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Application of Total Quality Management Principles (TQMP) for Continuous Improvement of Secondary Schools in Anambra State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study was designed to investigate the application of total quality management principles for continuous improvement of Secondary Schools in Anambra State. The study was carried out in the 257 Secondary Schools in Anambra State. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The study was guided by three research questions. The total population of the study was 6536; consisting of 257 Principals and 6279 teachers in public Secondary Schools in Anambra State (Source: Planning, Research and Statistics (PRS) unit of Post-Primary Schools Service Commission, Awka; June 2017). The sample was made up of 77 Principals and 1884 teachers, making a total of 1961 respondents. The sample was drawn using proportionate stratified random sampling technique. Stratification was based on the already existing six education zones in the state. Data was collected using structured questionnaire of 20 items, validated by three experts with a reliability index of 0.84, 0.79 and 0.77 for the three sections respectively which were obtained using Crombach alpha co-efficient. All the 1961 copies of the instrument distributed were duly filled and retrieved, representing 100 percent return rate. Data were analysed using mean and standard deviation. The findings revealed among others, that principals provided the opportunity for teachers to acquire on the job training principles that enhanced continuous improvement in Secondary Schools in the state. However, the study further revealed that teachers are not sponsored for conferences in their areas of specialization. Based on the findings, some recommendations were made which include: that the Ministry of education through the principals should annually make funds available for teachers' conferences and seminars to enable them update their knowledge especially in the area of application of TQMPS for continuous improvement of the school system in Anambra State.

Keywords: *Application, Total Quality Management Principles, Continuous Improvement.*

Introduction

One of the greatest worries of all the stake holders in education borders on the standard and quality of Nigerian education system. The worry is amplified on the premise that the development of any nation anchors on the quality of education provided to its citizenry. For the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2013), education is an instrument for national development and social change. Consequently, the government established various agencies to

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oversee supervise and monitor all the educational institutions to ensure that quality and standard are maintained in the system. Such agencies include: The National Primary Education Commission (NPEC), Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC), and National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE), and the National Universities Commission (NUC). The Anambra State Government introduced School Based Management Committee (SBMC) as a measure aimed at involving all the stake holders in order to ensure an effective management of the secondary education in the State. Despite this effort, a good number of authors still observed that the quality of education in Nigeria has not brought about much significant transformation for Continuous school improvement (Babayemi, 2006; Ofojebe, 2008; Agbionu, 2009 & Ezeugbor 2015). Indiscipline among teachers and students, ill-motivated teachers, teaching of obsolete concepts, teachers' lack of information that matches the test of time, poor curriculum implementation, dilapidated buildings and poor learning environment among others have continued to trail the school system (Egboka, Ezeugbor & Eneme, 2013). Meanwhile, Principals' inability to exhibit an appreciable sense of commitment is evident in their poor leadership principles, and application of effective supervisory techniques that could propel teachers to perform better.

It therefore becomes expedient that a viral strategy to achieve quality in the education system be explored. Some educators in the field of Management; Emanalo (2008); Salami and Ufoma (2013) advocated for the adoption of total quality Management (TQMP) in the Nigerian education system if the anticipated quality standard would be attained. Quality Management in line with Okeke(as cited in Emenalo, 2008) is the aggregate of "all efforts from the top management to the lowest cadre of the organizational hierarchy geared towards doing the right things first and all the time and continually striving for improvement. However, to achieve an efficient management in secondary schools requires using different management models/principles, one of which is total quality management. This concept was a brain child of W. Edwards Deming in the 1950s which was first introduced in the business world and which has been adopted and applied in educational management. According to Suzana, Smilijana Danijela(n.d.) TQMP approach in education involves not only achieving high quality but also influencing all segments of educational process; organising, management, interpersonal relations, material and human resources and others. It is an acceptable managerial tool for improving total organisational efficiency and effectiveness and departure from management by control.

Total Quality Management (TQM) calls for the participation of all the relevant stakeholders in education like principals, teachers, students, parents, government, and community, and the like. The leader factor in TQM is the process of systematic change itself. The issue here is to develop the school system as an integrated, organic set of relationships, and to gain the ability to change and direct those relationships again in the direction of improvement. Sallis (2002) argues that an educational organization could benefit from applying the TQM approach both in human financial terms. In furtherance to the fact that TQM in the idea of Ejionueme and Oyoyo(2015) is the cultivation and practice of quality in every person's tasks and activities through

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which the school focuses on continuous improvement of all operations in the task areas. The role of the school administrators (Principals) is key to its success or failure. He/She is endowed with the responsibility of harnessing all the scarce factor resources to ensure quality, reform and sustainability in the entire process of teaching and learning (Farooq, Akhtar, Ullah and memo, 2007). The philosophy of Deming as cited by Ejionueme and Oyoyo has provided a framework that can integrate many positive developments in education which include among others; teamwork, site-based management, cooperative learning and outcomes based education.

Total Quality Management Principles (TQMP) echoes the functionality and competencies of the school administrators in the areas of; creating constancy of purpose, instituting training on the job, developing effective leadership, encouraging teamwork and drive out fear among others in order to continuously improve the education system. It emphasizes teacher competence, creativity, commitment, teamwork, effective communication and how educational administrators are expected to lead in order to realise the full potentials of all personnel in the system. If school administrators would realize that the failure of the education system could translate into perpetual insecurity, poverty, insurgency, unemployment, proliferation of cult practices, unwanted destruction of lives and property as well as kidnapping in this nation, they will not waste time in embracing the application of TOMP as a step in the right direction with regards to their day to day administration of their schools. As a step in the right direction TQMP prevails on the principals to vigorously pursue quality of education by applying its principles on every sphere of the school curricula and co-curricular activities. Collaborating with this view, Kezner, (2006) affirms that TQMP approaches in school administration were established to improve quality leadership, unfettered commitment and teachers' response to goals in order to maximize quality. Also that the schools need to adapt to on-going changes as needs arise because change is inevitable. Positive response from Weller (as cited in Ghani &Pourrajab, 2014) indicates that with the application of TQMP, principals and teachers can recognize the root of absenteeism. It also can help in identifying realistic solutions which yield positive results in academic and non-academic areas.

A number of studies conducted by Comer and Gates(2004), Burke(2010), Pal and Dhodiya(2011) revealed a tremendous improvement recorded especially in the USA of schools that applied TQMP, such include: increasing students' involvement in school activities, growth in the membership of their parents teacher and Learner Associations, motivating students to do and be their best with development of the curriculum. Also, principals and teachers have become enablers or even facilitators; morale and motivation have improved, lower dropout rates among others have reduced drastically. It is not an exaggeration to advance that Nigerian education system in general and Anambra State in particular could enjoy the same benefits if TQMP are applied for continuous improvement in the programmes of the education system.

Mujis and Renolds (2004) defined school improvement as a vehicle for planned educational change that is concerned with raising students' achievement. They believe that the school principal requires action on several levels to improve the teaching learning quality. These actions include:

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leading by example, improved relationship with the teachers and students, rewarding good performance (motivator), encouraging professional development and increasing teachers morale. Others are; open communication, improved school climate, trust building, commitment and excellent professional learning opportunities. These are in agreement with what Ejionueme and Oyoyo(2015) ascribed as sources of quality education which to them are: teachers' commitment, effective leadership, adequate resources and application of the latest technology and appropriate curriculum, examination results and the support of parents.

Interestingly, Kezner(2006) noted that TQMP approaches in school administration were established to improve quality leadership and teachers' response to goals and to maximize quality (effective leadership). Onuka (as cited in Ejionueme & Oyoyo, 2015) suggested that TQMP has five major components as follow; Total commitment to quality (effective leadership), total commitment to students' satisfaction; total commitment to continuous quality improvement (always striving for programme improvement); total commitment to effective communication and teamwork. To satisfy the educational needs of students, continuous improvement efforts need to be directed to curriculum and delivery services (Salami & Ufoma, 2013). It can be argued that through such a perspective, some of the inherent causes of failures in education in Anambra State can be traced out. They went further to argue that the issue of quality in education is directly related to the quality of teachers (no system can rise above the quality of its teachers), students and infrastructure provided to them by the system. Within the context of TQMP it is the system that fails and not the individuals.

As the pioneer of TQMP movement, Deming (1991) postulated a 14-point Principles of TQMP (Farooq, Adkhatar &Ullah, 2007; Salami & Ufoma, 2013). These are (1) Generating reliability of function for perfection of merchandise and service. (2) Implementing Innovative ideas (3) Stop dependence on mass Inspection (4) End Grading Practice (5) Develop Persistent and Everlasting System of Production and Service (6) Institute Training(7) Develop Leadership (8) Drive out fear (9) Maximize the Effort of Teamwork (10) Remove slogans and Catch phrases (11) Eradicate Numerical Quotes for Staff (12) Eliminate Barriers to Satisfaction and pleasure of Workmanship (13) Encourage Education and Staff Improvement for Everyone and (14) Accomplishing the change. However, for the purpose of this study three of these Principles form the bases for the discussion and they are; Instituting Training, Develop Leadership and maximize the Effort of Team work as they relate to quality education in Anambra State.

In instituting training on the job in the views of Lunenburg (as cited by Salami and Ufoma, 2013) implies that training for educators is needed in three areas. First, there must be training in the new teaching and learning processes that are developed. Second, training must be provided in the use of new assessment strategies. Three, there must be training in the principles of the new management system. For secondary schools in Anambra State, this is a clarion call for the administrators/principals, teachers and support staff to involve themselves in a continuous professional development as never before. Principals who are the administrative heads should ensure that both

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he and teachers are abreast of the numerous changes in the education sector due to ICT revolution. Seemingly, there is doubt as to whether the teachers have fully embraced ICT considering their failure to utilise current information from the internet in their teaching practices.

In developing leadership the principals should realize that the success or failure of the school rests on his shoulder. He should be aware that his primary role is to get everybody in the school involved in school activities, especially teachers, so as to achieve effective teaching and learning. The teachers are the bedrock for achieving educational goals. One cannot apply TQMP in isolation of the teachers. The focus of improvement efforts should be on the process and on the outcomes which must have been outlined by the principal. Perhaps, this might be the reason why Deming argues that, "if quality is absent, the fault is in the system" which is under the leadership of the principal, (Winn & Green, 1998).

To maximize the effort of teamwork, principals should encourage optimal cooperation and collaboration among staff. Dimitriades (as cited by Ejionueme and Oyoyo) claims that the concept of teams and teamwork are of paramount importance for achieving quality education and continuous improvement in schools. Nonetheless, the situation in the school casts doubt as to whether these principles are applied by the principals. Thus, the need for the study which determined the level of application of continuous training of both principals and teachers on the job, leadership development and the effort of the principals and teachers to work in teams.

Statement of the Problem

Over the years public secondary schools in Anambra State appear to have witnessed managerial, administrative, and financial ineffectiveness that have jeopardized successful continuous improvement of the school programmes. Infrastructural facilities for teaching and learning are in short supply. Some of the school buildings are dilapidated and poorly maintained and as such unhealthy for teaching and learning. Principals appear not to be fully committed and therefore do not provide adequate leadership, and as well failed to motivate teachers to work collaboratively in teams. To worsen the situation, principals and teachers seem not to create opportunity for knowledge update in this 21st century ICT global development. One wanders less why they still teach obsolete concepts with out-dated information. Probably, these may have accounted for why some parents and guardians register their children in private and mission schools. The fundamental question that has propelled this study is; what are the TQMP principles applied for continuous improvement of secondary schools in Anambra State?

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of the study was to determine the application of Total Quality Management Principles for Continuous School Improvement of secondary schools in Anambra State. Specifically, the study investigated the;

1. Training on the job Principles applied by the Principals for Continuous School Improvement in the secondary schools in Anambra State.
2. Institutional Leadership applied by the principals for continuous school

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improvement in secondary schools in Anambra State.
3. Teamwork principles applied by the Principals for school improvement in Secondary Schools in Anambra State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study;

1. What is the training on the job principles that are applied by the Principals for continuous school improvement in Secondary Schools in Anambra State?
2. What are the leadership Principles that are applied by the Principals for continuous improvement of Secondary Schools in Anambra State?
3. What are the teamwork principles that are applied by the Principals for continuous improvement of Secondary Schools in Anambra State?

Research Method

Descriptive survey research design was adopted to collect data form secondary school principals and teachers geared towards determining the application of TQMP for continuous school improvement in Anambra State. The total population of the study was 6536 made up of 257 Principals and 6,279 teachers in public secondary schools in Anambra State (Aguata: 48 principals and 775 teachers; Awka 61 principals and 1655 teachers; Nnewi, 50 principals and 1005 teachers; Ogidi 40 principals and 980 teachers; Onitsha 32 Principals and 1397 teachers; Otuocha 26 Principals and 467 teachers) (Source: Planning, Research and Statistics (PRS) Unit, PPSSC, Awka, April, 2017). The sample was made up of 77 principals and 1884 teachers making a total of 1961 respondents. The sample, 30% of 257 Principals and 6279 teachers respectively was drawn as recommended by Nworgu (2015). The sample was drawn using proportionate stratified random sampling technique. Stratification was based on the already existing six education zones in the state.

The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire titled; Application of Total Quality Management Principles Questionnaire (ATQMPQ). The questionnaire consists of two sections, A and B. Section A elicited information on the respondents' personal data while section B sought information on the Total Quality Management Principles (TQMP). The instrument was built on a four point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) which were weighted 4, 3, 2, 1 respectively. The instrument was designed in three clusters in line with the research questions with a total number of 20 items.

The instrument was face validated by three experts; two from the Department of Educational Management and Policy and one from Measurement and Evaluation, Department of Educational Foundations, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The experts were requested to determine the relevance of the items, the language used, suitability of the number of items and appropriateness of the instrument in general to the purpose of the study. The experts' useful suggestions led to some modifications of the items before producing the final version of the instrument.

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To determine the reliability of ATQMPQ, it was pilot tested by administering them on 11 Principals and 59 teachers form Public Secondary Schools in Enugu State. The data obtained were correlated using Cronbach alpha. The result yielded; 0.84, 0.79 and 0.77 respectively for the three sections of AQTMPQ and these were considered adequate for the study. This is in line with Howith and Carnner (2011) who argued that a reliability coefficient of 0.56 and above is acceptable for a text of internal consistency for a research instrument. Copies of the instrument were administered to the respondents with the help of seven research assistants who were teachers. These assistants were given instructions and orientation on the purpose of the study and how to distribute, collect and handle the retrieved copies of the instrument. The instrument was collected on the spot after completion. All the copies of the instrument were duly filled and retrieved, representing 100% return rate. The mean value was used to answer the research questions while the standard deviation was used to determine the closeness of the mean ratings. In making decision, real limit of numbers were applied as follows 3.50 – 4.00, Strongly Agree; 2.50-3.49 Agree; 1.50 – 2.49 Disagree; 0.05-1.49 Strongly Disagree respectively. Therefore the cut-off mean of 2.50 was adopted as a decision rule.

Results

The results of the study are presented on the tables below:

Research Question 1: What is the training on the job principles that are applied by the Principals for continuous improvement in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Table 1: *Mean ratings and standard Deviation of Principals and teachers with respect to training on the job principles.*

S/N	Items	Principals			Teachers		
	Indicate your level of agreement with the following as applied by the principal in your school	No – 77			No = 1884		
		$\overline{X}$	SD	Decision	$\overline{X}$	SD	Dec
1	Expose teachers to training in the new Teaching methods that are developed	2.78	0.88	A	2.94	0.61	A
2	Training in the use of new assessment strategies.	3.55	0.67	SA	3.40	0.80	A
3	Sending teachers to training in the areas of ICT as they relate to education	2.74	0.91	A	2.68	0.72	A
4	Sponsoring teachers for conferences						

	in their disciplines.	2.44	0.82	D	2.40	0.58	D
5	Encouraging teachers to go into action research.	2.77	0.88	A	2.63	0.74	A
6	Encouraging peer tutoring among teachers.	3.70	0.88	A	3.91	0.86	A
7.	Sending teachers to training in the new management system.	3.82	1.00	A	3.59	1.01	A
	Mean of means	**3.11**	**0.87**	**A**	**3.08**	**0.76**	**A**

In table 1, all the items except item 4 have mean scores above the bench mean of 2.50. This suggests that they are the training on the job principles that are being applied for continuous improvement in public secondary Schools in Anambra State. On the other hand, item 4 have a mean score of 2.44 on the Principals' column and 2.40 on the teachers' column and this is below the mean score of 2.50. This implies that it is the only training on job principles that are not being applied for school improvement. In essence, training on the job principles are applied by the principals for the purpose of continuous improvement in the secondary schools in Anambra State.

Research Question 2: What are the leadership principals that are applied for continuous improvement in secondary schools in Anambra State?

Table 2: *Mean ratings and standard deviation of principals and teachers on the leadership principles applied by the principals for continuous improvement.*

S/N	Items	Principals			Teachers		
	Indicate your level of agreement with the following as applied by your principal:	No – 77			No = 1884		
		$\overline{X}$	SD	Decision	$\overline{X}$	SD	Dec
8.	The principal motivates teachers to work with commitment.	3.70	0.81	A	2.85	0.92	A
9	Teachers' classroom activities are supervised.	3.51	1.00	A	2.78	0.81	A
10	Teachers are guided on The use of new teaching methods	2.37	0.77	DA	2.25	0.79	DA

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11	There is usually an effective communication existing between the principal and teachers	3.55	0.91	A	3.48	0.64	A
12	Teachers are empowered towards acquisition of skills and competence through exposure to continuous professional development	2.88	1.01	A	3.05	1.00	A
13	The welfare of the teachers is a priority to the principal	3.44	1.00	A	3.25	0.99	A
	Mean of means	**3.24**	**0.92**	**A**	**2.95**	**0.86**	**A**

Table 2 shows that all the items except item number ten has a mean score well and above the bench mean of 2.50. This indicates that they are the leadership principles applied by the principals for continuous improvement in the secondary schools. However, item 10 both on the Principals' and teachers' column have mean scores less than the bench mean of 2.50. This implies that it is the only leadership principle which the principals do not apply. The mean of means of 3.24 on the principals' column and 2.95 on the teachers' column suggests that both respondents are in agreement that principals apply leadership principles for continuous improvement in secondary schools in Anambra State.

The standard deviation indicates that the responses of Principals' and teachers' rating to each item are close, implying that their responses are homogeneous.

Research Question 3: What are the teamwork principles that are applied by the principals for continuous improvement of secondary schools in Anambra State?

Table 3: *Mean ratings and standard deviation of principals and teachers on the teamwork principles applied for continuous improvement in secondary schools.*

S/N	Items	Principals			Teachers		
	Indicate your level of agreement with the following as applied by the principal:	No – 77			No = 1884		
		$\overline{X}$	SD	Decision	$\overline{X}$	SD	Dec
14	Encourages teachers to work in teams to promote continuous Improvement	3.55	1.03	A	3.43	0.99	A

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15	Encourages teachers to share Knowledge in their areas of specia-lization to engender commitment	3.61	0.84	A	3.70	0.75	A
16	Principals and teachers collaborate to attain the school goals	2.82	0.76	A	2.69	0.91	A
17	Involves teachers in decision-making towards continuous improvement approaches	3.11	0.96	A	2.94	0.85	A
18	Teachers are involved in developing the school vision and mission so as to work with direction	2.58	0.89	A	2.56	0.77	A
19	Encourages inter-personnel relation-ship with teachers for quality improvement in the school	3.92	0.84	A	3.57	0.78	A
20.	Accepting ideas from teachers to ensure healthy relationship	3.00	1.03	A	2.95	0.88	A
	Mean of means	**3.23**	**0.91**	**A**	**3.12**	**0.85**	**A**

Table 3 indicates that all the seven items have mean scores above the cut-off mean of 2.50. This implies that all the items are teamwork principles applied by the Principals for schools' continuous improvement. The mean of means of 3.23 and 3.12 are in concordance with this result. The standard deviation scores for all the items are within the same range. This shows that the respondents are homogenous in their response.

Discussion of Findings

The findings in table 1 revealed that principals are fully committed in availing the teachers the opportunity for acquiring training on the job principles. This is informed by the high response agreement between the principals' responses and the responses of the teachers which showed that principals expose teachers to training in the new teaching methods, in the areas of ICT and sponsoring teachers for conferences among others. This finding is in line with the opinion of Salami and Ufoma(2013) who stated that with the rate of change in the education sector due to ICT revolution, the immediate stakeholders such as administrators and teachers must keep pace with innovation in order to remain effective. Attesting to this, Lunenburg in Salami and Ufoma suggests that educators/teachers should regularly receive on the job training

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in; new teaching and learning process that are developed; the use of new assessment strategies and in the principles of the new management systems.

The implication of this finding lies on the fact that exposing teachers to on the job training helps the secondary schools in Anambra State to create and maintain in a continuous manner a constancy of purpose toward continuous improvement. Nonetheless, Principals inability to sponsor teachers to conferences in their discipline may be as a result of lack of funds which has been a bane in the schools disposition to attend to all her financial obligations.

Findings in table 2 suggest that both principals and teachers are in agreement that principals institute leadership principles in secondary school system. This collaborates with the ideas of Farooq, Akhatar and Zia (2007) who posit that principals' leadership consists of serving work force for better performance to learn by objective methods. Supporting this position, Ejionueme and Oyoyo(2015) state that any principal who is effective will always search for barriers to communication and productivity and remove them. They believe that teachers who are consistently supervised and motivated are positioned to total commitment that lends credence to continuous quality improvement of the school system.

However, the negative finding with the issue of teachers being guided by the Principals on the use of new teaching methods may perhaps be a consequence of the Principals' engagement on a quantum of administrative responsibilities that debar them form creating enough time to guide the teachers in the new teaching methods. The implication of this is that teachers could be found using teaching methods that are obsolete and are not in line with the modern trend in technology. This notwithstanding the finding that teachers are empowered to acquire skills and competencies in their professional areas could assist them in initiating and exploring best practices on modern teaching methods.

In furtherance, the findings in table 3 show that both Principals and teachers agreed that all the team work Principles are applied by the Principals for continuous improvement of Secondary Schools in Anambra State. They consented that teachers are encouraged to work in teams, share knowledge in their areas and are involved in decision-making among others. This finding is in agreement with the view of Winn and Green(1998) who assert that everyone must be included in the education process. Also that one may not predict the way a piece of knowledge will spark the idea that will lead to an important process in continuous school improvement. To affirm this position Winn and Green, Lunenburg and Ornstein(2007) enthused that the school authorities (Principals and teachers) should be in line with new techniques, knowledge, philosophies and polices of management through collaborative efforts and shared decision-making. This invariably places the school system at the apex of continuous improvements in quality which leads the teachers to develop new skills, new ways of carrying out their job efficiently in a harmonious inter-personnel relationship.

In essence, application of TQMPs is an indispensible phenomenon that must be entrenched in the daily administrative activities of both the principals and teachers

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if a continuous quality improvement would be fully actualized in the Secondary Schools in Anambra State in particular and Nigeria in general. The standard deviation shows that there is homogeneity amongst Principals and teachers, indicating a great consensus of opinion. This is possible because principals are teachers with administrative responsibility and would reason in the same way as teachers.

Conclusion

The study investigated the application of Total Quality Management Principles for continuous improvement of Secondary Schools in Anambra State. The findings of the study revealed that Principals apply the training on the job principles, institutes leadership Principles as well as apply teamwork principles in secondary schools in the state. This implicitly portends that the application of TQMPs is a lean way to quality education and continuous improvement in all the facets of Secondary School administration and therefore should continue to thrive.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The State Ministry of Education in collaboration with Secondary School Post-Primary Commission (SSPPC) should organize conferences for principals and teachers with particular reference to the application of TQMP. This will enlighten them on the indicators of TQMP and the best way to apply them for continuous quality improvement in the school system.
2. Principals should create an avenue to regularly guide the teachers on the use of new teaching methods. This will avail the teachers the opportunity to adopt new technological developments in ICT for quality teaching.
3. Principals should fully involve teachers in the development of the vision and mission of the school. This will help the teachers to have a real understanding of why the school exists and how to apply TQMP to achieve its mission.

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