



A PPLICATION OF QUALITY ASSURANCE STRATEGIES BY SCHOOL LEADERS TO ENHANCE GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS, GWAGWALADA AREA COUNCIL, ABUJA

ABSTRACT

The study investigated the “Application of quality assurance strategies by the school leaders for enhancement of quality Guidance and Counseling Education in junior and senior secondary schools in Gwagwalada Area Council, Abuja, Nigeria. The researchers adopted survey research design. Two research questions were answered using mean statistics. The population of the study was twenty-four (24) principals and vice principals from senior

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Introduction

Education is seen to be an instrument of building the child intellectual capacity, molding his behavior and transforming him to be a good citizen. The type of education that will bring the above attributes into human life is ‘quality education’. Quality guidance and counselling education must be made available to meet up the expectation and the standard of education required. Secondary school leaders are expected to promote quality Guidance and Counseling Education to help produce the quality manpower with the quality skills required in the society. Quality guidance and counseling education can enhance the students academic ability, correcting their deficiencies and weaknesses. It can help them to properly combine their subjects, mold their character lead to excellent academic performance and adjustment to acceptable behavioral pattern respectively. It can also significantly improves students employment choice perspectives which can aid them to obtain lucrative jobs to generate best income opportunities for economic growth. For these to be achieved the secondary school leaders must apply quality assurance strategies (Onyeama & Chidobi 2019).



secondary schools in Gwagwalada Area Council, Abuja. The sample of the study was twenty-four (24) principals and vice principal, sampled through purposive sampling technique. Questionnaire titled “Application of Quality Assurance Strategies by the School Leaders for Enhancement of Quality Guidance and Counseling Education (APASSLEGCE), was the instrument used for data collection. The instrument was validated by experts in the Departments of Educational Management and the Department of Guidance and Counseling, University of Abuja. The reliability coefficient of the questionnaire was calculated using Cronbach alpha and was 0.73. The findings of the study revealed that: there were guidance and counselling services such as: information, vocational, evaluation and follow up services to check students’ academic ability in class assignment, continuous assessment and examination performance; choice vocation; general assessment on student performance; their ability, talents and skill acquisition etc, that the school leaders needed to apply quality assurance strategies to enhance. The findings of the study also proved that the schools’ leaders did not apply quality assurance strategies to enhance Guidance and Counselling Education in secondary schools in Gwagwalada Area Council, Abuja. Based on the study findings the researchers recommended that the school leaders should designate the guidance and Counselling Services which are to be improved and enhance using appropriate quality assurance practices. Also that they should endeavour to apply appropriate quality assurance practices to enhance quality assurance in secondary schools in Gwagwalada Area Council, Abuja.

Keywords: Application, Quality Assurance Strategies, School Leaders, Guidance and Counseling Education.

Quality assurance is the prerequisite for enhancement of guidance and counselling education in secondary schools. The worth of any educational system is based on its ability to produce quality out puts (students) (Opetola, kayode and Okunuga 2012). This therefore means that quality education must be delivered to students and this could be done by the leaders ensuring that quality assurance strategies are applied and maintained in secondary schools.

Quality assurance strategies have become vital tools to enhance guidance and counseling education, to help the products of secondary schools conform to the accepted and expected standards. The enhancement of quality guidance and counseling education and the school obtainment of excellence can be achieved by the principals’ application of quality assurance services.



Quality Assurance Strategies to Enhance Guidance and Counseling Education in Secondary Schools

The quality assurance educational strategies include: supervision, inspection, monitoring, evaluation and quality control: Supervision service helps the teachers or guidance counsellors to enhance teaching because supervisors have to advise, guide, encourage, stimulate and help the staff to improve their instruction. (Osakwe 2016). The supervisors will take note of teacher's strengths, weaknesses their deficiencies, help to correct them for the teachers' improvement.

Inspection as quality assurance strategy helps the institution to meet up with the expected standard. The inspectors will assess the available facilities and resources in the school to make sure that they are enough and of standard (West-Burtham 2014). Inspection as a component of the school system is essentially a quality assurance mechanism which ensures that quality education is maintained.

Monitoring strategy improves efficiency, effectiveness by helping the staff to work on track and by allowing management to know when things are going wrong. This helps the management in institutions to find out if resources are sufficient and being well utilized or not. It also helps the management to maintain good accountability. Monitoring checks if there is enough human capacity to carry out guidance and counselling services efficiently and effectively (Ihekoronye 2016). The secondary school leaders have to engage monitoring team to monitor the school in order to produce best outcomes.

Evaluation as a quality assurance strategy ensures that the level of performance of teachers and students on their jobs and academics respectively are improved (Ijaiya 2011). Evaluation helps secondary schools' leaders to validate, developed plan, expand educational programmes to achieve qualitative education and its worthwhile goals (Osakwe 2016 & Nwiyi et al 2017).

Quality control as quality assurance strategy ensures that human resources are qualified and are enough, that there is functional equipment, enough educational material resources and adequate curriculum to produce high standard finished products (Ojedele 2007 cited in Osakwe 2016). All these quality assurance strategies when applied in the secondary schools will enhance guidance and counselling services such as:

Information Services: This enable the guidance counsellor in secondary schools to get information on students concerning their academic ability, interest and performance. Palton & Mcmalon 2001 cited in Ebuk & Afo (2019 maintained that this counselling service will make the teachers to help students lack of seriousness, confusion and failure. It will also help the teachers to direct the students' attention towards excellent academic performance.

Appraisal Services: This service will help the counselors or teachers to identify students' deficiencies, weaknesses and strengths. With this knowledge they will work to improve students' deficiencies and weaknesses thus improving their strengths in academic. This



is why guidance and counseling appraisal services must be rendered to every student at all times (Anyaneme, Owokolo & Chebdu 2012).

Vocational Services: It will guide the students in subject combination for career aspiration and choice. The students' instructor or the counsellor should help these youths to acquire knowledge on their choice vocation so that they can have lucrative jobs after school. Ebuk & Afu (2019) posited that youths should be guided and propelled to continue to higher level of education so as to have better vocation in future.

Evaluation and Follow up Services: Evaluation service revealed students' performance in their subjects. Teachers should follow up to see that these students make it excellently in their subjects and in their life generally. The World Health Organization (WHO) 1997 cited in Aho (2019) maintained that Guidance and Counseling Education should help the students to develop and possess life skills. Life skills according to the organization are abilities which will enable the students to adapt positive behavior to face everyday life challenges. This education can also help students develop technical knowledge and effective skills to face life situations. Federal Republic of Nigeria FRN 2013 cited in Aho (2019) affirmed that life skill education will enable the students to be assertive, think creatively, communicate effectively, cope with stressful situations and be able to solve life problems.

Katamei & Onwono (2015) suggested that principals in providing guidance and counseling services should apply behavior modification therapy as a counseling strategy to mould students bad behaviours. This will help the students to adjust to acceptable attitude which will help them in their relationship in the place of work and in life generally. To achieve the laudable benefits of Guidance and Counseling Education, the school heads need to apply quality assurance strategies.

Quality assurance in secondary schools aims at preventing problems and to ensure that the products of the system conform to the expected standards. The degree of excellence of the students graduated can be achieved through quality assurance. Onyeama & Chidobi (2019) asserted that quality assurance in secondary schools is very important because it involves indispensable variable which can maintain quality in education. Umah (2019) posited that guidance and counseling education is a well enhancement tool which can open clients'/students' experiences to new level of understanding, helps them to appreciate and have wisdom about life many potentials. It entails that the school putting in place quality structures and infrastructures like school building, classroom seats, tables, chalkboard, materials etc. legislation, rules, regulations and ethnical standard is to enhance quality education. The school must also carry out effective supervision of teachers to ensure that they teach well. Effective monitoring and evaluation must be carried out to make sure that teachers perform their duties as expected. They should ensure that appropriate teaching pedagogies are used by the teachers to disseminate the right knowledge to the students so as to achieve the goals of guidance and counseling



education. All the mentioned tools are quality assurance parameters which can enhance guidance/counselling education.

Quality assurance emphasized that for quality to be maintained in any educational system, the teachers must be efficient, effective, knowledgeable of the learning experiences to guarantee and make teaching impactful to students. Teachers also must be motivated, satisfied with appropriate living standards, good working condition of service, enabling environment, prompt payment of salaries timely promotion, career advancement etc. Government must provide the secondary schools with adequate educational facilities. School leaders through quality assurance should ensure that all practices are put in place for minimum standard to be attained and maintained consistently for the school products to be produced according to the predetermined specifications (Adegbesa (2011, Oyelabi (2011) Krase, Duchesne & Bochner (2013) and Osakwe (2016).

Statement of the Problem

Guidance and counseling services in education is a veritable tool to help students to be actualized academically. It helps the teachers to mould the students' behavior and transform them to be better individuals in the society. It ensures that these students are not only being independent in future but that they can also contribute towards human, economic and societal development. Quality assurance can be applied by the school leaders to enhance qualify in education and achieve school goal. Leaders must therefore put the necessary exigencies needed to achieve the objectives and goal to raise the secondary schools' standard. The principals have to ensure that guidance and counseling services affect students' lives positively. They also have to make sure that quality assurance is applied and adhered to in order to enhance guidance and counseling education in secondary school. Will all these be expedited by secondary school principals? For this reason, the present study researchers are motivated to carryout research on "application of quality assurance strategies by school leaders to enhance Guidance and Counseling Education in Secondary Schools".

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is on application of quality assurance strategies by school leaders to enhance Guidance and Counseling Education in Secondary Schools in Gwagwalada Area Council, Abuja. The researchers specifically want to:

1. Investigate the guidance and counselling services needed to be enhanced by the school leaders applying quality assurance strategies in secondary schools in Gwagwalada Area Council, Abuja.
2. Examine quality assurance strategies applied by school leaders to enhance guidance and counselling education in secondary schools, in Gwagwalada Area council, Abuja.



Research Questions

1. What are the guidance and counseling services to be enhanced by the school leaders applying quality assurance strategies in secondary schools in Gwagwalada Area Council, Abuja?
2. Have the school leaders applied quality assurance strategies to enhance guidance and counseling education in secondary schools in Gwagwalada Area Council, Abuja?

Methodology

The researchers used survey research design to sample representatives from the population (Nakpodia 2010). The population of the study was twenty-four (24) principals and vice principals from junior and senior public secondary schools in Gwagwalada Area Council, Abuja (ERC of 2012). The sample of the study was twenty-four (24) principals and vice principals, sampled through purposive sampling technique. The questionnaire used was "Application of Quality Assurance Strategies by School Leaders (AQASL)", it was also used for data collection. The instrument was validated by experts in the Departments of Educational Management and Guidance and Counseling Department, University of Abuja, Abuja. The reliability of the study was carried out by the researchers conducting a pilot study. Data was collated after test-retest method was used, for analysis. Reliability coefficient of the questionnaire was calculated using Cronbach alpha, the index coefficient score obtained was 0.72. Mean statistics was applied to analyse the research questions. The mean score of 2.50 and above created the basis for agreeing with the research question, whereas mean score of below 2.50 showed that the research question was rejected after analysis. In the same vein the sectional mean score of 2.50 and above were adjudged accepted whereas below 2.50 was adjudged rejected when considering the research questions.

Data Analysis

Research Question one: What are the guidance and counseling services to be enhanced by the school leaders applying quality assurance strategies in secondary schools in Gwagwalada Area Council, Abuja?

Table 1: Guidance and Counseling Services to be Enhanced by School Leaders Application of Quality Assurance Strategies

N=24

	Items	SA	A	D	SD	\bar{X}	Decision
S/N	Guidance and counseling services rendered in your school to be enhanced by quality assurance strategies are: information, appraisal, vocational, evaluation and follow up services which include:						
1	Students weaknesses in class assignment, and continuous assessment.	8	7	4	5	2.75	Agreed
2	Students' class performance	9	6	6	3	2.88	Agreed



3	Students' examination performance	5	10	2	7	2.54	Agreed
4	General ability	7	9	4	4	2.79	Agreed
5	Subject combination for career aspiration	8	10	4	2	3.00	Agreed
6	Requirement for choice vocation	6	11	3	4	2.79	Agreed
7	Life skills and talents	9	7	1	7	2.75	Agreed
8	Having appropriate behavior to maintain academic and personal relationship	12	6	3	3	3.13	Agreed
9	Students having deficiencies and weaknesses in academics and in life generally.	9	9	4	2	3.04	Agreed
10	Follow up to assure students excellent performance in choice subjects for future job aspiration	13	5	3	3	3.17	Agreed
	Sectional Mean					2.88	Accepted

Table 1 revealed that the respondents agreed with mean scores of 2.75, 2.88, 2.54, 2.79, 3.00, 2.79, 2.75, 3.13, 3.04 and 3.17 respectively that guidance and counselling services to be enhanced by quality assurance strategies include : information, appraisal, vocational, evaluation and follow up services which manifest in students weaknesses in class assignment and continuous assessment, students class performance, examination performance, general ability, subject combination for career aspiration, requirement for choice vocation, life skills and talents, having appropriate behavior to maintain personal relationship, having deficiencies and weaknesses in academics and in life generally and follow up to assure students excellent performance in choice subjects for future job aspiration. All the respondents accepted that these were guidance and counseling services to be enhanced by the school leaders applying quality assurance strategies in secondary schools in Gwagwalada Area Council, Abuja, with the sectional mean score of 2.88

Research Question Two: Have you applied quality assurance strategies to enhance guidance and counseling education in secondary schools in Gwagwalada Area Council, Abuja?

Table 2: Quality Assurance Strategies to Enhance Guidance and Counseling Education

N=24

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	\bar{X}	Decision
	You have put in place and have carried out the under listed quality assurance strategies to enhance guidance and counselling in your secondary schools:						
1	Have and maintain quality structure and infrastructure	3	4	6	11	1.96	Disagreed



2	Effective supervision of teachers while teaching.	1	7	9	7	2.08	Disagreed
3	Effective monitoring and evaluation of staff on duties and the school activities generally.	3	3	12	6	2.13	Disagreed
4	Appropriate method of teaching.	9	7	3	5	2.83	Disagreed
5	Cordial relationship between staff and the school leader.	9	5	4	6	2.71	Disagreed
6	Enabling teaching/ school environment.	4	5	8	7	2.25	Disagreed
7	Prompt teachers' salary payment.	6	3	9	6	2.38	Disagreed
8	Government legislation and rules.	2	7	5	10	2.04	Disagreed
9	Minimum standard for graduates to be produced according to predetermined educational specifications.	4	4	7	9	2.13	Disagreed
10	Teacher career advancement	4	2	8	10	2.00	Disagreed
	Sectional Mean					2.25	

Table 2 showed that the respondents with the mean scores of 1.96, 2.08, 2.13, 2.25, 2.38, 2.04, 2.13 and 2.00 respectively disagreed that their school have put in place quality assurance strategies that will enhance guidance and counselling education such as: quality structures and infrastructure, effective supervision of teachers; effective monitoring and evaluation of staff on duties and school activities generally; enabling teaching/ school environment; prompt teachers' salary payment; government legislation and rules; minimum standard for graduates to be produced according to the predetermined educational specifications and teacher career advancement. Some of the respondents in items 4 and 5 agreed with the mean scores of 2.83 and 2.71 respectively that their school leaders have made teachers to apply appropriate methods of teaching and maintain cordial relationship between Staff and the school leaders. The respondents rejected that the school leaders have applied quality assurance strategies to enhance guidance and counseling education in secondary schools in Gwagwalada Area Council, Abuja, with the sectional mean score of 2.25

Discussion of Findings

The finding of the research question one revealed that information, appraisal, vocational, evaluation and follow-up services which include: students' weaknesses in continuous assessment, class/examination performance, life skills and talents, appropriate behaviour in pursuance of their academics, maintaining personal relationship, students' deficiencies and weaknesses etc. were the guidance and counselling services or practices to be



enhanced by the school leaders applying quality assurances strategies. Adegbesa (2011), Krase, Duchesne & Brocher (2013) and Dsakwe (2016) in affirming the finding of the present study emphasized that, it is incumbent for the school heads in secondary schools to ensure that all educational practices whether in guidance and counselling or in other fields of education are put in place for minimum standard to be maintained. The finding of the research question two proved that school leaders have not applied quality assurance strategies to enhance guidance and counselling education in secondary schools in Gwagwalada Area Council, Abuja. Researchers affirmed that for teachers to be efficient, effective, improved in instruction and for the schools attain acceptable standard, that quality assurance strategies should be introduced into the school system (Osakwe 2016, Ihereonye 2016 and West-Burham 2014). Quality assurance according to Onyeama & Chidobi (2019) will help secondary schools to produce excellent graduates and to be of high expected standard.

Conclusion

Considering the findings of the study the researchers concluded that: there were guidance and counselling services such as appraisal, vocational, evaluation and follow up services, which embodied students weaknesses in continuous assessment, examination assessment, academic performance, subjects combination for career or vocation requirement respectively, to be enhanced by the school leaders applying quality assurance strategies. Finally, the study finding concluded that school leaders did not apply quality assurance strategies to enhance guidance and counselling education in secondary schools in Gwagwalada Area Council, Abuja.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study the researchers recommended that the secondary school leaders should endeavour to enhance the school guidance and counselling services rendered to students by applying appropriate quality assurance strategies in secondary schools in Gwagwalada Area Council, Abuja.

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