



QUALITY ASSURANCE IN SECONDARY EDUCATION FOR SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract:

Secondary education aimed at developing individual for useful living. Among its specific goal is the provision of diverse curriculum in technical knowledge, vocational skills' acquisition, and commerce. These objectives no doubt equip learners with entrepreneurial skills needed for socio-economic development. This is to say that there is a link between secondary education goals and socio-economic development in Nigeria. Unfortunately, there seems to be poor socio-economic development which ranges from high rates of corruption, social vices, unemployment, low wages and income, among others. In view of these, it appears there is a missing link between secondary education goals and the present socio-economic development in Nigeria. Thus, the researchers show that the bridge between secondary education goals and the socio-economic development is quality assurance in secondary education. Hence, this paper examined the concept of quality assurance, socio-economic development and above all, ways school principals can enhance quality assurance in secondary education in order to achieve socio-economic development in Nigeria. It is hoped that the result of the study will assist school principals in designing relevant managerial skills that can enhance quality assurance in secondary education for socio-economic development in Nigeria.

Keywords: quality assurance, principal, secondary education, socio-economic development

1. Introduction

Socio-economic development is a process directed towards change, growth of a nation's wealth and also an indication of good governance of any nation. It is one of the most

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desired expectations of the citizens of any country because it enhances living standard of the citizens. According to Ojo, Aworawo and Ifedayo (2014), socio-economic development is seen as terms of improvement in the living standards of the citizenry, which is among the basic expectation and reward for the citizens in the social contract agreement between the governors and the governed. In other words, socio-economic development is of importance to both those in governance and the governed.

On the part of those in governance it makes for a happy, cooperative and joint contribution to peaceful administration, which makes a government to render their duties to the citizenry. It also makes the government to enjoy legitimate support of its citizens, stability in system of government, and the citizens willingly adhere to laws or established legal forms in the country. It invariable reduces crime. In addition, it helps to enhance economic growth, technological advancement, military powers, health security and international recognition; and these help to reduce migration rate and brain drain in a country.

Moreover, socio-economic development is the key that unlocks educational advancement. With improvement in education system, those in governance maintain progression in providing skill and knowledge opportunities to citizenry such that will advance to creating employment opportunities, sophisticated health care equipment and services, good transportation system, security of lives and properties of the populace. In fact, it gives key that unlock greatness and unlimited opportunities of a country. No wonder, Adetoye (2016), stated that socio-economic development concentrates primarily on economic growth which is reflected by the increase in the gross domestic product, industrialization, capital formation, welfare services, and the development of infrastructure such as roads, electricity, transportation, and increased economic efficiency.

On the part of the governed, socio-economic development enable the populace to enjoy maximum living standard. The governed will enjoy various social amenities such as; security of lives and properties, quality education and health care services, good roads and ports, earn a living and gain employment. With all these in place, the governed reciprocate by their willingness to perform their civic responsibilities and give their legitimate support to the government.

In Nigeria, the reference point at the beginning of the year 2015 is maximum socio-economic development by the year 2020. The long-awaited great year 2020 is here, but it appears that actualizing maximum socio-economic development is unrealistic. One of the reasons is that majority of citizenry do not enjoy the basic needs of life. For instance, there are evidences of poor health care system in Nigeria. Personal observation of the researchers shows that there are inadequate; drugs, portable water supply, ambulances in case of emergency, equipment, health centers and personnel, especially in the rural areas. While visits around some general hospitals in the cities, show that there are ill-equipped laboratory tools for complex health problems and carefree attitude of some health workers. Similarly, Menzibeya (2011), reported lack of coordination, fragmentation of services, dearth of resources, drug and supplies, inequity in resources distribution, and access to care and very deplorable quality care in Nigeria. This state of

affairs makes it hard for both patients to receive adequate attention, undergo laboratory test and checkups in critical conditions. This seems to make prevention, treatment, management of illness an uphill task for health workers. The preparedness of the recent COVID 19 pandemic is a challenge for most health workers. This is because they need to be sure of their safety and then be prepared for the safety of other citizens.

Moreover, Ewetan and Urhie (2014), reported of the deteriorating security situation in Nigeria. Following this, is insecurity of lives and properties such as: persistence armed robberies, herdsmen attacks, bomb expulsions, political thuggery, kidnaps, killings, stealing, cybercrime, cultism, Boko Haram attacks, ceaseless insurgency and militancy in the Niger Delta area of Nigeria, among others. These states of affair have posed threat, danger, harm, fear, tension and anxiety on the society.

In addition, there seems to be poor education system in the Nigeria. The educational system is faced with poor educational infrastructure, teaching aids and funding especially at primary and secondary levels of education. The poor education system at primary and secondary levels seems to have made most parents to enroll their children in schools owned by private individuals at exorbitant tuition rates for most parents. Also, the recent strike action at tertiary institution which started in March 2020 with an indefinite date of resumption is also a clear pointer to the poor education system in Nigeria. In the face of all these areas of poor socio-economic development, the researchers argue that there is a link between socio-economic development and secondary education goals in Nigeria.

2. Secondary Education

Secondary education is an indispensable level of education aimed at developing individual for useful living and socio-economic development. According to Federal Republic of Nigeria in her National Policy on Education (2015), secondary education is the education children receive after primary education and before going to tertiary institution. It is a vital educational institution where people are groomed into useful living, receive formal education, imbibe the acceptable values, skills and knowledge of the society for self-actualization and socio-economic development (Okeke-James, Igbokwe, Anyanwu & Obineme, 2020). The principals are the key players in the secondary education. They are the managers in secondary schools. They are to ensure that educational goals are attained through quality assurance. They work together with the teachers collaboratively and collegially to achieve school objectives (Igbokwe, Okorji & Asiegbu, 2016). The broad goal of secondary education is to prepare individual for useful living within the society and higher education. Among the specific goals of secondary education include to provide:

- 1) Technical knowledge and vocation skill necessary for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economic development;
- 2) Trained manpower in the applied science, technology and commerce at sub-professional grades;

- 3) Diversified curriculum to cater for difference in talents, opportunities and future roles.

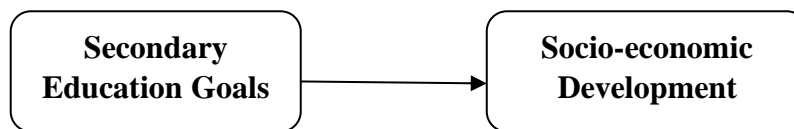


Figure 1: Socio-economic development through secondary education goals
(Source: The researchers)

Figure 1 is a diagram showing relationship between socio-economic development secondary education goals. The arrow indicates that achieving secondary education goals will result in the achievement of socio-economic development.

From the above, is clear that secondary education goal is targeted at imparting technology, commerce, vocational and entrepreneurial skills, such that is needed for an individual useful living and socio-economic development by extension. Despite, the clear link seen between the definitions of socio-economic development and secondary education goals, there are evidences of poor socio-economic development in Nigeria. Thus, the researchers argue that underlying factor to this missing link is assurance of quality education in secondary schools.

3. Quality Assurance

Secondary education is an important level of education that equips learners with necessary skills to be both employable and self-reliant. It prepares learners to further their education and contribute to socio-economic development of the country. Therefore, training learners as such a life-long asset require a double assurance that the learners achieve maximally the aim of establishing the educational institution. This is the reason quality assurance in the views of Omebe (2015), Oguntimehin, Kuewumi and Adeyemi (2018) is the ability of educational institutions to spell out some set of activities to pursue and meet the need of the use of manpower in relation to the quality of skills acquired by their products.

In other words, quality assurance is attained when learners are imparted with objectives of which educational organization was established. According to Ayeni (2012) quality assurance is the efficient management, monitoring, evaluation and reviews of the resource inputs and transformation process to produce quality output that meet standard and expectations of the society. The underlying point to the above definitions is that quality assurance aimed at actualizing a set educational objective. The Federal Government of Nigeria in her education quality assurance service handbook (2015), stated that quality assurance involves systematic monitoring, evaluating, regulating and reporting of educational programmes and practices to ensure that acceptable standards are attained and maintained. Thus, attainment of a set standard or objective is the watchword for quality assurance definitions of the above authors. This is to say that the

ability of schools to meeting the set national secondary education goal is dependent on quality assurance.

According to Nwosu (2013), quality assurance is the relatively measure of input, process, output or learning outcome according to nationally agreed minimum standard. This means that it is a process in which all the functions and activities of an institution are treated equally, planned, controlled and implemented in a systematic and scientific manner (Feldsman, 2017). In the views of Uthman and Mohammed (2018), quality assurance is a process of setting attainable standards for instructional delivery process, organizing, teaching and learning activities so that education objectives are achieved. This process must be continuous to ensure improvement in all aspects of education business in an institution of learning and satisfy the needs and expectations of the institution's customers, the learners and the larger society (Epelle & Kalu, 2018).

Quality assurance from the view point of the researchers is a process of ensuring that the learners are maximally imparted with the skill and knowledge as was stated in the national educational goal. The above definition implies four ideas: firstly, quality assurance is set to meet a set goal. It is aimed at actualizing the national educational goal. Secondly, quality assurance requires a strategic plan. It requires intended actions to achieve the expected educational goal. Thirdly, quality assurance requires a collective effort of stakeholders. Fourthly, stakeholders should be ready to discharge their duties responsibly.

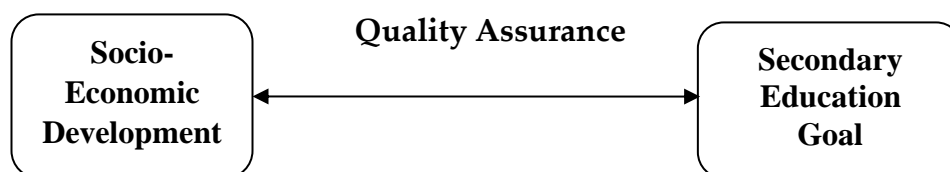


Figure 2: The missing link between socio-economic development and secondary education goal can be achieved through quality assurance
(Source: The researchers)

Figure 2 demonstrates that the bridge between socio-economic development and secondary education goal is quality assurance. In order to achieve quality assurance in secondary school, the principal who is important stakeholder that directs school activities requires adopting mechanisms for maximum assurance of national educational goals.

4. Ways Principals Enhance Quality Assurance in Secondary Schools

The principals are the major drivers of quality assurance in schools. They are the ones that ensures that educational goals and objectives are well attained. They motivate behaviours and attitudes in the school. Okorji, Igbokwe and Ezeugbor (2016), observed that every behaviour in secondary school is influenced directly or indirectly by the principal because he is the image copied by the teachers and students. The following were

suggested for principals to enhance quality assurance and guarantee socio-economic development:

- 1) **Adequate planning:** The principal should draw school objectives from the national educational goal. With this blue print, means of achieving school objectives and goals may be anticipated and handled. In the planning process, there is need for a strategic reminder of school objectives to the teachers, parents and students. The reminders give adequate attention to quality teaching-learning exercise.
- 2) **Adequate room for improvisation:** There is need to create room for impromptu make up for any inadequacy (ies) of human and material resources. The principal should be creative to make up alternative arrangement for human resources such as part-time teachers where there are inadequate teachers. Also, extra classes may be fixed for subjects that most students find difficult to understand. The principal should invent or spur teachers to invent teaching aids for students' maximum comprehension. Some of these services may be sponsored by internal generated revenue, donations from the communities, parents or guardian of the students.
- 3) **In-service training:** There is need for the principal to periodically organize on-the-job training such as seminars, workshops and conferences, especially on holidays for teachers. Such trainings will enable teachers to discover self, exploit their teaching potentials, keep abreast of teaching or educational trends and redirect the attention of teachers to quality assurance towards educational goals. In-service training can be organized frequently with services of external people who are experts in various subject areas or teaching skills. This may be organized at various levels such as in-school, inter-school and external levels.
- 4) **In-school supervision:** The principal should oversee the activities of both the students and teachers through periodic supervision. The principals' periodic supervision helps to check the regression or progression of both national and school objectives. With this constant oversight, the students' behaviour, class work, assignments, projects, corrections and questions are noted. On the other hand, teachers' lesson notes, class diaries, class registers and time books among others will be crosschecked.
- 5) **Periodic appraisal:** There is need for the principal to assess the performance and behaviour of both the teachers and students. This assessment should be student-teacher assessment and vice versa. Such assessment may have a criterion for scoring, for instance; teachers may be appraised as to: student-teacher relationship, class behaviour, teaching method and classroom management. The student can be assessed on the basis of class behaviour, academic performance and discipline. On the other hand, the principal should ensure self-appraisal which is to be done by both the teachers and students in the areas of administrative roles, academic roles and disciplinary roles.
- 6) **Principal's annual evaluation:** This assessment should be different from termly appraisal. This serves as review of all the year activities in the school in order to identify general strengths and weakness of the school, after which proper

documentation are made for accountability, clarity and authentication of happenings, experiences and observation this surely make up for school academic and administrative year calendar.

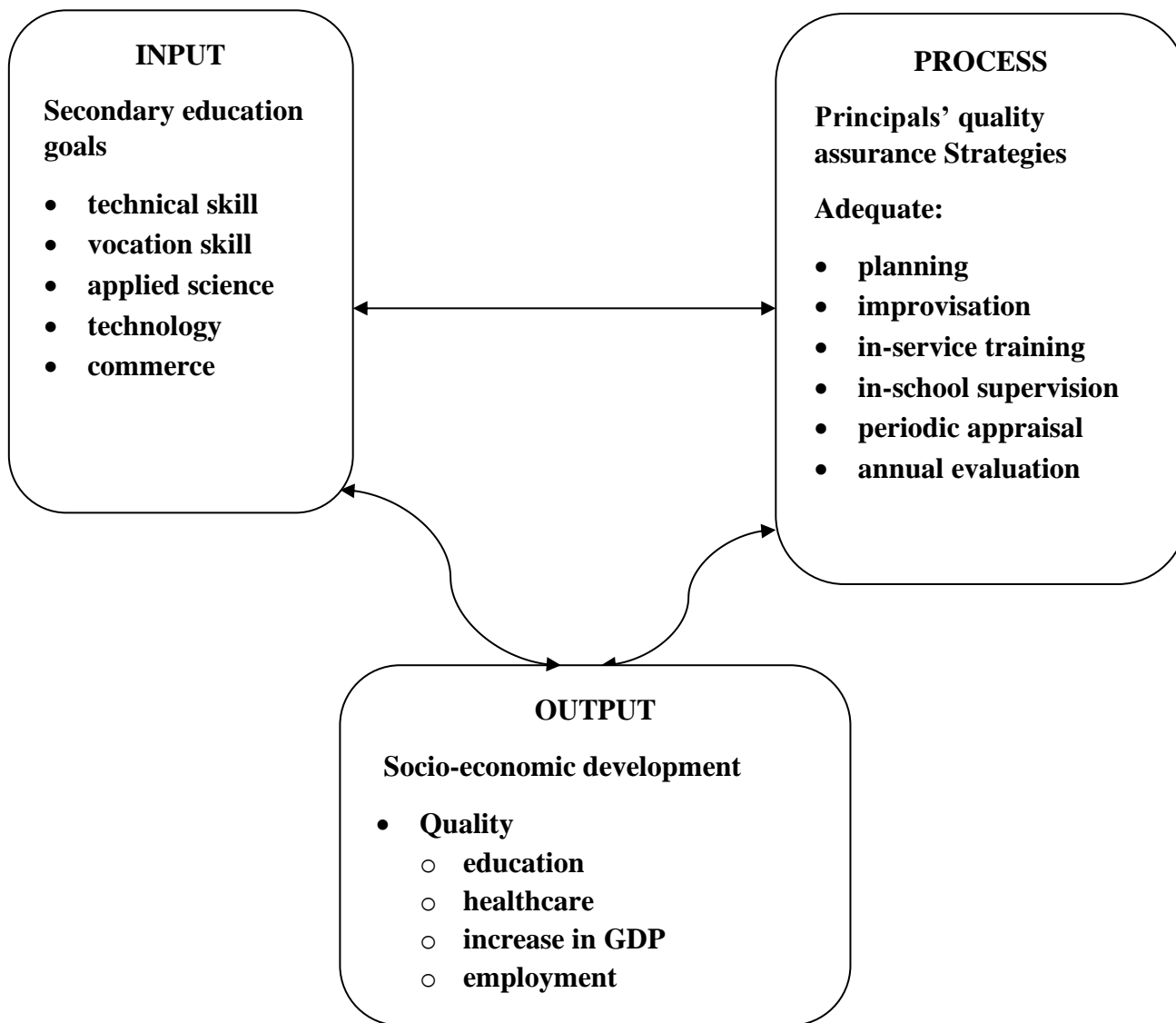


Figure 3: Socio-economic development, secondary education goals and quality assurance strategies
(Source: The researchers)

Figure 3 is a diagram showing the relationship among socio-economic development, secondary education goals and quality assurance. It shows that socio economic development will be achieved in Nigeria through secondary education goals by principals' adopting quality assurance mechanism in the school. The arrows show that they are inter-related. This has already been discussed above.

5. Significance of the Study

This study will be significant to the students, teachers, principals, government and society at large. The recommendations of this study will be of benefit to the student, in that when school principals adopt the suggested quality assurance strategy they will be informed on various mechanisms to ensure quality control; and students at the receiving end will improve students' learning, acquire necessary knowledge and skills needed to be employable and entrepreneurs. With such academic and entrepreneurial skills, students will be developed and useful to themselves and others. Also, for the student that may wish to further their education, it will serve as foundation that will trigger the choice of study in tertiary institution.

Hopefully, this study will be of benefit to the teachers, in that in their bid to ensure quality education, they are equally exposed to new ideas, knowledge and skills needed to be productive and entrepreneurs themselves. Again, the principal will successfully achieve national educational goals, specifically achieve school objectives, and adopt managerial skills needed to handle academic, disciplinary and administrative challenges in the school. The government will benefit from this study in that when quality assurance is guaranteed at secondary education level it will help to boost the socio-economic development in Nigeria, reduce youth unemployment and other social vices. Finally, the society will benefit when the other education stakeholders have benefitted accordingly, leading to a general socio-economic development.

6. Recommendations

Socio-economic development is achieved through a spontaneous growth. One of the means to achieve socio-economic development is through attaining the secondary education goals. Thus, there is obvious link between socio-economic development and the set secondary education goals. The vehicle that drives secondary education goals to socio-economic development lies on assurance of quality in secondary schools. It is recommended that school principals are sure means of achieving quality assurance and should ensure that the standard of quality assurance is followed in secondary schools. Thus, there is need to adopt planning, in-school supervision, keep compulsory academic records, self-appraisal and evaluation in order to achieve the set secondary educational goals. This will in turn develop learners with necessary skills needed to be employable, reduce unemployment and ensure socio-economic development in Nigeria.

7. Conclusion

Education remains the driver of moral, political and socio-economic transformation of any nation. It is commonly believed to be the foundation and backbone of economic sustainability and socio-economic development. This study has revealed that to estimate the returns of education in terms of job creation, entrepreneurial development, self-reliant, skill-acquisition and above all, socio-economic development in Nigeria, one must

address the concept of quality assurance in the educational institutions. This necessitates pro-active administrative and quality standardized driven interventions in favour of quality assurance in Nigerian educational institutions, with special reference to secondary education. The principals of secondary schools must be assisted by the government to take up their professional roles of ensuring and facilitating quality assurance in schools.

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