Nigeria
choice.okaforcha@gmail.com**

&

AMAKA EKWESIANYA

**Department of Vocational Education,
Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam Campus,
Anambra State, Nigeria
kepolemma@gmail.com**

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research work was to determine the extent of principals' school self-assessment for improvement of secondary schools. It is a descriptive survey and was carried out in public secondary schools in Awka Education zone. The population of the study comprised of 76 secondary school principals and 895 teachers in the area of the study while the sample for this study consisted of 486 respondents made up of 38 principals and 448 teachers. Fifty percent (50%) principals and teachers respectively were selected by simple random sampling technique. Instrument for data collection was a questionnaire developed by the researchers. The instrument was validated by experts and their reliability indices determined using Cronbach alpha method. Data were collected by the researchers through direct hand-delivery process and were analyzed using mean and standard deviation for answering the research question while t-test was used to test the hypothesis. It was among others found that that principals in public secondary schools in Awka education zone of Anambra state practice school self-assessment for school improvement to a low extent. It was therefore recommended that the state government organize in-service training for principals on school self-assessment.

Keywords: Principals; Secondary School; Self-assessment practice; School improvement.

Introduction

In all human organizations, self assessment allows people to reflect on themselves and their work. In this process, the people in the organization are likely to identify the aspects of the organization they can improve upon. In the school system and with particular reference to learners, assessment encourages the learners to understand their own progress or to comment on their own achievement in schools.

In teaching and learning processes, assessment is indispensable to teachers, for without it, there would be no evaluation of their own effectiveness. Thus, a school's performance is constantly and regularly appraised, criticize the performance, teaching, physical and human resources and at the same time try to find out the nature of the difficulties encountered by the schools, examine the syllabus and other components of the school programme. According to Adebule and Adebule (2014:23), assessment is basically for decision making which concerns the following:

- (i) Whether a student needs additional instruction on a topic
- (ii) Whether a final programme is effective in developing student's problem solving abilities
- (iii) Whether an educational policy that requires students to be promoted to the next higher grade is made or less detrimental than a policy that allows low-achieving students to be retained.

According to Alade (2017:57), the main purpose of assessment includes the following;

- (i) to find out if children are learning
- (ii) to find out if children are having problems in learning
- (iii) to improve the teaching-learning activities in schools
- (iv) to ensure that children are helped or assisted to learn
- (v) to prepare the teacher for discussion with parents and other teachers and community members.

In schools, assessment could be internal or external. The focus of this work is on internal assessment which is also known as self-assessment. According to Adebayo (2016) and Oloda (2016) many schools have tried to encourage a more active participation on the part of learners in learning activities by the development of schemes for self-assessment and that self-assessment can take many forms varying from a scrapbook collection of dairies of personal experiences to formal judgments by the learners of their degree of attainment and effort using their teacher- or leaner-generated criteria.

Traditionally, teachers have been seen and regarded as the custodians of knowledge and students as the recipients, but over the past few years, there has

been a growing recognition that revising for test is not the same as acquiring and developing deep understanding of the test, its purpose and content. According to Boud and McDonald (2013), teachers are taking more interest in assessment for learning in which they target their own and their students' actions precisely upon the next steps in learning for individuals. Activities that contribute to assessment for learning include the use of detailed feedbacks, teacher questioning, peer and self-assessment build on specific learning goals and explicit criteria. Adebayo (2016) opined that the benefits of self-assessment could be summarized to include the: (a) transfer of some responsibilities for making decisions from the teacher to the learner; (b) helping the students to understand the concepts of quality; (c) providing the foundation for lifelong learning; and (d) improving learning in the course being studied.

School self-assessment (SSA) is a programme of professional development that supports schools in improving teaching and learning through ongoing reflection and peer review (Alade, 2017). An institution undertaking school self-assessment involves its whole staff in a process of goal —setting regarding students learning and sets in motion a continuous cycle of internal self review and external peer review that moves the school closer to its goals. School self-assessment shares a common theme:

1. Questions are asked from school heads, staff and students about the school teaching and learning progress, achievement, acquisition of human and physical facilities and what areas confusion still exists.
2. Meaningful reflection on taken practices. This is true for the students as it is for the staff. These questions serve as guide to ones reflection according to Adebule and Adebule (2014; pg. 6).

(i) How do schools rate their own performance?

(ii) What is spectacular about the school?

(iii) What is the school lacking?

(iv) What are the areas where the school needs improvement?

School self-assessment is supposed to be the nucleus of a school's review process designed to establish the potentials of educational institutions for accreditation and to maintain standard of already accredited schools but attention has been focused primarily on the schools seeking external authentication or prove of attainments and self or internal assessment and examination as of little or no value. This has led to the non improvement of "school" itself" (students and staff) in school assessment and evaluation process due to oversight where it is supposed to be on essential part of a balanced assessment (Adebayo, 2016).

School self—assessment is defined by Schildkamp (2007) as a procedure involving systematic information gathering initiated by the school itself and intended to evaluate the functioning of the school and the attainment of its educational goals for purposes of supporting decision-making and learning and for fostering school improvement as a whole. School self-assessment is a means of recognizing the quality of provisions made by a school and from this early identification, formulating actions to improve provision and outcomes. The focus

of school self-assessment is on all that the school provides, but is primarily concerned with the impact the school has on students' attainment while recognising that the school also has a broader function. The general view is that school self-assessment needs to be undertaken in partnership with the local education authority so that each party can contribute maximally. The effectiveness of a school self-assessment process is determined by the process adopted to gauge the quality of its provision. As part of this process, judgments are made from external and internal generated data which, in many cases, are for school improvement.

Several scholars' and authors have defined school improvement in different manners. According to Nnebedum and Egboka (2017), school improvement is about strengthening learning and other related conditions toward bringing about higher students academic performance. They further pointed out that a school could be said to have improved, if there is positive change from the existing practices and outcomes and this positive and incremental change comes across various areas such as curriculum planning, physical facilities, supervision, financial management, time management, staff and students' personnel management as well as learning outcomes. School improvement is the on-going process by which the school strives for high level of productivity and effectiveness in terms of learners' attainment (Makoelle, 2014). School improvement is about rising students' achievement through focusing on teaching-learning and the conditions which support it (Alammar, 2015; Ashiq, Naseer & Nasarullah, 2014). The above definitions point to the fact school improvement is geared towards raising learning outcome. The state of education in Anambra State does not seemly support that principals in the state fully engage on school self-assessment for school improvement.

In Anambra State and with particular reference to Awka education zone, several efforts have been made to improve secondary schools. In an effort to improve the productivity of secondary schools in the State, and Awka education zone in particular, the Anambra State Ministry of Education has encouraged the involvement of the Parent Teachers Associations and School Based Management Committee in the management of schools in the state. However, some school principals seem not to have devised the needed school self-assessment practices for handling the multi-faceted problems facing the secondary school system in the area. The problems border on how to ensure efficient service delivery towards producing quality education in the area, ensuring that funds entrusted on them is properly utilized, ensuring the provision and maintenance of physical facilities, ensuring that teachers are motivated for their total commitment, ensuring the supervision of instructional materials to ascertain effective teaching and learning.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study was to determine the extent of principals' school self-assessment practice for improvement of secondary schools. Specifically, the study determined the extent of principals' school self-assessment practice for improvement of secondary schools in Awka education zone of Anambra State.

Research question: What is the extent of principals' school self-assessment practice for improvement of secondary schools in Awka education zone of Anambra State?

Hypothesis: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals and teachers in secondary school on the extent of principals' school self-assessment practices for improvement of secondary schools in Awka education zone of Anambra State.

Research Method

This research work is a descriptive survey and was carried out in public secondary schools in Awka Education zone. The population of the study comprised of 76 secondary school principals and 895 teachers in the area of the study. The sample for this study consisted of 486 respondents made up of 38 principals and 448 teachers. Fifty percent (50%) principals and teachers respectively were selected by simple random sampling technique. Instrument for data collection was a questionnaire developed by the researchers. It is titled "Principals' School Self-Assessment for School Improvement Questionnaire" (PSSASIQ). The instrument was validated by experts and their reliability indices determined using Cronbach alpha method. In doing this, test-retest method was adopted using 20 copies of the questionnaire which was administered twice in one week to 20 principals and 45 teachers in public secondary schools in the Area. This yielded index of 0.83 which was considered adequate for the study. Data were collected by the researchers through direct hand-delivery process and were analyzed using mean and standard deviation for answering the research question while t-test was used to test the hypothesis. The decision rule was that wherever p-value is greater than or equal to the significant value of .05, the null hypothesis was not rejected. On the other hand, a null hypothesis was rejected wherever the p-value was less than significant value and this means that the null hypothesis was significant.

Result

Research Question: What is the extent of principals' school self-assessment practice for improvement of secondary schools in Awka education zone of Anambra State?

S/n	Items on school self-assessment practices for school improvement in your school	Principals N=76			Teachers N=4595		
		mean	SD	Remarks	Mean	SD	Remarks
1	Ensuring that the periods for school self-assessment are known by teachers and students	2.45	0.62	Low Extent	2.00	0.71	Low Extent
2	Involving students in the teachers assessment	1.50	0.51	Low Extent	2.11	0.70	Low Extent
3	Involving parents in the school assessment process	1.98	0.54	Low Extent	2.34	0.65	Low Extent
4	Making available resources for carrying out school assessment	2.78	0.67	Moderate extent	2.22	0.69	Low Extent
5	Making staff aware of the criteria for assessment	2.15	0.55	Low extent	2.42	0.72	Low Extent
6	Providing information on the tools to be used for assessment	2.22	0.58	Low extent	2.25	0.74	Low Extent
7	Ensuring that assessment covers issues regarding teaching and learning in school	2.57	0.67	Moderate extent	2.44	0.76	Low Extent
8	Ensuring that audits are done on the school finances	2.64	0.71	Moderate extent	2.36	0.67	Low Extent
9	Ensuring that the school properties are audited	2.21	0.52	low extent	2.34	0.69	Low Extent
10	Providing feedback after assessment	2.50	0.64	Moderate Extent	2.38	0.72	Low Extent
Cluster total		23	6		22.9	7.1	
Cluster mean		2.30	0.60	Low Extent	2.29	0.71	Low Extent

Data in Table 1 reveals that the principals rated four items (items 4,7,8 and 10) on the extent of principals' school self-assessment practices for secondary school improvement to a moderate extent with mean rating ranging between 2.50 to 2.78 and standard deviations ranging between 0.64 to 0.71. However, they rated 6 items (items 1, 2, 3, 5, 6 and 9) to a low extent with mean ratings ranging from 1.50 to 2.45 and standard deviations ranging between 0.51 to 0.62 the teachers rated all items to a low extent with mean ratings ranging between 2.00 to 2.44 and standard deviations ranging from 0.65 to 0.76.

The cluster mean of 2.30 for principals and 2.29 for teachers indicates that principals in public secondary schools in Awka education zone of Anambra state practice school self-assessment for school improvement to a low extent. The standard deviation shows that the responses of principals and teachers rating for each item is low, suggesting that their responses still clustered, though there is difference in the cluster scores of 0.60 and 0.71 respectively.

Hypothesis: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals and teachers in secondary school on the extent of principals’ school self-assessment practices for improvement of secondary schools in Awka education zone of Anambra State.

Table: t-test Analysis of the mean ratings of principals and teachers in secondary schools on the extent of principals’ school self-assessment practices for school improvement

Status	N	X	SD	Df	Cal.t	t-value	p-value	Decision
Principal	38	2.30	0.60	484	0.11	1.96	0.91	NS
Teacher	448	2.29	0.71					
Total	486							

Result in Table 2 show that principal (38 in number) had a mean rating of 2.30 and standard deviation of 0.60, while the teachers (448 in number) had a mean rating of 2.29 and standard deviation of 0.71. These yielded a calculated t-value of 0.11 at 484 degree of freedom with a p-value of 0.91. Since the p-value of 0.91 is greater than the criterion value of 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted. Hence, there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals and teachers of secondary school on the extent of principals’ school self-assessment practices for school improvement in Awka education zone of Anambra State.

Discussion of Results

The findings on the seventh research question indicated that public secondary school principals in Awka education zone of Anambra State practice school self-assessment to a low extent. This finding is in line with Adediwura (2012) who found that more than half of the sampled teachers were not adequately prepared to conduct school based assessment. Adediwura also discovered that more than fifty percent of the teachers have a negative perception of the effect of school based assessment on their teaching practices and on students’ learning. Schildkamp (2017) discovered that school self-assessment is a means of recognizing the quality of provisions made by a school and from this early identification, formulating actions to improve provision and outcomes. Schildkamp also found that the effectiveness of a school self-review process will be determined by the process it adopts to gauge the quality of its provision.

Furthermore, findings of the study revealed that principals and teachers did not significantly differ in their mean ratings on the extent of principals’ school self-assessment for school improvement. ‘This implies that principals and teachers of public secondary schools in the area of the study, irrespective of status, practice school self-assessment for school improvement to a low extent. As a result of this, it becomes imperative that principals of public secondary schools arc educated on the need to adequately apply school self assessment principle in order to meet school goals.

Conclusion

The conclusion of this study is that public secondary school principals in Awka education zone of Anambra State practice school self- assessment to a low extent. Principals and teachers did not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the extent of principals' school self-assessment for school improvement.

Recommendations

In the light of the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. State government organize in-service training for principals on school self-assessment
2. Government should also provide adequate fund for secondary school principals to enable them organize seminars, workshops and interactive session to expose teachers on the importance of school self-assessment.
3. Institutions of higher learning in the state should mount programmes on school self-assessment and improvement.

REFERENCES

- Adehule, S. O. & Adehule, TI. T. (2014). Self-assessment of secondary school performance in South West Nigeria. *international Journal of Educational Research and Technology*, 5 (1), 5-11.
- Adediwura, A. (2012). Teachers' perception of school-based assessment in Nigerian secondary schools. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Science*, 3(1), 99-109.
- Adebayo, S.O. (2016). Establishing quality assurance in Nigeria education system: Implication for educational managers. *Educational Research and Review*, 6(2), 147-151.
- Makoelle, T.M. (2014). Exploring factors contributing to school improvement in South Africa secondary schools in Free State province. *International Journal of Education and Sciences*, 7(1), 119-130.
- Ashiq, H., Naseer, A.S. & Nasarullah, V. (2014). Leadership strategies for school improvement: A qualitative approach. *Journal of Social Science for Policy Implication*, 2(2), 267-281.
- Alade O.M. (2017): Assessment of the attitude of students and parents to the practice of school-based assessment. Implication for Educational Management. NAERE conference Proceedings, 5 (5), 2-8.
- Alammar, L. (2015). The effective school: The role of the leaders in school effectiveness. *Educational Research and Reviews*, 10(6), 695-721. Available at doi: 10-5897/ERR2014.1986.
- Boud, A. & McDonald, T. (2013). Supervisory functions of secondary school principals and factors competing with these functions. *Journal of Research and Method in Education*, 1(3), 13-19.

- Nnebedum, C. &Egboka, P.N. (2017).Analysis of resource management strategies adopted by principals for secondary schools improvement in Enugu State, Nigeria. *International Journal of Advance Research and Innovative Ideas in Education*, 3(3), 4124-4129.
- Oloda, A. (2016). Analysis of principals' accountability in managing secondary school funds in Anambra State. *Academic Group Journal*, 1(23), 44-50.
- Schildkamp, A. (2017).The analysis of the impact of accounting records keeping on the performance of the small scale enterprises. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 4(1), 1-17.