

AN APPRAISAL OF THE DEGREE OF SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOLS OF ZAMFARA STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted purposely to assess the degree of school effectiveness among public secondary schools of Zamfara State, Nigeria. In order to achieve this fundamental objective, one research question was formulated. A descriptive survey research design was adopted in the study. Population of the study comprised the entire 2361 classroom teachers deployed in the 158 public secondary schools of Zamfara State-Nigeria. From the population of the study, a sample size of 266 teachers was extracted using a 'Multistage Random Sampling Technique'. A semi-structured questionnaire developed by Lezotte and Snyder (2011) on a five Likert type scale instrument with 21 items was employed as an instrument for data collection. The instrument composite reliability was computed using Cronbach's alpha method and obtained the value of .949. All data covered in the study were collected through a field survey approach. Analytically, the current study discovered that, the degree of school effectiveness was at a high extent with mean score ($M=3.68$, $SD=0.15$). Based on this finding, the paper recommends that, stakeholders in educational sector comprising government's ministries, departments and agencies, policy-makers, secondary schools' principals, instructional teachers as well as the learners and their parents/guardians should reciprocally work together in the process of appropriate perpetration and advancement of effective school system and its practices.

Keywords: appraisal, school effectiveness, degree, secondary school

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INTRODUCTION

Empirically, there have been a number of arguments among the researchers in the sector of education on the constructs that produce(s) an effective school and its characteristics. In a significant general viewpoint, school effectiveness as a concept denotes the extent to which the established goals and/or objectives of a school are being implemented successfully (Dahiru et al., 2017). It was gathered in prior related research investigations that, learning outcomes and academic performance of students in core subjects has been regarded as a fundamental indicator that signifies the success of effective school practices; however, there have been some alternative causal factors that serves as determinants of school effectiveness, such factors include a proper implementation of a school's goals, teacher performance and teachers' job satisfaction as well as the extent to which members of communities (notably parents and guardians) are involved towards the achievement of school's goals (Scheerens, 2013). Furthermore, according to Zamir (2020) school effectiveness deals with educational leadership through which school teachers are informed of their professional responsibilities in the process of facilitating an effective teaching and learning of instructions which yields a positive outcome towards the attainment of an effective school system alongside its practices and constructs.

Conceptually, it is complex upon researchers in the sector of education to extract a specific authoritative definition of school effectiveness as a result of several causal factors that play a vital role in the process of achieving effectiveness among public schools. Therefore, the activity of conceptualisation and theory formulation in regards to school effectiveness differs among professional academics comprising researchers and educators (Zamir, 2020). On this basis, Dahiru & Gbolahan (2022) observed that, a number of researchers in educational arena focused on students' academic achievement as one of the most significant determinants of school effectiveness; while some of the researchers emphasised more on students' cognitive abilities, behaviours, attitudes and conducts.

According to Universal Basic Education (2002) school effectiveness is a multi-disciplinary, multi-dimensional and multi-level series of activities through which productivity in terms of quantity and quality of schools' services proceedings regarded as the ultimate criterion, and all other criteria are seen as preconditions and means in a school setting. In addition, school has been regarded as a significant environment that facilitates teaching and learning of instructions. Thus, school has an influence on the successful teachers' course delivery and learning performance of the students. In this viewpoint, school effectiveness signifies effectiveness of teaching and learning processes in a school setting (Wu, 2014).

Systematically, an effective school entails a series of essential activities that accommodate professional school leadership style, school culture and ethics, effective planning and organisation of proceedings in teaching and learning of instructions as well as academic guidance and counselling services (Udo, nd). Al Ahbabi (2018) established in research investigation, that, an effective school is one that produced a result by undertaking certain actions. i. Instructional leadership, ii. Clear and focus mission, iii. Safe and orderly environment, iv. Opportunity to learn on time/task, v. Great level of anticipation for success of teaching and learning processes, vi. Timely assessment of the learners' academic achievement and progress, and vii. Positive home/school relation (Indra et al., 2017; Dahiru et al., 2017; Lezzote & Snyder, 2011).

In spite of the significance of an effective school setting, there have been certain impedimental factors that negatively impacted towards actualisation of an effective school setting; such constraints include socio-cultural, socio-economic and political-will differences. On this viewpoint, Duze (2012) lamented that, secondary schools in Nigeria are no longer effective. This study was conducted purposely to assess the degree of school effectiveness among public secondary schools in Zamfara State.

Research Question

What is the degree of school effectiveness among public secondary schools in Zamfara State?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Descriptive [survey] research design was considered and thus, adopted in the conduct of the current research investigation. A descriptive study seeks to find out and describes the event or phenomenon (research problem) in its actual form. Descriptive study seeks or used the sample data of an investigation under review, describe, and explain what is existent or no-existent on the present status of a phenomena being investigated (Almustapha et al., 2021).

Participants

The study was conducted with a total population of the entire 2361 classroom teachers deployed in the 158 public secondary schools of Zamfara State-Nigeria as participants among which a sample size of 266 teachers was extracted using a 'Multistage Random Sampling Technique' due to the condition that, all the teachers (as participants) do possess equal characteristics of recognition in the context of this research paper.

Instrumentation

In order to achieve the main objective of the study, a semi-structured questionnaire developed by Lezzote and Snyder (2011) on a five Likert type scale instrument with 21 items was employed. The instrument composite reliability was computed using Cronbach's alpha method and obtained the statistical value of .949. Furthermore, the instrument adopted was found culture free. Thus, considered acceptable in the conduct of the current study.

Data Collection Procedure

With all the consents and approvals from authorities and people, all data covered in the study were collected through a field survey approach. Thus, the researchers visited all the sampled public secondary schools in the geographical area of the study.

Method of Data Analysis

Data analysis was made through descriptive statistics using mean and standard deviation which was computed on SPSS Version '20 Software. The statistical values of the constructs were determined through table 1 below:

Table 1: Mean Score Interpretations

Mean Value	Level
1.00-2.33	Low
2.34-3.66	Moderate
3.67-5.00	High

Source: Adopted from Robert (2006); Modified by Dahiru (2017)

RESULTS

Table 2: Descriptive Analysis of the Constructs Related to School Effectiveness

Statements/Constructs	Mean	SD	Level
SE1 Principal in my school communicates the mission to all the major stakeholders of the school	3.64	1.14	
SE2 Principal in my school supports teachers' efforts to maintain a disciplinary climate	3.81	1.07	
SE3 In my school, teachers understand the overall school purpose and goals	3.62	1.05	
SE4 In my school, an agreed-upon written statement of purpose guides the instructional program	3.52	1.03	
SE5 In my school, teachers are committed to school instructional priorities	3.65	0.96	

SE6 In my school, instructional focus provides a clear direction toward school instructional program	3.68	0.90	
SE7 In my school, teachers are welcomed to discuss school goals and means of achieving them during faculty and in-service meetings	3.79	0.98	
SE8 In my school, there exist practical plans including its mission and objectives	3.57	1.08	
SE9 My school is regularly clean and maintained	3.75	1.08	
SE10 In my school, teachers really care about students	4.02	2.65	
SE11 In my school, discipline is not a problem	3.57	1.07	
SE12 In my school, expectations of teachers are not easily influenced by the attitudes of students	3.58	0.94	
SE13 In my school, teachers are confident that all students have opportunity to learn and succeed	3.97	0.92	
SE14 In my school, policies reflect high academic expectations for all students	3.75	0.94	
SE15 In my school, teachers ensure their students master the skills being taught before they proceed to the next learning task	3.65	0.98	
SE16 In my school, students' performance is regularly evaluated	3.70	0.94	
SE17 Teachers in my school use student assessment information to give feedback and plan instruction	3.76	2.65	
SE18 In my school, sufficient time is allocated to teach the intended learning outcomes	3.59	0.98	
SE19 Teachers in my school use variety of teaching methods to attract students	3.70	0.96	
SE20 Parents in my school are involved in the selection, evaluation, and revision of school activities	3.41	2.16	
SE21 Parents are kept informed about students' progress in my school	3.50	1.10	
Overall Mean Score of the Level of School Effectiveness	3.68	0.15	High

Source: Researchers' Field Survey, 2022.

As shown in table 2 above, it was revealed that the following constructs: SE10 "In my school, teachers really care about students" has the highest mean score of (M=4.02, SD=2.65); SE13 "In my school, teachers are confident that all students have opportunity to learn and succeed" (M=3.97, SD=0.92); SE2 "Principal in my school supports teachers' efforts to maintain a disciplinary climate" (M=3.81, SD=1.07); SE7 "In my school, teachers are welcomed to discuss school goals and means of achieving them during faculty and in-service meetings" (M=3.79, SD=0.98); SE17 "Teachers in my school use student assessment information to give feedback and plan instruction" (M=3.76, SD=2.65); SE 9 "My school is clean and maintained" (M=3.75, SD=1.08); SE14 "In my school, policies reflect high academic expectations for all students" (M=3.75, SD=0.94); SE16 "In my school, students' performance is regularly evaluated" (M=3.70, SD=0.94); SE19 "Teachers in my school use variety of teaching methods to attract students" (M=3.70, SD=0.96); as well as SE6 "In my school, instructional focus provides a clear direction toward school instructional program" with mean score (M=3.68, SD=0.90) were found at a high level. While, the constructs of SE5 "In my school, teachers are committed to school instructional priorities" (M=3.65, SD=0.96); SE15 "In my school, teachers ensure their students master the skills being taught before they proceed to the next learning task" (M=3.65, SD=0.98); SE1 "Principal in my school communicates the mission to all the major stakeholders of the school" (M=3.64, SD=1.14); SE3 "In my school, teachers understand the overall school purpose and goals" (M=3.62, SD=1.05); SE18 "In my school, sufficient time is allocated to teach the intended learning outcomes" (M=3.59, SD=0.98); SE12 "In my school, expectations of teachers are not easily influenced by the attitudes of students" (M=3.58, SD=0.94); SE8 "In my school, there exist practical plans including its mission and objectives" (M=3.57, SD=1.08); SE11 "In my school, discipline is not a problem" (M=3.57, SD=1.07); SE4 "In my school, an agreed-upon written statement of purpose guides the instructional program" (M=3.52, SD=1.03); SE21 "Parents are kept informed about students' progress in my school" (M=3.50, SD=1.10) as well as SE20 "Parents in my school are involved in the selection, evaluation, and revision of school activities" with mean score (M=3.41, SD=2.16) were found at a moderate level.

By referring to table 1 (Mean Score Interpretations), the overall mean score of table 4 ($M=3.68$, $SD=0.15$) revealed that, the level of school effectiveness among the public secondary schools in Zamfara State was observed at a high degree of practice.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Comprehensively, the outcomes of the study highlighted that, teachers (as participants) agreed on all seven common correlates of school effectiveness (namely, effective school administration/leadership, clear and focused mission of the school, orderly and conducive environment of learning, great level of anticipation for success of teaching and learning processes, timely assessment of the learners' academic achievement and progress, and positive home/school relation) were at high degree of practice among the public secondary schools of Zamfara State, Nigeria as it was indicated by the overall mean score of ($M=3.68$, $SD=0.15$).

This finding is in line with that of Ajayi & Ekundayo (2011) who conducted a research work on the factors determining the effectiveness of secondary schools in south-western States of Nigeria. Thus, the outcome of their investigation exposed that, the level of school effectiveness was significantly high.

On other hand, the finding of the current study was contrary to that of Dahiru (2017) who dedicated that, the level of school effectiveness in government-owned public secondary schools in Zamfara State was just moderate.

Furthermore, the major finding of the current research was not in harmony with that of Duze (2012) who submitted that, almost [generally] secondary schools in Nigeria are no longer effective. One possible explanation for the difference(s) between the findings of this research and other researches on the level of school effectiveness could be the socio-cultural, socio-economic and political-will differences between the geographical areas that the researches were conducted.

CONCLUSION

This study was conducted purposely to assess and determine the degree to which effective school practices were implemented. The major findings of the paper observed that, the degree of school effectiveness was at a high degree with an overall mean value of ($M=3.68$, $SD=0.15$).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on major findings of the study, the paper recommends that, stakeholders in educational sector comprising government's ministries, departments and agencies, policy-makers, secondary schools' principals, instructional teachers as well as the learners and their parents/guardians should reciprocally work together in the process of appropriate perpetration and advancement of effective school system and its practices.

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