MPRI-JAEE | INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ASSESSMENT & EVALUATION IN EDU.
VOL. 1 NO. 1 JUN-2022

PERCEIVED IMPACT OF ACCREDITATION EXERCISE ON STUDENTS ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN AWKA EDUCATION ZONE

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KEYWORDS:
Accreditation Exercise, Students, Academic Performance, Secondary Schools

Abstract

The study investigated the perceived impact of accreditation exercise on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Awka education zone of Anambra State. Three research questions guided the study. The research design adopted for the study was the descriptive research design. The population of the study comprised 1,228 teachers in public secondary schools in Awka education zone of Anambra State. Through simple random sampling technique, 245 teachers in public secondary schools in Awka education zone of Anambra State were sampled. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire which was validated by three experts in the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The reliability test on the instrument using Cronbach Alpha which yielded reliability co-efficient values of 0.84, 0.80 and 0.82 for the three clusters in the study respectively with an overall reliability coefficient of 0.82. The instrument collected was analyzed using mean. Findings of the study revealed that accreditation of school facilities, teachers' quality and curriculum implementation have impacts on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Awka Education Zone of

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Anambra. Based on these findings the researcher recommends among others, that the Ministry of Education in collaboration with Post Primary School Service Commission (PPSSC) should ensure that accreditation of school facilities is given top priority attention. It was also recommended that principals of secondary schools should ensure that teachers update them on the level of progress in terms of their implementation of the school curriculum.

Introduction

The importance of education as a critical tool for improving the quality of life of an individual and the society at large cannot be overemphasized. Education is a process of imparting some knowledge, skills and attitude on the learners. It is viewed by the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) (2013) as the instrument for national development. In order for education to achieve its role in the transformation and development of individuals and the society it has to be characterized by quality. Quality is the baseline standard in education that can be measured on a scale of reference. It is an expression of standard or the means by which to set a standard in which education can be achieved (Ajibade & Ajibade, 2020). In order to achieve quality in school programmes across the three levels of education (Basic, secondary and tertiary level), the Federal Government instituted accreditation as a mechanism.

Accreditation is a process of self-study and external quality review used in higher education to scrutinize an institution or its programmes for quality standards and need for quality improvement (Obadara & Alaka, 2013). The process is designed to determine whether or not an institution has met or exceeded the required standards (set by an external body such as a government, national quality assurance agency, or a professional association) for accreditation, and whether it is achieving its mission and stated purpose. Accreditation is a systematic and comprehensive evaluation of secondary schools to look out for areas of strengths and weaknesses of the school. Ajibade and Ajibade (2020) stated that a well designed accreditation should aimed at providing qualitative education and which could only be achieved when there is adequate facilities, qualified manpower, curriculum implementation and adequate delivery among others.

Accreditation according to Sani (2015) seeks to evaluate the adequacy of facilities in the school. In accrediting school facilities, accreditation is concerned with determining the quality of die facilities present in the school, if the number of facilities in school is adequate to meet the needs of the school population and the

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site of the school. Furthermore, another aspect of education is in the area of teachers' quality in secondary schools. Accreditation of school teachers is very essential in the realization of quality in education. According to Ajibade and Ajibade (2020), teachers are implementers of the curriculum, it is therefore important that their academic and professional qualifications are evaluated in the realization of school goals. In the same vein, the goal of accreditation is to ensure curriculum implementation in secondary schools.

For any curriculum plan or innovation to become fully meaningful, it must be adequately implemented. The way it is implemented influences the degree of success. Guga and Bawa (2013) defined curriculum implementation as actualization, concretization, making and real the planned curriculum. It is a critical phase in the cycles of planning and delivering a curriculum.' Curriculum implementation in secondary schools focuses on both the actual use of the curriculum and the attitude of those who implement it. Accreditation of curriculum implementation has been suggested as having significant influence on students' academic performance.

Ajibade and Ajibade (2020) stated that reason for accreditation exercise in schools is for quality assurance, standard, control and academic achievement of students, hence they are potent factors that will qualify any institution to sit/write any external examination in their school. Abubakar (2015) opined that there are institutions who are not accredited, as a result, this will make them to sit/write their external examination in another school and when doing so it will make student not be relaxed, experience fears, lack confidence due to unfamiliar school environment.

Academic performance is measured by examination or continuous assessment. However, there is no general agreement on how it is best tested or which aspects are most important. Ezeh (2014) defined academic performance as what the students have learned or what skills the students has learned and is usually measured through assessments like standardized tests, performance assessment and portfolio assessments. In this context, academic performance refers to the rate in which students perform in their examinations and other extra-curricular activities in the school system. However, the extent to which accreditation in secondary school influences students' academic performance has not been empirically proven in Awka Education Zone. It is against this background that the researcher sought to ascertain the perceived impact of accreditation exercise on

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students' academic performance in secondary schools in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State.

Statement of the Problem

Secondary education is a very important level of education in Nigeria. This is because it is a strategic level of education that prepares individual for useful living and for higher education. The achievement of the goals of secondary education is pivotal in the extent to which quality it's enshrined in the activities and dealings in the schools. In order to realize the goals of secondary schools, school are expected to undergo accreditation exercise before establishment and after establishment based on set standards. The goal of the accreditation is to ensure that secondary schools have all the necessary facilities and tools to be qualified for external examinations.

Moreso, when schools are fully accredited, they will be qualified to sit for external examinations within their school premises rather than going to another school to sit for such examination. This will reduce stress among the students and teachers. Field interactions with students reveal that they are of the opinion that the full accreditation of their schools makes them relaxed when writing external examinations. However, there is no empirical evidence to back the claim that accreditation improves students' performance in secondary schools. The above situation begs to question, the perceived impact of accreditation exercise on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State?

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to ascertain the perceived impact of accreditation exercise on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State. Specifically, the study determined the perceived impact of:

1. Accreditation of school facilities on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State.
2. Accreditation of teachers' quality on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State.
3. Accreditation of school curriculum implementation on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State.

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Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the impact of accreditation of school facilities on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State?
2. What is the impact of accreditation of teacher quality on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State?
3. What is the impact of accreditation of school curriculum implementation on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State?

Method Research Design

The research design adopted in this study is the descriptive survey. Nworgu (2015) defined descriptive survey as a study which aims at collecting data on, and describing it in a systematic manner, the characteristics, features or facts about a given population.

Area of the Study

The study was carried out in Awka Education Zone. The zone covers five local government areas- Awka-North, Awka-South, Anaocha, Dunukofia and Njikoka Local Government Areas, there are 62 secondary schools in the zone. The zone is well known for civil service, trading and agriculture. The choice of the area for the study is informed by the need to maintain quality assurance for academic standards in schools in the zone.

Population of the Study

The population of the study comprised l,228 teachers in public secondary schools in Awka education zone of Anambra State based on information from Post-Primary Secondary Schools Services Commission (PPSSC), Awka, Anambra State in November, 2021.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample comprised 245 teachers in public secondary schools in Awka education zone of Anambra State. The sampling technique used to draw the sample was

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simple random sampling. 20 percent of the study population was drawn from the five local governments in the zone.

Instrument for Data Collection

The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire developed by the researcher from the reviewed literature. The instrument was titled "Questionnaire on Impact of Accreditation Exercise on Students Academic Performance in Secondary Schools in Awka Education Zone (QIAESAPSSAEZ)". The instrument contains 22 items in three clusters of Bl, B2 and B3 according to the three research questions guiding the study. The three clusters contain 10. 6 and 6 items respectively. All the items are structured on a 4-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) weighted 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively.

Validation of the Instrument

The face validation of the instrument was determined. To do this, the research questions, purpose of the study and the questionnaire were given to three experts; who are lecturers; two in the Department of Educational Management and Policy and one in Measurement and Evaluation Unit of the Department of Educational Foundations, all in the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

Reliability of the Instrument

A pilot test was conducted to establish the instrument's reliability whereby the questionnaire was administered on 10 teachers in secondary schools in Enugu State who were not included in the population of the study. As a result of the fact that the instrument is in three clusters, the researcher had to ascertain the reliability of each cluster using Cronbach Alpha reliability method, which yielded coefficient values of 0.84, 0.80 and 0.82 for clusters Bl to B3 respectively. The Cronbach Alpha reliability analysis on the obtained data yielded a score of 0.82 for internal consistency, which was deemed high for the study. These coefficient values indicate that the instrument is reliable because they are in line with Nworgu (2015) who suggested that reliability co-efficient of 0.70 is adequate for a research instrument.

Method of Data Collection

Data was collected by the researcher with the help of three research assistants. Copies of the questionnaire were administered by the researcher or the research

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assistants on the spot to the teachers' in their staff rooms or classrooms in their schools. Yet those teachers who were not disposed to fill the instrument for immediate retrieval, an appointment of revisit was made with the researcher or research assistants. This exercise lasted for three weeks. The reason was to ensure and facilitate high return rate of the item for analysis. Out of the 245 copies of questionnaire administered, 206 copies were returned. These 206 copies representing 84 percent return rate of the questionnaire distributed were used for data analysis.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected was analyzed using mean. The mean value was used to answer the research questions. Any item with mean rating between 2.50 and above was regarded as agreed while any item with mean rating below 2.50 was regarded as disagree.

Results

Research Question 1

What is the impact of accreditation of school facilities on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State?

Table 1: Respondents Mean Rating on the Impact of Accreditation of School Facilities on Students' Academic Performance in Secondary Schools

S/NO	Item Statements	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	D
1.	Allows students to enjoy lesson in a conducive environment	100	106	0	0	3.48	Agree
2.	Enables teachers to use appropriate teaching tools	84	122	0	0	3.40	Agree
3.	School facilities like the science laboratories enable students to learn by practicing	98	108	0	0	3.47	Agree
4.	It provides students the opportunity to learn in a quiet environment	104	102	0	0	3.50	Agree
5.	Creates positive attitude among students towards learning	102	100	4	0	3.47	Agree
6.	Motivates students to attend school	100	106	0	0	3.48	Agree
7.	Facilitates easy transmission of	99	107	0	0	3.48	Agree

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	knowledge from teachers to students						
8.	Gives students feeling of security	101	100	1	2	3.45	Agree
9.	The beauty and aesthetics of the school improves students' self-esteem among their peers	84	122	0	0	3.40	Agree
10.	The availability of audio-visual devices in school facilitates high learning knowledge retention among students	98	108	0	0	3.47	Agree
	Cluster Mean					**3.46**	**Agree**

Data in Table 1 reveal that the respondents agree that items 1 to 10 are the impact of accreditation of school facilities on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State with mean ratings ranging between 3.40 to 3.50. The cluster mean of 3.46 indicate that the impact of accreditation of school facilities on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State, allows students to enjoy lesson in a conducive environment, enables teachers to use appropriate teaching tools, it provides students the opportunity to learn in a quiet environment, motivates students to attend school and that it facilitates easy transmission of knowledge from teachers to students among others.

Research Question 2

What is the impact of accreditation of teacher quality on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State?

Table 2: Respondents Mean Rating on the Impact of Accreditation of Teacher Quality on Students' Academic Performance in Secondary Schools

S/NO	Item Statements	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	D
11.	It improves teachers use of effective teaching methods for improving students understanding	98	108	0	0	3.47	Agree
12.	Ensure that teaching plans are effectively prepared for teaching students	88	118	0	0	3.50	Agree
13.	The determination of subject knowledge of teachers would	103	103	0	0	3.50	Agree

	impact on the ease with which knowledge is transmitted to students						
14.	It enable teachers to have good relationship with their students thus improving their attitude to learning	84	100	2	0	3.11	Agree
15.	Gives teachers time to patiently handle students according to their needs	100	100	4	2	3.44	Agree
16.	Allows teachers to effectively organize classrooms to increase students attention to lesson	103	103	0	0	3.50	Agree
	Cluster Mean					**3.40**	**Agree**

Data in Table 2 reveal that the respondents agree that items 11 to 16 are the impact of accreditation of teacher quality on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State with mean ratings ranging between 3.11 to 3.50. The cluster mean of 3.40 indicate that the impact of accreditation of teacher quality on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State, improves teachers use of effective teaching methods for improving students understanding, ensures that lesson plans and teaching aids are adequately prepared for teaching students, enable teachers to have good relationship with their students thus improving their attitude to learning, gives teachers time to patiently handle students according to their needs and allows teachers to effectively organize classrooms to increase students attention to lessons.

Research Question 3

What is the impact of accreditation of school curriculum implementation on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State?

Table 3: Respondents Mean Rating on the Impact of Accreditation of School Curriculum Implementation on Students' Academic Performance in Secondary Schools

S/NO	Item Statements	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	D
17.	Ensures that the syllabus is completed hence ensuring that student knowledge is up-to-date	104	102	0	0	3.50	Agree

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18.	Ensures that the desires instructional materials are used for teaching making it easy for students understand	99	107	0	0	3.48	Agree
19.	Ensures that students are properly placed in their subject areas classes	98	108	0	0	3.47	Agree
20.	Ensures that students are placed in the required number in the classroom	101	100	3	2	3.45	Agree
21.	Ensures that the school time table is made according to the directives of the ministries of education	88	118	0	0	3.42	Agree
22.	Ensure that the required number of teachers are recruited to teach in schools	100	106	0	0	3.48	Agree
	Cluster Mean					**3.46**	**Agree**

Data in Table 3 reveal that the respondents agree that items 17 to 22 are the impact of accreditation of school curriculum implementation on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State with mean ratings ranging between 3.46 to 3.50. The cluster mean of 3.46 indicate that the impact of accreditation of school curriculum implementation on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State, ensures that the syllabus is completed hence ensuring that student knowledge is up-to-date, ensures that the desires instructional materials are used for teaching making it easy for students to understand, ensures that students are properly placed in their subject areas classes, ensures that the school time table is made according to the directives of the ministries of education and ensures that the required number of teachers are recruited to teach in schools, ensures that there is equity between teachers and students ratio in school population.

Discussion

Findings of the study revealed that the impact of accreditation of school facilities on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Awka Education Zone of Anambra are that it allows students to enjoy lesson in a conducive environment, enables teachers to use appropriate teaching tools, it provides students the

opportunity to learn in a quiet environment, motivates students to attend school and that it facilitates easy transmission of knowledge from teachers to students among others. This finding is in disagreement with Ibrahim, Umar and Clement (2017) who did not find statistically significant relationship in the areas of school plant and facilities and students' academic achievement. However, Abubakar (2015) found that accreditation had significant influence on physical quality of facilities, Abubakar noted that accreditation offers schools opportunity to improve on the level of their facilities and improves the level of academic excellence in schools. Briggs, Ubulom and LongJohn (2018) reported that accreditation of school plant improves students academic performance. Briggs et al (2018) suggested that provision of school facilities should be taken seriously by school administrators, Post-Primary School Service Commission Ministry of Education because school facilities are enablers of students' academic success.

Findings of the study revealed that the impact of accreditation of teacher quality on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State, improves teachers use of effective teaching methods and teaching aids for improving students understanding, ensures that lesson plans are effectively prepared for teaching students and allows teachers to effectively organize classrooms to arouse students attention/interest on the lesson among others. This finding is in line with Abubakar (2015) reported that accreditation exercise had significant influence on quality of instructors. Similarly, Ukaigwe and Nwabueze (2018) stated that accreditation offers opportunity for school administrators and teachers to improve on their abilities, competencies and qualification. Ukaigwe and Nwabueze noted that improves in teachers' quality as a result of school accreditation can significantly improve the students' academic performance.

Findings of the study revealed that the impact of accreditation of school curriculum implementation on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Awka Education Zone of Anambra is that it ensures that the syllabus is completed hence ensuring that student knowledge is up-to-date, ensures that the desires instructional materials are used for teaching making it easy for students to understand, ensures that students are properly placed in their subject areas classes, ensures that the school time table is made according to the directives of the ministries of education and ensures that the required number of teachers are recruited to teach in schools. This finding is in agreement with Abubakar (2015) found that accreditation had significant influence on the quality of curriculum

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implementation. Abubakar stated that accreditation offers school administrators opportunity to assess the level of completion of the curriculum contents, Obadara and Alaka (2013) opined that there is significant relationship between accreditation and resource input into Nigerian universities, quality of output, quality of process, and no significant relationship between accreditation and quality of academic content. Obadara and Alaka recommended among others that human capacities should be built in the area of quality assurances as to ensure quality in schools.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher concludes that school accreditation has significant impact on the academic performance of secondary school students in Awka education zone of Anambra State. Accreditation of school facilities, teachers' quality and school curriculum implementation would significantly have impact on the quality of secondary school students.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher proffers the following recommendations:

1. State Ministry of Education in collaboration with Post Primary School Service Commission (PPSSC) should ensure that all that is required are provided in schools before accreditation exercise.
2. It is of most important that Principals of Secondary schools should ensure that teachers are updated on the level of progress in terms of implementation of school curriculum by the teachers.
3. State Government in collaboration with Ministry of Education and Post Primary School Service Commission (PPSSC) should ensure adequate provisions of school facilities, school plants, qualified teachers, updated school curriculum which are potent factor for accreditation exercise as these will help a school to qualify to sit/write for any external examination.
4. Post Primary School Service Commission (PPSSC) and Principal should ensure that accreditation of school facilities, teachers, students and school environment, school curriculum, school plants and teaching aids should be given top priority attention.
5. Ministry of Education in collaboration with Post Primary School Service Commission (PPSSC) should ensure that accreditation of teachers' quality,

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standards and requirements are made known to teachers in secondary schools so that teachers can always improve their professional qualifications.

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