

An Approach to Quality Improvement of Education in Nigeria through EFQM Excellence Model

Nwachukwu Prince Ololube¹
University of Helsinki Finland.

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to specifically evaluate the existing leadership styles and management practices in the education environment in Nigeria using the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) Excellence Model, and identify some excellence-related factors associated with success in the model. While this exploration was a survey research as depicted in figure 3, the population of study consisted of senior staff of the Ministry of Education. Questionnaire was used for data gathering through a random sampling procedure. Data were analyzed through the use of quantitative research procedures. The findings revealed that the leadership styles and management practices used by the Ministry of Education are not relevant to the educational development needs of Nigerian schools; also there are relationships between the leadership styles and management practices used and the level of educational performance. The study further revealed that the Ministry of Education is faced with enormous constraints which hinder the realization of its aims and objectives. This research paper fulfils a need to provide the Ministry of Education, educational administrators, policy makers, educational planner and researchers that are interested in empirical information methods that might help them improve the quality of education with a framework and guide for assessing and planning towards sustainable excellent improvement in Nigerian education.

Keywords: Excellence model, Excellence in education, Educational system, Ministry of Education, Nigeria

BACKGROUND INFORMATION TO THE STUDY

This study came about after a long reflection on Nigeria's educational leadership and management strategies. Educational leadership and management strategies were chosen as a focus for this study because of its importance in contributing to educational success. However, if the superhero images of educational leadership do not work, meaning that the mandates and incentives are not powerful enough to function as engines that will drive our efforts to improve schools. Nonetheless, in tomorrow's world, success will depend upon the ability of leaders to harness the capacity of human and material resources to further educational responsibilities (Fullan, 1993).

The role of education in research, evaluation, teaching, information transfer, and technological development is critical to nationwide social progress and economic growth. That is why the social benefit for individuals and crucially for societies provides the main justification for increased investment in education in both developed and developing countries. However, confidence in human capital theory continues to underpin the belief in economic benefit from educational investments (Anyamele, 2004). In addition, much recent writings on the "rise of knowledge economies" (e.g. Carayannis & Laporte, 2002; Neef, 1998) assign important role to educational institutions, because the world over, education is the major vehicles for economic and social development, and it has been a known fact that institutions of education have the responsibility for equipping individuals with the advanced knowledge and skills required for positions of responsibility in government, business and professions (Ololube, 2004; Osunde & Omoruyi, 2004). Thus, we agree that education appears to play a central role in supporting both advanced forms of capitalism and new forms of democratic citizenship. From these perspectives, education is reasonably claimed to be about the transformation of society (Boaduo, 2005).

Likewise, students, parents and society are demanding much more from schools as education becomes more and more important for national economic competitiveness, growth and even survival. Therefore, the need for the education sector to better understand quality concepts and apply quality principles and tools becomes imperative. Interestingly, developments and projects related to quality management in education have been conducted across the world, mainly in the United States and Europe. Among them are several approaches that can be used to guide the implementation of quality management principles in schools. One that has been followed with success involves the adoption of EFQM Excellence Model to support self-assessment practices and continuous improvement. This model has inspired research at all levels of education—from kindergarten to higher education (Saraiva et al., [n.d]).

The administrator in the educational system in Nigeria, the Schools Board, the Ministry of Education or even the government from time to time make minor and major policies and decisions that would make for effective utilization of resources in the educational system. The effectiveness of the control measures and management depends to a large extent on the ability of these reference groups to make and take effective decisions at the right time (Nwuzor, 1979). Thus, it becomes unmistakable to highlight that the decisions, policies and strategies employed by the aforementioned are not effective which has led to a decline in education in Nigeria. In addition, the decline in the standard and quality of education from kindergarten to the university is as a result of dwindling resources, poor national economic performance, inappropriate governing structures, political interference, educational instability and so on (Salisu, 2001). The evidence seems strong when Shattock (2003) averred that, one of the major causes of academic inefficiency is low academic morale and the low public esteem in which education is often held is the extent to which institutional infrastructure has been allowed to decline. As a result, effective research, teaching and learning cannot be delivered when libraries are badly run, computer systems break down, and teaching room facilities are inadequate. That is to say, study time will be wasted if administrative and financial systems are unreliable.

Therefore, it is my belief in this study that improving the quality of educational management in Nigeria can add value to educational institutions by enhancing their quality to function effectively and respond to the needs of changing society. This study might assist Nigerian schools as well as those in other developing countries to effectively manage their educational systems in the areas of research, scholarship and service through adequate utilization of their financial resources. This study was undertaken with the belief in the argument that good management strategies is a necessary condition for effective and worthwhile teaching, learning and research, whereas its neglect poses a serious threat to core academic values (Anyamele, 2004; Shattock, 2003). The Ministry of Education in Nigeria need to adopt/accept contemporary management approaches, that will enable educational institutions to realize the full potential of their staff and students in order not to suffocate initiatives with outdated management techniques.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The enthusiasm to carry out this research was inspired by the desire to examine EFQM Excellence model from the perspective of the education environment. In particular, it looks at leadership styles and management practices in Nigeria, which is built on the theoretical frameworks of EFQM Excellence model.

The research objectives and questions of this investigation are made to order for the study of Nigerian educational management practices, with the view to ascertaining the degree to which the existing leadership styles and management practices impact on educational development and

quality improvement. The study addressed major steps in quality improvement in education in Nigeria. Specifically, this study is designed with the following objectives:

- To examine the leadership and management role played by the Ministry of Education toward sustainable excellence improvement in Nigerian education.
- To explore if there are any relationship between the leadership style and management practices used by the Ministry of Education and the level of educational performance?
- To scrutinize the Ministry of Education constraints in improving the basic processes of research, teaching and learning in schools.

To give direction and focus to the study, the following research questions were raised to guide the study. The questions were constructed to suit Nigeria's educational system.

- Are the leadership styles and management practices used by the Ministry of education relevant to the educational development needs of Nigerian school?
- Is there any relationship between the leadership and management practices used and the level of educational performance?
- What are the major constraints encountered by the Ministry of Education's efforts in seeking to realize its aims and objectives?

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The EFQM Excellence Model was introduced at the beginning of 1992 as the framework for assessing organizations for the European Quality Award. It is now the most widely used organizational framework in Europe and it has become the basis for the majority of national and regional Quality Awards. The EFQM Excellence Model is a non-prescriptive framework based on 9 criteria. Five of these are 'Enablers' and four are 'Results'. The 'Enablers' criteria cover what an organization does. The 'Results' criteria cover what an organization achieves. 'Results' are caused by 'Enablers' and 'Enablers' are improved using feedback from 'Results'. The Model, which recognizes that there are many approaches to achieving sustainable excellence in all aspects of performance is based on the premise that excellent results with respect to Performance, Customers, People and Society are achieved through Leadership driving Policy and Strategy that is delivered through People, Partnerships and Resources, and Processes (European Foundation for Quality Management, 2005). However, the EFQM excellence model usage in the public and private sector has grown over the years not only in the United Kingdom alone but in other European countries and outside the EU (Herbert, 2001). In the UK alone it is reported that even in as far back as 1996, 35% of companies or organizations were found to be using or intended to use the EFQM Excellence Model as a guide to self-assessment (Consortium for Excellence in Higher Education, 2003).

In Portugal for instance, a large-scale project at 47 schools was based on the application of the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) Excellence Model (Saraiva et al, [n.d]). In other parts of Europe, some universities have used the model for their quality development. For example, at least the Eindhoven University of Technology (TUE), Netherlands, and the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH), Zurich, have used the EFQM as a basis for their own quality model for the university (Blomqvist, 1997). An extensive discussion concerning the applicability of the model in the education environment can be found for example in the articles by Zink and Schmidt (1995, 1998). This well-known model had already been widely used in spite of cultural disparities for achieving excellence by businesses, other leading organizations, government agencies and national quality award programs throughout Europe and abroad. However, great success has been achieved so far following its application in schools in around the world.

The Federal Government of Nigeria has a nonspecific strategy and operational methods for educational management, this direction is set out in the National Policy on Education 1981 reversed 1989 (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1989), which describes the plans and purposes of the nation's educational policies aimed at best practices and better quality educational services. Unfortunately the said plans are not functioning. Best practice is described as the process of seeking out and studying the best inner and outer practices that produce better-quality performance in the education sector to meet the needs and aspirations of its citizenry. There has been mounting pressures on the Ministry of Education and other bodies such as Schools Board to adopt an approach which will support and nurture sustainable educational development and institutional changes in its policies and administration in a holistic way that will create innovations. This requires organizational techniques to enable Nigeria move deeply into a performance management tradition to enhance educational production. EFQM Excellence model offers a holistic approach to institutional leadership and management that many other management approaches has not offered previously. It is clear from the Excellence model that regardless of sector, cultural settings, size, structure or maturity, to be successful, organizations need to establish an appropriate management framework.

The EFQM Model is presented in diagram form below. The arrows emphasize the dynamic nature of the Model. They show innovation and learning helping to improve enablers that in turn lead to improved results.

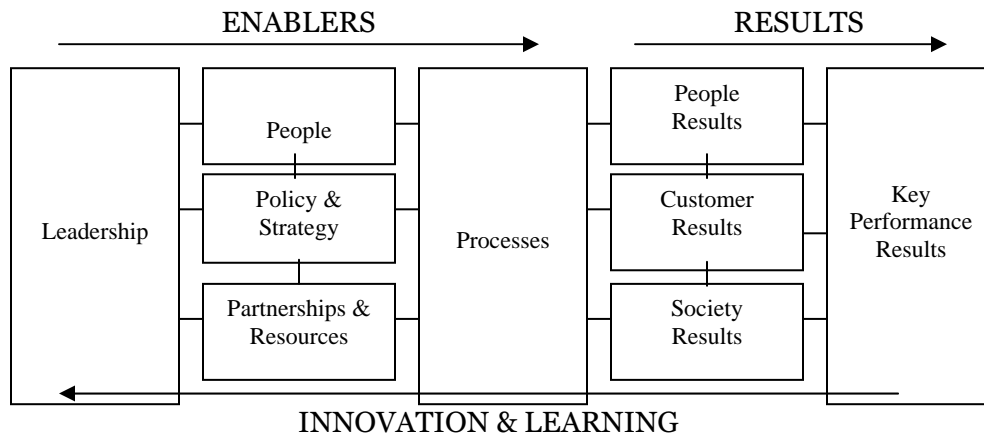
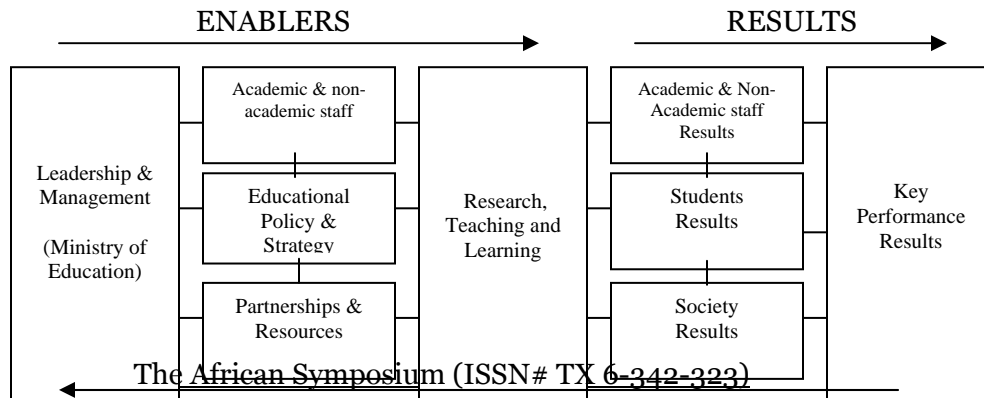


Fig. 1: The Original EFQM Excellence model
Source: The European Foundation for Quality Management 1999

However, the EFQM Excellence Model has been modified by the author to fit the Nigerian education environment.



INNOVATION & LEARNING

Fig. 2: Author self-modified version of EFQM Excellence Model for Application to Nigerian Educational Management

LITERATURE REVIEW

Leadership and Management processes

Leadership is the process of influencing employees towards achievement of organizational goals (Naylor, 1999). Leadership provides a guide to action in education setting by contributing to the achievement of excellence. Outstanding leaders have a vision for their institutions. They have a mental picture of preferred future, which is shared with all in the institution and which shapes the programs of learning and teaching as well as policies, priorities, plans and procedures pervading day-to-day life of the institution (Beare et al., 1997). However, no matter how effective leaders could be, they are faced with a lot of obstacles which they must contain in order to succeed. Leadership in the educational context is the ability to anticipate and envision the future. By word and by personal example, they inspire the whole educational system by effectively influencing the behaviors, thoughts, and feelings of those working within it, and ensure vision to educational leaders by creating strategic alignment in the whole system (Peretomode, 1991).

Warren Bennis (1998 in Anyamele 2004) argued that leadership is a creative enterprise, involving all in innovating and initiating. For them leadership looks at the horizon, and not just at the bottom-line. They believe that a leader does the right things; which implies a goal, a direction, an objective, a vision, a dream, a path, a reach. According to them, a leader does the following.

- ❖ A leader creates a compelling vision. Leadership has to get people in the organization to buy into a shared vision and then translate that vision into reality. They inspire and empower people; they pull rather than push, Leaders motivate people by bringing them to identify with the task and the goal, rather than by rewarding or punishing them.
- ❖ A leader creates a climate of trust. Leaders must know how to generate and sustain trust. In order to do this, leaders must reward people for disagreeing, reward innovation, and tolerate failure. For leadership to create trust, three things are needed:
 - i) competence: trust in leader's capacity to do the job
 - ii) congruity: a leader must have integrity, and
 - iii) to be an effective leader, what the leader says must be congruent with what he does, and what he does must be congruent with what his vision is.
- ❖ A leader creates meaning. A leader creates meaning by creating an environment where people are reminded of what is important. The leader helps to define the mission of the institution and models the behavior that will move the organization towards goals. Leaders are people who can put words to goals and aspiration, and can use words beautifully to express the collective goals of their people.
- ❖ A leader creates success. Successful leaders perceive and handle 'failure' differently. All successful leaders learn from and embrace error and learn from it.
- ❖ A leader creates a healthy, empowering environment. Effective leadership empowers the workforce to make them committed, has the feeling that its members are learning, and that they are competent. Good leaders make people feel that they are at the very heart of things, not at the periphery.

- ❖ A leader creates flat, adaptive, decentralized systems and organizations. Bureaucracy does not create leaders; they create managers and bureaucrats. Managing change is ultimate leadership challenge. Strong leadership is needed in organizations based on a network or flattened hierarchy model—a more centralized model where the key works are acknowledge, create and empower.

Furthermore, according to an Internet source (<http://www.plus2net.net/be/index.php>), leaders ensure appropriate design of policies, procedures, processes, systems, performances etc. as well as values, commitment, motivation, loyalty, communication etc. to pursue progress towards their vision. On the whole, leadership and constancy of purpose concerns the importance of leadership in educational management and planning, that is, setting right the educational policies and strategies, which involves also the improvement of educational programs and administrative services that is aimed at creating quality students capable of entering significant positions in society and improving all forms of educational practices and procedures.

Management processes and fact involves design and deployment of systems that ensure implementation of policies, strategies, and action plans through a set of integrated processes to meet the stakeholders' requirements. The process performance can only be optimized through a clear understanding of how different units of work fit into the whole process. It ensures that a "fit for purpose" management system of the education is developed, implemented and improved. It also looks at how management gathers information to inform policy and strategy on an educational system. Additionally, it involves the application of systems standards covering quality management systems (Lewis, Goodman & Fandt, 1995). The quality management indicators involves how educational leaders ensure that academic and non-academic staffs are continually trained and developed to operate in the innovative and changing educational processes and building professional learning communities (Harris & Muijs, 2005). The process performance when documented and analyzed scientifically and compared with desirable outcomes generate facts on the basis of which the processes can be effectively managed and improved continuously on a day-to-day basis. This factual information supports decisions at all levels that improves the educational process performance further (Schoderbek, Cosier & Aplin, 1988).

People Development and Involvement

People development and involvement means people management at the educational level, which relates to people criteria in the excellence model. Staff as people is very crucial resources of any institution/organization. At the educational levels, it involves the academic and non-academic staff which support and bring about student learning (Anyamele, 2004). The quality of an educational system constitutes strength to the general development of a country. Educational leaders must invest in the academic and non-academic staff, and seek potential in all those who enter the education environment. Thus, in order that these educational functions may be discharged efficiently, a cadre of staff is required in adequate numbers and quality at the different operational levels of the system. The productivity of educational systems is not only research, teaching and learning, but it includes the quality of life of everyone who works in it. Therefore, to ensure quality, their staffs need to be continually developed. Staff development is a systematic attempt to harmonize individual's interests and wishes, and their carefully assessed requirements for furthering their careers with the forthcoming requirements of the organization within which they (are) expected to work (Teather, 1979). Thus, every employee working in this sector need to and must be fully developed, motivated and involved in the education processes. Through development, employees are equipped with necessary resources to accomplish the educational goals and through involvement of staffs, the education sector ensures that the acquired knowledge and skills are put to use in the most productive way which enable it to achieve education goals (Ho et al., 2001).

Partnerships and Resources

This involves how external partners are handled. It includes how leadership generates and support innovative thinking through the use of partners. Moreover it includes how educational leaders create energy in working together to improve educational processes and add value to student's academic achievement. In addition, the criterion concerns how leadership in the education environment with help of partners balances the current and their future needs. Fundamentally, the availability of the necessary resources (knowledge, information and capital) to support quality management is an issue in organizations including the education sector. In an environment starved of resources, good ideas are sometimes killed by a lack of resources, and this can often be misconstrued as a lack of commitment from the leadership, causing de-motivation among employees. However, what is lacking in this perspective is not leadership commitment to quality management but rather the reality that resources are frequently and severely limited in the educational management.

Bonvillian's (1996) research supports the view that in the event of this happening, the image of the leadership suffers as a result of this perception, which can ultimately have a negative impact on the proper functioning of the educational system. The remedy to this problem is for institutions to develop links with external constituencies, both private and public organizations to generate the resources for its activities within the context of limited resources and develop the ability to accomplish more with less. The notion of developing collaboration between predominantly private sector entities and predominantly public sector education is not new, and the enduring nature of some partnerships has been recognized (Gray & Broquard, 2000).

We recognize that partnerships and alliances between education and stakeholders have been a powerful force in managing change and prime matrix for renewal in education (UNESCO, 1998). However, Hoff (1999) pointed out that it is the responsibility of every staff member and administrator to recognize and pursue partnerships that could lead to increasing collaborative efforts in research, service and teaching. He argues that it is often from these strong relationships built on hours of working side-by-side for the betterment of the institutions, and services provided to students and other constituents that gifts of equipment and financial resources are realized. In short, major factors influencing the success of educational system lie outside its boundaries and control. In such atmosphere, partnerships are a means to ensure high level of operational linkages with the resources that are critical for the success of the organization and yet beyond its control.

Educational Process

Process is one of the 'enablers' of the study model. In the context of this study processes it is modified as 'educational processes' in order to accommodate the purpose of this study. The educational 'processes' is divided into teaching and research, and then learning as an outcome of teaching and research. The promotion of quality in teaching means the ways we can breathe new life into teaching. For teaching to be made result-oriented in the way of improving students' skills, teaching requires more efficient instructional skills by improving students' ability to learn effectively. Educational leadership must champion the promotion of teaching quality. Leadership must introduce and promote appropriate institutional policies and practices through concrete actions that might be taken to support a higher priority for teaching. Seldin (1990) argued that another way to improve the quality of teaching in the schools is for the administrators' need to know when equipment and facilities do not work, and when classroom supplies have run out. If staff morale should be boosted, institutional leadership should pay serious attention to and correct environmental shortcomings. Seldin further argued that the use of appropriate rewards improves the quality of teaching, suggesting that the best route to improve teaching was to change the reward system, and concluded that a productive way to encourage outstanding teaching is for

administrators to provide meaningful rewards to staff members. Improvement of teaching is to broaden competence through most often focusing almost exclusively on helping teachers to master their subject matter.

In making judgment about quality teaching, Perry (1994) logically suggested that the necessary conditions for teaching quality include the performance of the teachers; the construction of the course; the device put in train by the institution to enhance the quality of teachers' performance; the necessary links with industry; the existence of appropriate accommodation, furniture and equipment for teaching as well as the backup of good library and learning resource facilities. However, he pointed out that this list however provides only the necessary not the sufficient condition for a judgment of quality, but argued that quality in teaching in schools equals first and foremost the quality of students' achievement at the end of their course. For him, it is what a student knows, understands and is able to do, that is the chief and legitimate object of the measurement of teaching quality. Finally, educational systems that fail to provide the quantity and quality of graduates its society requires is not a system that we can be satisfied with. An educational system that is not yet providing for all who are able to benefit from, and who wish for education is not a system that we can be satisfied with (Ball, 1991).

Like teaching and learning are a central task of educational institutions and also an outcome of combined teaching and research processes. Bowen says that learning is often viewed as the unifying goal of teaching, research, and service for education institutions. He also observes learning as knowing and interpreting the unknown, discovering the new, and bringing about desired change in cognitive and affective skills and characteristics of the individuals. In the same way, Domjan describes learning as a change in behavior that meets three criteria. First, students think, perceive, or react to the environment in a new way; second, change is the result of students' experiences in repetition, study, practices, or observations; third, the change is relatively permanent (Watson & Stage, 1999).

In this excellence dimension, excellence means accomplishing results that delight the stakeholders of an educational system, which focused clearly on and understanding of students and teachers, their needs, expectations and values, keeping in consideration and valuing their contribution, and the contribution of other stakeholder in line with educational goals. In addition, excellence is an outstanding practice in managing education and achieving results. Truly Excellent educational systems are those that strive to satisfy their stakeholders by what they achieve, how they achieve it, what they are likely to achieve and the confidence they have that the results will be sustained in the future. Being excellent requires total leadership commitment and acceptance of the fundamental concepts, a set of principles on which an institution or organization bases its behaviors, activities and initiatives. When the institution or organization turns them into practice it opens the access to 'sustainable excellence' (EFQM, 2003, 2005).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A survey research design was used in this study. However, the design of this study is as depicted in figure 3. The research area was in three states Ministry of Education in Nigeria. The population of the study consisted of senior staff of the Ministry of Education who have attained grade level 8 and above. The data for the study were collected through a random sampling procedure, whereby all the senior staffs had an equal opportunity to be selected. A total of 90 questionnaires were sent out and a convenient sample size consisting 55 (79.7%) were chosen from the 69 questionnaires

returned. The reason for discarding 14 questionnaires was either because of the way they were filled out or some questions were not answered. The existing model on the research topic ‘EFQM Excellence Model’ was used to measure levels of leadership and management styles in Nigerian educational system.

Respondents Demographic Information Variables

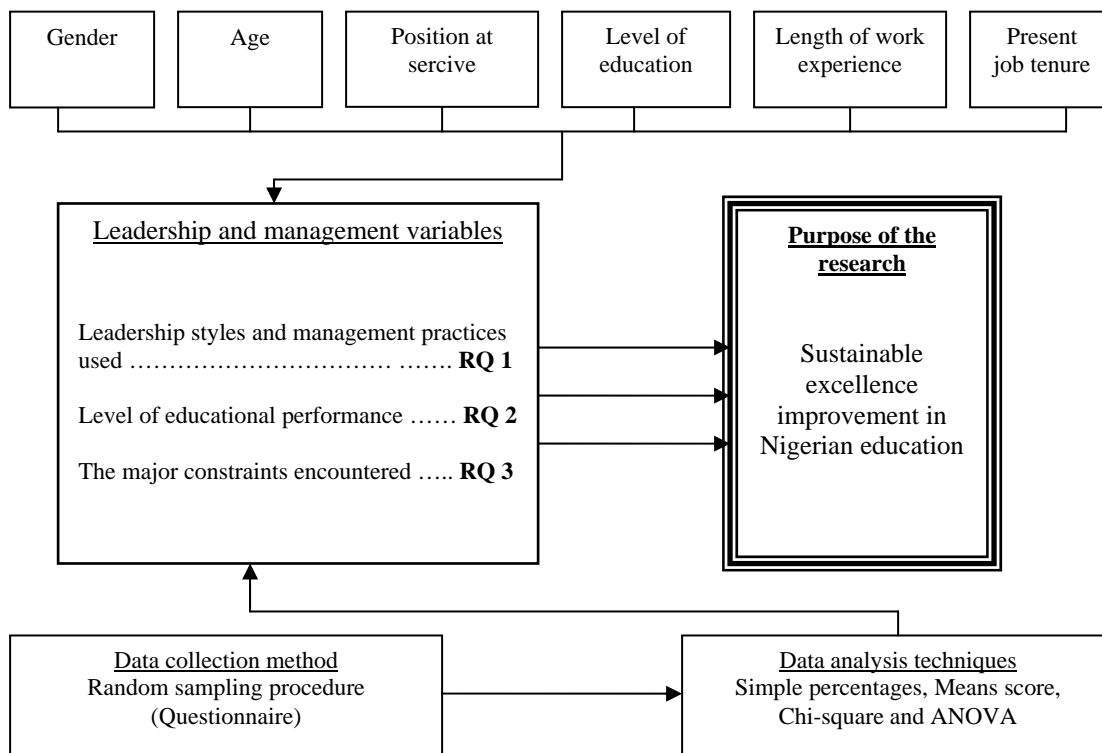


Fig. 3: Research questions and design summarized

The instrument used for data collection was questionnaires. The questionnaire is made up of section ‘A’ and ‘B’. Section ‘A’ consisted of the demographic part that includes (a) gender, (b) age, (c) position at service, (d) level of education, (e) length of work experience and (f) present job tenure. Section ‘B’ consisted of related sources of leadership and management variables, including their sub-variables. The respondents were required to indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with the items. The respondents weighed each item on a four-point Likert scale, from (4) strongly agree, (3) agree, (2) disagree, and (1) strongly disagree. All items were considered of approximately equal “attitude value” to which participants responded with degree of satisfaction and dissatisfaction (intensity) (Fowler, 1995, p. 162; Kerlinger, 1973, p. 496; Nworgu, 1991, pp. 103-109).

The participants’ responses were keyed into SPSS version 13.0 software of a computer programme and they were analyzed using Simple Percentage, Mean Score and Chi-Square statistics. One-way-analysis of variance (ANOVA) was employed to test the relationship between variables and respondents’ demographic information. It was a statistical significant set at $p < 0.05$ to measure if the researcher’s level of confidence observed in the sample also exists in the population (Bryman & Cramer, 1990, p. 151; 2001, p. 159). The purpose of the research was well explained to all the respondents. Creswell (1998), Kerlinger (1973) and Salant and Dillman (1994) argued that in

order to have a high response rate, the purpose of the research work must be explained to the respondents on the first or last page of the research instrument. Furthermore, The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire designed by the researchers. Some colleagues who were experienced in the construction of research instruments helped to validate the questionnaire. As a result of the input of the experts, some items were added while a few others were restructured. In addition, a pilot test was conducted prior to when the main questionnaires were sent out to determine how respondents understood the questions (Yin, 1989, 1994). The advantages derived from the pilot test were that new insights were got, the errors pointed out were corrected and the total understandability of the questionnaire was measured which helped enrich the final questionnaires sent out to the respondents. To test the consistency with which the research instrument measures what it is supposed to measure, SPSS of a computer program was also employed, and the overall reliability estimate of 0.86 was obtained. Thus, the instrument was considered to be very reliable (Bryman & Cramer, 1990, p. 151; 2001, p. 159; Reynaldo & Santos, 1999).

PRESENTATION OF EMPIRICAL RESULTS

Descriptive analysis of respondents' demographic variables

Gender and Age: Slightly more than half the sample size were male (52.7%, N = 29) and slightly less than half of the respondents were female (47.3%, N = 26). On average, the respondents in the present sample were 45 years of age with the youngest respondent being 31 and the oldest 59 years.

Position at service: The subjects were divided into two categories according to their positions in the ministry. The first group were directors (N = 3, 5.5%), while the second group (N = 52, 94.5%) were department heads and their administrative staffs, who are in charge of personnel, finance, planning research and statistics, and post secondary education matters. In 16 cases the respondents as administrative head were in fact more accurately placed in their positions based on their qualification, nature of their job and their responsibilities, while the rest employees were not correctly placed.

Level of Education: About half the respondents (N = 27, 49%) had first degree education. While (N = 20, 36.4%) had postgraduate education. Whereas, (N = 8, 14.5%) of the respondents had secondary, training or vocational education. The last category of respondents based on their level of education rose to level 9 as a result of their length of service and experience.

Length of Work Experience: The respondents (N = 55) had been on an average of (14.5) years through out their length of work experience, ranging from less than one year to 34 years. The data revealed that respondents have generally shorter length of experience in their present job. Female (N = 26) had on average been employed two years less (13.6) years compared to (15.6) for male in their current position, but the difference was not statistically significant. To obtain easily comprehensible groups of comparable sizes, work experience in the field was grouped into five categories: 0-5 years, 6-10 years, 11-15 years, 16-20years, and 21-above years.

Present Job Tenure: The respondents had worked, on average, of 12 years for their present employer with the number of years ranging from 1 to 29. Apparently, the results reveal that there were respondents who had worked for other ministries longer than they felt that they had been in the job. However they had done tasks that were very much different from the ones that they currently do as a result of transfer of service, or possibly they had moved from one division or department of the ministry to another, which may have been perceived as being in a different field outside their profession. The third explanation may be that job assignments may have shifted

from one field to another. To obtain groups of comparable sizes, present job tenure was grouped into the same five categories as length of work experience. The categories are 0-5 years, 6-10 years, 11-15 years, 16-20 years, and 21-above years. A third (35%) had been employed by the present employer between 16 and 20 years. More than a sixth (22%) had been employed for more than 21 years. One fourth (28%) had been employed for less than five years, and (15%) had been employed between five and ten years by the Ministry of Education.

Descriptive statistics of respondents' leadership styles and management practices

To determine if the leadership and management practices and styles used are relevant to the educational development needs of Nigerian schools, responses from the returned questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics and it was revealed that the nature of the acceptance of innovation by top line administrative structures rated very low ($M = 2.45$, $SD = 0.89$), this implies that respondents were most dissatisfied with the way proposals for improvement are turned down by the government. Second in the levels of respondents dissatisfaction was in the used of excessive bureaucratic procedures ($M = 2.22$, $SD = 0.82$), which comes from the educational policies and administration in which they operate. Partnership and collaboration among staff and administration was equally rated very low ($M = 2.35$, $DS = 8.88$). The lowest mean ($M = 1.98$, $SD = 0.93$) came from level and quality of inspection and supervision. In general, the respondents expressed their views that the working climate in the Ministry of Education was quite less supportive ($M = 2.38$, $SD = 0.73$). While the male and female respondents were fairly equal in terms of their experiences of the working climate. For the female the less supportive climate were ($M = 2.73$, $SD = 0.84$), and for the male the corresponding figures were ($M = 2.59$, $SD = 0.69$). Non-parametric (Chi-square) and ANOVA analysis of the leadership and management practices used and the level of educational performance

Regarding the relationship between the leadership and management practices used and the level of educational performance, a two tailed chi-square was conducted to test the statistical significance differences between leadership and management practices and the level of educational performance. The result showed that significant relationship exists between leadership and management practices used and levels of educational performance ($\chi^2 = 5.99$, $DF = 2$). It was suggested that the low academic standard experienced in Nigeria is as a result of poor leadership and management practices. Not surprisingly, (79%) of the respondents compared to 21% accepted that the quality of education in the west is more sophisticated than the one experienced in Nigeria. Where the results from ANOVA analysis showed that no significant differences were found for the attitude of age at ($F = 2.67$, $p > 0.190$), in position at service at ($F = 2.24$, $p > 0.181$), length of work experience ($F = 2.62$, $p > 0.242$), present job tenure ($F = 2.66$, $p > 0.232$), and between level of education at ($F = 2.38$, $p > 0.333$) towards the variables.

Descriptive analysis of respondents' answer to the major constraints encountered

A descriptive analysis was used to demonstrate the presence or absence of a relationship. As the data were tallied along agree and disagree. The result from the analysis on the constraints facing the Ministry of Education from achieving educational aims and objectives on the entire variables tested showed large differences. Thus, it was discovered that the respondents rated inadequate funding (89.6%) as against (10.4%) as one of the most important pressing problem encountered by the Ministry of Education. Not surprisingly, the empirical results revealed that (76.7%) compared to (23.3 %), agreed that administrative bottle neck is also a major limitation to the success in achieving the aims and objectives of the Ministry. Whereas (75.5%) are of the same opinion that lack of recruitment of competent staff and placing them at the right place at the right time is also a key setback against (24.5%) who disagreed. Similarly, lack of information dissemination and project implementation was also a contributing setback for the successful functioning of the educational system via the Ministry of Education, (71.9%) and (88.8%) agreed

to this fact, while (28.1%) and (11.2%) differed respectively. Asked whether staff education and training were also a major problem encountered by the Ministry, respondents' answers demonstrated that (82.2%) compared to (17.8%) accepted that staff education and training (workshops, seminars, conferences, in-service training) is a crisis for the Ministry of Education. Finally, the respondents rated very high misappropriation, embezzlement of public fund and political interferences which leads to the appointment of non-professionally qualified staff as the most pressing problems of the Ministry of education. Their percentage values almost equaled that of inadequate fund at (90.3%), and (89.9%) while (9.7%) and (11.1%) respectively held the opposite view. The overall result showed that the educational system in Nigeria has a lot of obstacles hindering its progress.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This paper investigated the leadership and management practices employed by the Ministry of Education in Nigeria. In general, the analysis of the results obtained showed that the leadership and management styles used do not welcome innovation as creativities and initiatives are hardly utilized. Innovation is the most important competitive advantage that enables contemporary institutions to thrive in today's changing world environment. The secret of innovative educational institutions lies in the capacity to leverage the talent and motivation of their employees. Experts and forward-looking institutions recognize that effective leadership and management provides a key capability for exploiting the innovative capacity of institutions. As such, innovation is a top of the mind issue for modern educational leaders. Therefore, Nigerian educational system should evaluate current innovation processes to measure whether idea generation can be formalized and properly managed rather than sweeping innovative proposals under the carpet.

The dissatisfaction of employees with the bureaucratic management style of leadership stems from the fact that it focuses on the overall institutional system and it is based upon firm rules, policies and procedures, as such, employees often displays more loyalty to individuals than the mission of the educational system. As a consequence, the meager resources are often used to satisfy individual interest rather than the institution's objectives which also comes from endless red tape. That is, much time is spent on official protocols as it causes too much delay. There is hardly an opportunity to exercise personal judgment, the tendency to strictly follow laid down rules, policies and procedure automatically limits one's capacity to adapt to changing circumstances (Whawo, 1993; Peretomode, 1991). Therefore, for there to be sustainability in educational development these vices must not be allowed to flourish in schools.

The respondents showed a negative attitude toward the influence of the working climate as saying that it is quite less supportive. This is evident because employees are poorly paid and occasionally their salaries are not paid on time, as such, they are not stimulated to work. These are translated to employee absenteeism, lukewarm attitude to work, frustration, sharp reduction in professional standards, and early departure from job (Ladebo, 2005; Ulom & Joshua, 2004). Roe's (1970) need theory explains that an occupation is a primary source of need satisfaction and improved productivity, in this case, any thing that will not effectively leads to employee need satisfaction will eventually lead to their dissatisfaction and less performance. In light of the above discussion, low salaries earned compared to employees in other sectors of the economy, poor working condition, limited opportunities for professional advancement and dysfunctional and educational policy and administrative procedures tantamount to lose of appetite for Ministry and teaching job (Abangma, 1981; Nwagwu, 1981).

The lack of partnership and collaboration among employee in the Ministry of Education is a major cause for concern and should be taking seriously, because according to Hoff (cf., 1999), it is the

responsibility of every staff member and administrator to recognize and pursue partnerships that could lead to increasing collaborative efforts in research, service and teaching because it is often from these strong relationships built on hours of working side-by-side for the betterment of the institutions, and services provided to students and other constituents that gifts of equipment and financial resources are realized. In the same vein, partnerships and alliances between education and stakeholders have been a powerful force in managing changes and prime matrix for renewal in education (cf., UNESCO, 1998).

The research findings revealed that the lack of adequate funding is a major constraint in the fulfillment of the obligation of the education sector. According to Bonvillian's (cf., 1996), in the event of this happening the image of the leadership suffers as a result of lack of funding, which can ultimately have a negative impact on the proper functioning of the educational system. The remedy to this problem is for institutions to develop links with external constituencies, both private and public organizations to generate the resources for its activities within the context of limited resources and develop the ability to accomplish more with less. That is developing collaboration between predominantly private sector entities and predominantly public sector education so that enduring nature of some partnerships has to be acknowledged (cf., Gray & Broquard, 2000).

Government corruption, misappropriation and the outright stealing and the unabated embezzlement of public fund by public servants and high-ranking officials stands as a major obstacle to the realization of educational goals in Nigeria (Okotoni & Okotoni, 2003). These authenticities have led to a drastic reduction of government grant to educational institutions, inadequate maintenance of facilities, admissions and certificate racketeering by employees of educational institutions, extortion of money from students to encourage them in examinations malpractice, and general indiscipline (Nwagwu, 1997; Soyinka, 1996). Political interferences such as the appointment of party loyalist and family members results to using the services of non-professionals who lack professional abilities. It also results to constant duplication of educational policies and practices and are highly political without genuine commitments that has affected educational planning and implementation.

On the whole, this research endeavor noted that employees of the Ministry of Education including the academic and non-academic staff in schools are dissatisfied with their job. Noticeable differences were found in the level of priorities accorded each factors in their job. This research design also noted that the reason why employees are dissatisfied with their work was because of the total neglect to innovation and the high level of gross misconduct found in the educational system among employees, in addition, the respondents insisted that educational policy makers, planners and operators of educational policies lack the capacity to make policy work.

This article has presented and discussed new empirical data derived using the EFQM Excellence Model and its applicability to the Nigerian context. However, its results and success has been fully reported elsewhere especially in Europe. Here, we concentrated on one segment (enablers) of the model, reporting the outcomes of the results applications for special measures on how to ensure sustainable excellence improvement in Nigerian education system. By examining and reflecting upon the circumstances surrounding the EFQM model applications, no small measure will be seen in the success if properly applied in Nigeria. We may hope to gain a better appreciation of the existing findings for securing special measures, and to assess the scope for further refinements of educational leadership and management policies and practices by accepting and familiarize ourselves with the EFQM Excellence Model.

The EFQM model being a self-assessments model has been proved to be relatively fast, easy and inexpensive to conduct if appropriately applied with the results usable for a variety of purposes, such as, improving performance, team-building, and enhancing individual and organizational innovation and learning. To achieve a successful educational institution, innovation and learning has to be an integral part of all processes in institutions. Effort at ensuring that empirical data resulting from tests may be utilized to justify decisions such as those related to personnel training and other human resources development issues are thus, very essential. Human resources or personnel managers trained in personality theories can make use of these concepts to identify and distinguish human characteristics necessary in the workplace during recruitment and selection.

As far as we know, this research study seems to be a simultaneous application of self-assessment in education ever based on excellence models in Nigeria. Specifically, the reimbursement for embracing the excellence model in Nigerian educational system will not be far-fetched as the model provides a number of key performance results which have been proven to be of value:

- It looks at all the areas of educational institutions and offering a holistic approach which has been absent in many other leadership and management approaches that has been used before.
- The appraisal process of the excellence model is based on truthful proof but the procedure can be defined at a time to and pace to suit individual institution.
- The EFQM model provides a framework through which the essential part of an institution's concerns are surfaced, investigated and improved on continuous bases. And
- The model has been used widely in Europe and has been extensively tested in a range of sectors—private, public and non-governmental agencies and it offers benchmarking opportunities with others within and outside a particular sector.

Therefore, it is against the empirical results gained in this study and the background on its usability that I wish to propose the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) excellence model to be adopted as a means to enhance sustainability in the education sector, given that it seems to be obvious at present that things are not moving as planned after decades of applying other leadership and management methods.

Anyway, the limitation to this research study relates to the representativeness of the findings in this study vis-à-vis the general viewpoint of the respondents. The sample size of the population used may be another factor. While there are over 36 states of the federation with Ministry of education offices, only samples from three states were used. Arguably, the sample size of this study is not inconsistent with approved sample size recommended for a study like this. At the same time, highly educated and experienced participants were used in the study. However, we recommend that a carefully stratified national survey sample size to further investigate the EFQM Excellence Model is a step in the right direction. As we also recommend that a similar studies of this kind should be carried out in other parts of Africa to ascertain its applicability in those countries.

References

- Abangma, M.A. (1981). A study of primary teachers' attitudes towards ruralisation of school curriculum in English speaking Cameroon. Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis. University of London.
- Anyamele, S. C. (2004). Institutional management in higher education: A study of leadership approaches to quality improvement in university management: Nigerian and Finnish Cases. Academic Dissertation, University of Helsinki, Finland.
- Ball, C. (1991). Quality and qualities: An overview. In Schuler, T. (ed.) The future of higher education. Buckingham and Bristol: The Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press.

- Beare, H. Caldwell, B. & Millikan, R. (1997). Dimensions of leadership. In Megan Crawford, Lesley Kydd and Collin Riches (Eds). Leadership and teams in educational management. Buckingham and Philadelphia: Open University Press.
- Blomqvist, M. (1997). Towards World-Class University Department. Academic Dissertation. Espoo: Department of Industrial Management, Helsinki University of Technology.
- Boaduo, N. A. (2005). Secondary education provision in Africa: What form should it take in the twenty-first century? The African Symposium Vol. 5, No. 4, pp. 3-16.
- Bonvillian, G. (1996). Quality-driven change in the 1990s: Lessons learned from small manufacturers. IIE Solution, 32, April.
- Carayannis, E. G. & Laporte, B. (2002). By decree or by choice? A case study implementing knowledge management and sharing at the education sector of the World Bank Group. Washinton: The World Bank.
- Dahllof, U., Goddard, J., Huttunen, J., O'Brien, C., Roman, O. & Virtanen, I. (1999). The regional role of eastern Finland universities. Helsinki: Edita.
- EFQM (1999). The European excellence model. Brussels: The European Foundation for Quality Management.
- EFQM. (2005). The EFQM Excellence Model. Retrieved 25th September 2005, from <http://www.efqm.org/Default.aspx?tabid=35>
- European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) Excellence Model (2003). Helsinki: Excellence Finland.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (1989). National policy on education. Lagos: NERDC Press.
- Fullan, M. (1993). Change forces: Probing the depths of educational reform. London: Falmer Press.
- Gray, M. A. & Boquard, D. (2000). Partnership development between higher education and industry. Lifelong Learning in Europe 3, pp. 132-141.
- Harris, A. & Muijs, D. (2005). Improving schools through teacher leadership. Berkshire: Open University Press.
- HEFCE (2003). Embracing excellence in education: A summary of the learning gained from applying the EFQM excellence model in further and higher education. Sheffield Hallam University.
- Herbert, D. (2001). Clinical governance. In Johnson, G. and Scholeseds, K. (Eds.) Exploring Public Sector Strategy. Essex: Pearson Educational Ltd.
- Ho, A., Watkins, D. & Kelly, M (2001). The conceptual approach to improving teaching and learning: An evaluation of a Hong Kong staff development programme. Higher Education 42: pp. 143-169.
- Hoff, K. S. (1999). Leaders and managers: Essential skills required within higher education. Higher Education 38, pp. 311-331.
- Ladebo, O. J. (2005). Effects of work-related attitudes on the intention to leave the profession: An examination of school teachers in Nigeria. Educational Management Administration & Leadership, Vol. 33, No. 3, pp. 355-369.
- Lewis, P. S., Goodman, S. H. & Fandt, P. M. (1995). Management: Challenges in the 21st Century. New York: West Publishing Company.
- Naylor, J. (1999). Management. Harlow: Prentice hall.
- Neef, D. (1998). The Knowledge Economy. Boston, MA: Butterworth and Heinemann Press.
- Nwagwu, A. N. (1981). The impact of changing conditions of service on the recruitment of teachers in Nigeria. Comparative Education, Vol. 7, No.1.
- Nwagwu, C. (1997). The environment of crisis in the Nigerian education system. Comparative Education, 33(1), pp. 87-95.
- Odor, G. O. (1995). Administration of schools in Nigeria: Theory and practice. Benin-City: Monose Amalgamates.
- Okotoni, O. & Okotoni, A. (2003). Conflict management in secondary schools in Osun state, Nigeria. Nordic Journal of African Studies, 12 (1), 23-38.
- Ololube, N. P. (2004). Professionalism: An institutional approach to teachers' job effectiveness in Nigerian schools. Paper presented at the Seventh International LLine Conference. Held in Helsinki, September 23-25, 2004.
- Osunde, A. U. & Omoruyi, F. F. O. (2004). An evaluation of the national teachers institute's manpower training program for teaching personnel in mid-western Nigeria. Intentional Education Journal, 5, 405-409.
- Peretomode, V. F. (1991). Educational Administration: Applied concepts and theoretical perspective. Lagos: Joja Educational Research and Publishers.

- Perry, P. (1994). Defining and measuring the quality of teaching. In Green, D. (Ed.) What is quality in higher education? Bristol: The Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press.
- Roe, A. (1970). The study of occupations. New York: John Wiley.
- Salisu, M. (2001). Incentive structure, civil service efficiency and the hidden economy in Nigeria. United Nation University, Discussion Paper No. 2001/86.
- Saraiva, P. M., Rosa, M. R. & d'Orey, J. L. (n.d). Global Quality: Applying an Excellence Model to Schools. Retrieved 27th September 2005. from <<http://www.asq.org/pub/qualityprogress/past/1103/qp1103saraiva.pdf>>
- Schoderbek, P. P., Cosier, R. A.; & Aplin, J. C. (1988): Management. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Publishers.
- Seldin, P. (1990). Academic environments and teaching effectiveness. In How administrators can improve teaching. San Francisco and Oxford: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Shattock, M. (1997). The Managerial Implications of the New Priorities. Higher Education Management, Vol 9, No. 2, pp. 27-34.
- Sheffield Hallam University (Consortium for Excellence in Higher Education. (2003). Embracing excellence in education: A summary of the learning gained from applying the EFQM excellence model in further and higher education. Sheffield: Sheffield Hallam University.
- Soyinka, W. (1996). The open sore of a continent: A personal narrative of the Nigerian crisis. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Teather, D. C. B. (1979). Introduction. In Teather, D. C. B. (Ed.). Staff development in higher education. New York: Kogan Page.
- Ubom, I. U. & Joshua, M. T. (2004). Needs satisfaction variables as predictors of job satisfaction of employees: Implication for guidance and counseling. The African Symposium, 4 (3), September 2004.
- UNESCO (1998). World Conference on Higher Education Higher Education in the Twenty-First Century: Vision and Action, 9 October 1998.
- UNESCO (1998). Benchmarking in higher education: A study conducted by the commonwealth higher education management service. Paris: UNESCO.
- Watson, L. W. & Stage, F. K. (1999). A framework to enhance student learning. In Stage, F. K., Lemuel W. Watson, L. W. & Terrell, M. (Eds.) Enhancing student learning: Setting the campus context. Boston, Oxford: American College Personnel Association.
- Whawo, D. D. (1993). Educational administration: Planning and supervision. Lagos: Amos and Hannah Books.
- Yin, R. K. (1989). Case study research: Design and methods. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Zink, K. J. & Schmidt, A. (1995), Measuring universities against the European quality award criteria. Total Quality Management, 6, 547-561.
- Zink, K.J. & Schmidt, A. (1998). Practice and implementation of self-assessment. [International Journal of Quality Science](#), 3, (2), 147-170.

Nwachukwu Prince Ololubeⁱⁱ
Department of Applied Sciences of Education
Faculty of Behavioural Sciences
University of Helsinki Finland.
E-mail(s): nwachukwu.ololube@helsinki.fi or ololubepriince@yahoo.com