

Teachers' and Principals' Perception to Total Quality Management Practices in Lagos State Secondary Schools

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Abstract. This study ascertained the total quality management practices in Agege Local Government Area secondary schools in Lagos state. The research design adopted was a descriptive survey. Ten principals, 20 vice-principals and 100 teachers were selected through random sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was a researcher's self-designed questionnaire titled "Total Quality Management Assessment Questionnaire (TQMAQ). Three research questions guided the study. Data collected were analyzed with descriptive statistics, precisely mean and standard deviation. Findings of the study revealed that effective communication and follow-up of the educational process were practiced to a very high extent. Findings also revealed that the principle of total commitment is being practiced to a low extent in secondary schools in Agege Local Government Area of Lagos state. Based on the findings, the researcher recommended that government agencies such as Education District Areas and Ministry of Education should try to maintain standards by carrying out periodic inspection of staff recruited and whether they are abreast with the current challenges of the 21st century classroom management, and principals should be fully committed to TQM application for effective school administration.

Keywords: Assessment, total, quality management, secondary schools.

1. Introduction

One of the greatest concerns of Nigerians has been the issue of the standard and quality of the educational system. The development of any nation depends on the quality of its education hence conscious efforts are usually made to ensure educational quality at all levels. This explains why uniform educational standard in the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) was established and the various measures being taken by the federal government to ensure quality in the educational system. The establishment of specific bodies to control quality in the various levels of education is a clear indication of the commitment of the federal government to assure quality. Some of these bodies include the Universal Basic Education Board (UBEB) at the state and federal levels, Education District Offices (EDO), The National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) and the National Universities Commission (NUC). Therefore, effective administration or administrative effectiveness of secondary schools may be determined by total quality management (TQM) (Iftikhaar and Hakim, 2014). Collaborating this statement, Mwaniki and Okibo (2014) maintained that total quality management (TQM) is the only tool that can improve the quality of administrative services in work organizations because it is a continuous improvement process and customers' (students) feedback is used to improve the quality of service more effectively and efficiently.

According to Rakesh and Shabarisha (2013), TQM is a philosophy and strategy- minded customer.

The authors stressed further that the word total implies that all members of the organization make consistent efforts to achieve the objective for a customer through systematic efforts for improvements while quality denotes an excellence in goods and services especially, to the degree they conform to requirements and satisfy customers (students). In the assertion of Iftikhaar and Hakim (2014), TQM is the continuous development of operations management for ways and means to raise the level of performance and reduce the time to accomplish by cutting out all the tasks and functions unnecessary for the client or the process by reducing the cost and raise the level of quality basing in all stages of development on the requirements and needs of the client. To this end, total quality management is a management philosophy and practice that aims at harnessing the human and material resources of any organization in the most effective way to achieve their organizational objectives (Oboegbulem & Onwurah, 2011). However, due to teachers and principals perception of total quality management practices in Lagos state secondary schools and with particular reference to Agege Local Government Area being the area where this study was carried out, the researcher is interested in knowing if TQM variables like effective communication, follow-up of the teaching-learning process (supervision) and commitment of school management to the philosophy of total quality were actually practiced in the delivery of functional education or not.

In the early twentieth century when scientific management movement was developing, another school of management thought developed concurrently. This school has been referred to by several names as 'Universal Principles Movement' or 'Process' or 'Functions' School. Some writers equate the ideas of this movement with those of the scientific management movement and thus come up with the name 'Foundational school of Thought' (Landers et al., 1977 in Rakesh and Shabarisha, 2013). But the name that has become most popularly associated with the movement is the 'Administrative Movement School'.

In spite of an overlap in certain areas, there is a distinction between scientific management theory and administrative management school of thought.

While scientific management ideas, as represented in Taylor's work, focused primarily on the operative level (individuals at the workshop level) from the bottom of the organizational hierarchy upwards and ignored the larger top level issues, the administrative management theorists concentrated on the upper level administration (the MD) and worked downwards on the organizational hierarchy. The administrative management theorists look for the common or universal principles that characterize successful management. So, this study is hinged on Administrative Management Theory as explained above since the activities involved in Total Quality Management as discussed in this paper involve processes of doing one thing or the other as activities relate to administrative management functions.

It is observed that secondary schools in Agege Local Government Area of Lagos state over the years have been suffering due to inadequate facilities for effective teaching and learning. Also, lack of maintenance of existing ones, lack of commitment by principals, lack of teamwork, poor communication method, lack of adequate funding, poor performance of students, especially in external examinations have been other noticeable issues among others, and these have resulted in many parents registering their wards in other states and/or private schools for good results. However, one possible way of improving this quality of education lies in the application of the ideals of Total Quality Management (TQM) in the management of secondary schools in Agege Local Government Area and in Lagos state in general, although, the situations are improving for better now. The question is to what extent are the teachers and principals practicing the elements of TQM in secondary schools in Agege Local Government Area of Lagos state?

2. Concept of Quality

With so many definitions and dimensions of quality, what is quality still remains vague. As the saying goes "beauty lies in the eyes of the viewers". We can also say that "quality lies as per the perception of the customers". In similar a vein, Norhayati, Shalini, Muhamad, Mohd, Sapiah and Rozita (2012) defined quality in terms of its "dual nature". The researcher stated that quality is of two sub-concepts, that is "quality in fact" and "quality in perception". The

authors explain, "quality in fact" as "the provider of goods and services who through dint of hard work and capital expenditures performs up to its own specifications achieves quality in fact and "quality in perception" is defined as the subjective quality as the customer sees it. Abdul-Razak, Bawa, and Abdul-Razak (2014) opined that quality consists of product features which meet the needs of the customers and thereby provides product satisfaction. In another debate, Crosby quoted in Kaplan (2014) postulated the four "absolutes to quality". According to their view, quality has to be defined as conformance to requirements not as goodness or excellence. This is to suggest that quality is only achieved when the product or the outcome is in line with the set standard. For example, in the educational circles, quality could be said to have been realised when students perform satisfactorily in their examinations. From the foregoing, it can be inferred that it is difficult to assign a single definition for quality as a concept as different researchers and writers have expressed divergent views on its definition. One can, therefore, describe it as the efficient and effective efforts the individual puts in work to achieve excellent output.

3. Concept of Management

The term management has been given various definitions by various writers. The term management is the process or method whereby a group of people at the top level of an organization plan, organize, communicate, coordinate, control and direct the actions and the activities of those who work in an organization with a view to achieving the organizational objectives (Gaspersz, 2011). In similar a vein, Kaplan (2014) posits that management is "the process of planning, organizing, leading and controlling the efforts of an organization's membership and of using all other organizational resources to achieve stated organizational goals". Scholars like Mullins (2005) and Abdul-Razak, Bawa and Abdul-Razak (2014) indicated that at its most basic sense, management could be defined as making things happen through a practical way of influencing the behaviour of employees in an organisation. The National Open University of Nigeria (2015) maintained that management consists of the interlocking functions of creating corporate policy and organizing, planning, controlling and directing an

organization's resources in order to achieve the objectives of that policy. In other words, management involves identifying the missions, objectives, procedures, rules and manipulation of the human capital of an organisation to contribute to the success of the enterprise. This implies effective communication in an organisation (as opposed to a physical or mechanical mechanism), human motivation and some sort of successful progress or outcome. On the basis of the foregoing conceptualisations of management, one could describe management as a governance strategy which aims at the efficient utilisation of organisations resources in order to achieve its objectives. Management focuses on efficiency through strict compliance with designed policies and structures that are capable of realising essential administrative functions in an organization (Kaplan, 2014).

4. The Concept of Total Quality Management (TQM)

There are numerous definitions of TQM by different scholar and researchers. According to Oduwaiye, Sofoluwe and Kayode (2012), total quality management is "the process of integration of all activities, functions and processes within an organization in order to achieve continuous improvement in cost, quality, function and delivery of goods and services for customers' satisfaction". The scholars stated further that TQM refers to the application of quality principles to the overall process and all the management functions in order to ensure total customer satisfaction. This implies the application of quality principles right from identification of customers' needs to post purchase services. In an individualistic approach, Muia (2014) defined total quality management conceptually. To Muia, total means every person associated with the company and every activity and quality is as defined by customers. Customers could be internal or external. Management refers to the prevention of fault, errors or mistakes and directions toward customers' satisfaction. To this end, TQM is defined as a management philosophy that seeks to integrate all organizational functions (marketing, finance, design, engineering, and production and customer service among others.) to focus on meeting customer needs and organizational objectives (Mwaniki and Okibo, 2014).

In similar a vein, Al-Ettayem and Zu'bi (2015) defined total quality management as the integration of all functions and processes within an organization in other to achieve continuous improvement of the quality of goods and services with the primary goal of customer satisfaction. Izuagbe (2013) as well as Al-basheer, Shawaqfeh, Mathani and Al-Jabari, (2015) opined that TQM is the foundations for activities which include commitment by senior management and all employees, meeting customer requirements, reducing development cycle times, just in time demand, flow manufacturing, improvement teams, reducing products and services costs, system to facilitate improvement, line management ownership, employee involvement and empowerment, recognition and celebration as well as challenging among others.

In a study carried out by Mohammed (2013) using the Government of Jarash, it showed that the impact degree of applying total quality criteria on the public schools' effectiveness in the Government of Jarash as viewed by the educational supervisors was high for all the areas. Eshun (2012) equally reported that culture of quality has been institutionalized in the schools and staff members are well motivated, and these were tied to high academic performance by the students in their external examinations.

John (2012) in his study on the role of Total Quality Management in the academic performance of students in secondary schools in Murang's East District of Murang's Country in Kenya, it was found that most schools were adhering to leadership, quality planning, human resource and employee empowerment principles to enhance total quality management. The study also revealed that total quality management was not applied in all schools in Murang's East district. Oduwaiye, Sofololuwe and Kayode (2012) in their study on TQM and Students' academic performance in Ilorin Metropolis found that there is effective communication in the schools and principals and staff are not re-trained on new methods of school-based management. In Kenya, a study conducted by Karani and Bichanga (2011) among Services Institution in Kenya revealed that educational

administrators are very much committed to the implementation of TQM. This simply means that the top management (administrators) is fully involved as to appraise and support their subordinates in the quality making process.

5. Follow-up of the Teaching-Learning Process (Supervision) using TQM

Another TQM variable in this study is a follow-up of the teaching-learning process (supervision). Follow-up of the teaching-learning process (supervision) is central to the attainment of the goals and objectives of the school. The National Policy on Education (2004) has highlighted in precise terms the objectives of educational supervision which among others is to ensure quality control through regular inspection and continuous supervision of instructional and other educational services. There are various definitions of educational supervision. There is the need to state some of them in order to bring out what educational supervision is, its nature and purposes in education. Bello (2015) defined supervision as a constant and continuous process of more personal guidance based on frequent visits when attention is directed to one or more aspects of the school and its organization. Igwe (2001) stated that to supervise means to direct, oversee, guide or to make sure that expected standards are met. Thus, follow-up of the teaching-learning process (supervision) is a process of ascertaining that the teachers carry out the task of teaching to an expected level according to the stipulated guidelines which control the educational system. It is also a way of persuading workers to desist from applying wrong methods and procedures in carrying out certain functions of their jobs. The essence of supervision is, therefore, the monitoring of the performance of school staff, noting the merits and demerits and using befitting and amicable techniques to ameliorate the flaws while still improving on the merits thereby increasing the standard of schools and achieving educational goals (Bello, 2015).

TQM can further be applied in secondary schools by ensuring commitment to strategic quality planning and providing human resources development in schools to motivate and realize the maximum potentials from teachers and also by being

understandable and competitive (Brown, Hitchcock and Willard, 2014 & Al-basheer, Shawaqfeh, Mathani and Al-Jabari, 2015). According to Muhammad and Rashid (2014), the foundation of an effective TQM application is commitment. Lack of administrators' commitment is one of the reasons for the failure of TQM efforts. It is also recorded that high levels of quality achievement have always been accompanied by an organizational commitment to that goal. High product quality does not exist without strong top management commitment. Gaspersz (2011) stated that the principal's support for quality is a key factor in quality improvement. In the application of TQM, all educational administrators must be committed to quality as they must actively involve in quality management and improvement process, and they must also strongly encourage teachers' involvement in quality management and improvement process (Brown, Hitchcock and Willard, 2014; Al-basheer, Shawaqfeh, Mathani and Al-Jabari, 2015).

To this end, educational administrators must realize that failure in education is a problem and a waste to the nation. Quality management may be regarded as an ideal process for making a change in the education system. In today's economy, quality has become a high priority and is at the top of most agenda (Gaspersz, 2011). Improving quality is probably one of the most important tasks any organization may be facing, whether private or public. Educational institutions are not foreign to this reality. On the contrary, they must recognize the need to pursue this quest for quality and to deliver it to pupils and students alike.

6. The Need for Effective Communication and Coordination in the Management Structure and Process

Communication is defined as transmitting information from one person to another. It is also a process of sharing and exchanging of ideas, feelings, information, and thoughts (Oboegbulem, and Onwurah, 2011). Apart from the need for effective communication and coordination in the management structure and process, the basic functions of education rely almost on communication among teachers and students as well as co-ordination among various institutional

structures and levels (Ejionueme and Oyoyo, 2015). In any institution where there is effective communication, there will be an understanding among staff, harmony in work operation, good inter-personal relationship and easy realization of common objectives and goals (Iftikhaar and Hakim, 2014). In the application of effective communication, principals are expected to establish and encourage good interpersonal relationship among the staff. That is, principals and teachers, students and principals, teachers and students are expected to establish and encourage good interpersonal relationship so as to maintain a continuous improvement in the quest for quality education. The principals are expected to apply effective communication to a very great extent in order to achieve the secondary educational objectives (Bua, 2011).

7. Purpose of the study

The main purpose of this study is to determine the extent to which total quality management is being practised in secondary schools in Agege Local Government Area of Lagos state.

8. Research Questions

Specifically, this study was concerned with finding answers to the following questions:

- What is the perception of teachers and principals of secondary schools in Agege Local Government Area of Lagos state as to the practice of effective communication in their schools?
- What is the perception of teachers and principals of secondary schools in Agege Local Government Area of Lagos state as to the extent to which supervision is being practised?
- What is the perception of teachers and principals of secondary schools in Agege Local Government Area of Lagos state as to the extent to which total commitment being practised in secondary schools in Agege Local Government Area of Lagos state?

9. Research Methodology

The descriptive survey method was adopted for this study. The study target population was all public secondary schools in Agege Local

Government Area of Lagos state, Nigeria. Records at the Ministry of Education and Human Capital Development (2015) of Lagos state revealed that Agege Local Government has 18 public secondary schools comprising of 18 principals, 52 vice principals and 292 teachers. Random sampling method was used in selecting 10 out of the 18 secondary schools which is more than 50%. Also, the 10 principals in the 10 schools plus the two available vice principals in each of the 10 schools as well as 10 teachers each from the schools were selected at random. This brought the total of respondents that was used to 130.

The research instrument used in this study is a researcher's designed questionnaire titled "Total Quality Management Assessment Questionnaire" (TQMAQ) to gather information from the respondents. The instrument was made up of two sections A and B. Section "A" consists of items seeking the demographic information of the respondents while section "B" of the questionnaire consists of 15 item questions in relation to the practice of total quality management in the sampled secondary schools. Section B was a closed ended form of questionnaire based on a five (5) point scale ranging from Strongly Agree (SA) = 5 points, Agree (A) = 4 points, Undecided (UN) = 3 points Disagree (D) = 2 points and Strongly

Disagree (SD) = 1 point. The research instrument (TQMAQ) was subjected to face validation by three experts, that is, the supervisor and two experts in Educational Administration and Planning. In determining the reliability of the instrument, a trial-test on 30 respondents including the 2 principals, 4 vice- principals and 24 teachers from secondary schools in Mushin Local Government Area of Lagos state outside the area of the study was conducted. The outcome was calculated using Cronbach's coefficient based on their responses. The alpha value obtained was 0.89.

The researcher with the help of three research assistants administered 130 copies of TQMAQ on the respondents to gather information with the use of direct the delivery technique. The questionnaire items were retrieved on the spot. In addition, data collected in the course of this study were presented and analyzed with descriptive statistics. The researcher used means and standard deviation to answer the research questions. The mean is interpreted as if Mean >3.0, the TQM item is practised to a high extent, if Mean <3.0, the TQM item is practised to a low extent. A cut off point of 3.00 was considered because it represented the mean of the continuum of the scale i.e. 5, 4, 3, 2, 1. In so doing, mean scores were used to answer the three research questions postulated earlier.

Research Question1: What is the perception of teachers and principals of secondary schools in Agege Local Government Area of Lagos state as to the practice of effective communication in their schools?

Table 1: Mean and Standard deviations of respondents response on the extent effective communication is practised in secondary schools in Agege Local Government Area of Lagos state

S/N	Items	N	X	SD	" Decision
1	Principals communicate various policies and plans to teaching and non-teaching staff	130	3.49	.63	HE
2	Principals exchange their ideas and knowledge with the teachers	130	2.92	.93	LE
3	Principals encourage inter-personal communication between them and teachers	130	3.31	.94	HE
4	Principal accept information from every staff member	130	2.96	.89	LE
5	Information from teachers is used for continuous improvement.	130	2.71	.80	
CLUSTER MEAN			3.08	0.84	HE

Key: HE = High Extent, LE = Low Extent; Cut off point/mean = 3.00

Table 1 indicated the responses of the respondents on the extent effective communication are being practised in secondary schools in Agege Local Government Area of Lagos state. The analysis shows that the respondents agreed to a high extent that principals communicate various policies and plan to teaching and non-teaching staff and principals encourage inter-personal communication between them and teachers with

mean values 3.49 and 3.31 respectively. This finding negates that of Ejionueme and Oyoyo (2015) whose findings revealed that principals to a little or no extent encourage interpersonal-relationship with their subordinate.

However, items 4, 2 and 5 have means scores of 2.96, 2.92 and 2.71 with standard deviations of .89, .93 and .80 respectively. Since these mean scores are less than the 3.00 bench mark, it means that principals to a low extent accept information from every staff member, exchange their ideas and knowledge with the teachers, and use information received from teachers for continuous improvement. These findings, therefore, support Bua (2011) whose findings showed that poor communication significantly affects secondary school administration. The implication is that effective communication should be properly applied in school administration to improve school performance. Also, when summing up, the grand mean scores are less than 3.00 benchmark, it further indicates that effective communication to a high extent was practised in secondary schools in Agege Local Government Area of Lagos state. This finding collaborated that of Oduwaiye, Sofoluwe and Kayode (2012) who found that there is effective communication in secondary schools in Ilorin metropolis.

Research Question 2: What is the perception of teachers and principals of secondary schools in Agege Local Government Area of Lagos state as to the extent to which supervision is being practised?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviations of Respondents’ responses on the extent the Educational process is being followed-up in Secondary Schools Agege Local Government Area of Lagos state

S/N	Items	N	X	SD	Decision
6	The principal goes around the classes while lessons are in progress	130	3.85	.51	HE
7	Committees are formed for the monitoring and supervision of staff on duty in the school	130	2.48	.83	LE
8	Class representatives (prefects) keep records of teaching in secondary schools	130	4.01	.65	HE
9	Ministry of Education and Teaching Service Commission Officials from time to time to engage in the supervision of staff for job effectiveness in the school	130	3.07	0.83	HE
10	Supervision of staff in secondary schools is done on regular basis	130	2.59	.79	LE
CLUSTER MEAN			3.20	0.72	HE

Key: HE = High Extent; LE = Low Extent

The data presented in table 2 shows the means and standard deviations of respondents on the extent the educational process is being followed-up (supervision) in secondary schools in Agege Local Government Area of Lagos state. The mean values 4.01, 3.85 and 3.07 of the respondents’ responses revealed that to a very high extent, class representatives (prefects) keep records of teaching in the secondary schools, the principal goes around the classes while lessons are in progress and the Ministry of Education and Educational District Officials from time to time engage in the supervision of staff for job effectiveness in the schools.

However, items 10 and 7 have means scores of 2.59 and 2.48 with standard deviations of .79 and .83 respectively. Since these means scores are less than the 3.00 benchmark, it means that to a little extent, supervision of staff in the secondary schools is done on regular basis and committees are formed for the monitoring and supervision of staff on duty in the schools. These findings support the assertion of Oleforo, Ikpe and Bassey (2015) who stated that when there is negligent of effective supervision by the school managers, teachers' attitude to work will dwindle, lesson notes will not be prepared and teachers' absenteeism both in schools and in classes will be at the increase thereby affecting their effectiveness negatively. The author stated further that the students' academic performance will also suffer tremendously which may lead to high drop-out rate and crime involvement as a result of poor academic performance. In fact, the whole educational system would crumble.

Also, when summing up, the grand mean value of 3.20 is above the 3.00 benchmark. This indicates that the educational process is being followed-up (supervision) to a very high extent in secondary schools Agege Local Government Area of Lagos state. This finding is in agreement with the opinion of NOUN (2015) who stated that supervising the teaching and learning process provides opportunities for teachers to be groomed through critical study of instructional processes and classroom interactions to carry out their teaching tasks in line with professional codes of conduct. If schools are not supervised adequately, it will have inimical effects on the students' output and the educational objectives may not be achieved. Consequently, various instructional supervisory techniques should be employed to ensure qualitative and quantitative service delivery by the teachers.

Research Question 3: What is the perception of teachers and principals of secondary schools in Agege Local Government Area of Lagos state as to the extent to which total commitment being practised in secondary schools in Agege Local Government Area of Lagos state?

Table 3: Means and Standard Deviations' responses of Respondents on the extent of Total Commitment is being practiced in Secondary Schools Agege Local Government Area of Lagos state

S/N	Items	N	X	SD	Decision
11	Top management of your organization is committed to quality services in the organization	130	4.22	0.86	HE
12	Performance appraisal is being encouraged in your school	130	3.42	0.74	HE
13	The school is well equipped with the requisite facilities to deliver quality services expected by students. '	130	2.22	.98	LE
14	Suggestion boxes are available for teachers and student to make comments to improve service delivery.	130	1.32	1.01	LE
15	Principals involve the teachers in decision making towards continuous improvement approaches.	130	2.94	0.98	LE
	CLUSTER MEAN		2.82	0.91	LE

Key: HE = High Extent; LE = Low Extent

The result of data presented in table 1 reveals that the cluster mean value of 2.82 of the respondents' response is below the weighted mean of 3.0. This implies that the principle of total commitment is being practised to a low extent in secondary schools in Agege Local Government Area of Lagos state. The findings are in line with the assertion of Brown, Hitchcock and Willard (2014) as well as Al-basheer, Shawaqfeh, Mathani and Al-Jabari (2015) who stated that lack of administrators' commitment is one of the reasons for the failures of TQM efforts.

10. Summary / Conclusion

There is no doubt that to achieve quality education, it is imperative that a system is put in place that will ensure stakeholders in education make conscious efforts to ensure educational quality at all levels. This study, therefore, explored the

extent to which elements of total quality management (effective communication, follow-up of the educational process and commitment to the philosophy of total quality) is being practised in secondary schools Agege Local Government Area of Lagos state. Though, the study revealed to a very high extent, the practice of effective communication and follow-up of the educational process. Findings also revealed that the principle of total commitment is being practised to a low extent in secondary schools in Agege Local Government Area of Lagos state. To this end, it is postulated that secondary school administrators and all stakeholders in education should be dedicated by ensuring total commitment to the philosophy of TQM in order to provide a functional education in Lagos state and Nigeria as a whole.

11. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it was

recommended that the Ministry of Education through the principals should organize seminars, workshops, conferences for teachers where TQM attributes will be discussed for continuous quality improvement. Also, adequate educational facilities should be provided in schools in order to ensure quality instructional delivery. Again, the study found that supervision of staff in secondary schools is done on regular basis to a low extent, it is therefore recommended that government agencies such as Education District Offices and Ministry of Education among others should try to maintain standards by carrying out periodic inspection of staff recruited and they should be abreast with the current challenges of the 21st century classroom. And finally, it was recommended that principals should be fully committed to TQM application for effective school administration.

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