

# ETHICAL SUPERVISION AND QUALITY ASSURANCE IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN BENUE NORTH EAST SENATORIAL DISTRICT, NIGERIA

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## ARTICLE INFO

**Article No.:** 0207

**Accepted Date:** 09/02/2026

**Published Date:** 08/03/2026

**Type:** Research

## ABSTRACT

This study investigated ethical supervision and quality assurance in public secondary schools in Benue North East Senatorial District, Nigeria. The study was guided by two research questions and two hypotheses were formulated and tested. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population of the study was 1,496 teachers from the existing 114 public secondary schools in North East Senatorial District of Benue State, Nigeria. A sample of 239 teachers representing 16% of 1, 496 teachers drawn from 18 secondary schools representing 16% of 114 public secondary schools was used for the study. A multi-stage sampling procedure was used. The instrument used for data collection was “Ethical Supervision and Quality Assurance Questionnaire (ESQAQ)”. The questionnaire contained 10 items on the two variables of the study. The instrument was structured on four-point rating scale of Strong Agree (SA)=4, Agree (A)=3, Disagree (D)=2 and Strongly Disagree (1)=1. Face and content validity of the questionnaire was carried out by three experts in the Department of Educational Foundations, Rev. Fr. Moses Orshio Adasu University, Makurdi. Cronbach Alpha was used to determine the reliability of the instrument and it yielded reliability coefficient of 0.86. Data collected were analyzed using Mean scores and Standard Deviations to answer the research questions. The hypotheses were tested using Chi-square test of goodness of fit at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study showed that ethical supervision practices such as constructive criticism and impartial performance evaluation have positive significant impact on quality assurance in public secondary schools in Benue North East Senatorial District, Nigeria. The study concluded that improved ethical supervisory practices leads to improved quality assurance in public secondary schools. It was recommended that school administrators and supervisors in public secondary schools should promote the consistent use of constructive criticism and impartial performance evaluation during school supervision to bring about improved quality assurance in public secondary schools.

**Keywords:** Ethical supervisory practices, quality assurance, constructive criticism, impartial performance feedback.

## Introduction

Quality assurance in education has increasingly become a global priority among stakeholders such as governments, school administrators, teachers and parents, largely due to the recognition of education as a key driver of national development, social progress and economic growth. As a result, there is a rising international concern over how best to ensure that educational institutions produce learners equipped with the knowledge, skills and values essential for sustainable development in both developed and developing nations such as Nigeria (Owoeye, 2017). In Nigeria, the *National Policy on Education* (FRN, 2014) recognizes quality assurance as a critical instrument for promoting educational excellence and ensuring that set standards are maintained. Despite this recognition, quality assurance in public educational institutions in Nigeria appears to be lacking due to inadequate supervision, poor instructional delivery and low student outcomes (Adebayo, 2019). This calls for strengthened efforts such as adequate teacher development programmes, regular monitoring and evaluation, improved instructional materials and ethical supervision in order to enhance quality assurance in Nigeria's educational institutions.

Quality assurance in education refers to the systematic processes, policies and practices put in place to ensure that educational services meet established standards and continuously improve in effectiveness, relevance and outcomes (Obanya 2014). It serves as a mechanism for monitoring, evaluating and enhancing teaching, learning and administrative practices to ensure that schools produce competent and responsible learners. In public secondary schools in Nigeria including Benue North East Senatorial District the general public has expressed concerns over widespread lack of quality assurance as evident in constant teacher absenteeism, poor lesson preparation, inadequate feedback to students and ineffective supervision largely due to weak ethical supervisory practices by educational administrators.

Ethical supervision refers to the practice of guiding and evaluating teachers with integrity, fairness and professionalism, aimed at improving instructional effectiveness and sustaining quality in education (Nwachukwu, 2016). According to Oladele (2017), basic ethical supervisory practices in education include constructive criticism and impartial performance evaluation. These practices ensure that supervision contributes meaningfully to teacher growth, professional reflection and school improvement. According to (Nwachukwu, 2016), a critical starting point in ethical supervision is the application of constructive criticism during classroom observation and feedback.

Constructive criticism is an important ethic in school supervision that entails the process of providing objective, respectful and solution-focused feedback aimed at improving teachers' instructional performance without diminishing their self-worth or professional dignity (Udeh, 2019). It involves identifying areas of weakness in teaching practices while offering practical suggestions for improvement in a supportive and non-threatening manner. According to Muthanga (2015), constructive criticism in instructional supervision helps teachers reflect on their instructional methods, build confidence and embrace positive change. Adolla (2017) reported that supervisors' constructive criticism, effective report writing, and timely supervisory feedback significantly influenced quality assurance in public secondary schools. Adolla further observed that schools where supervisors adopted constructive criticism and maintained systematic report writing recorded higher levels of instructional quality and student achievement. Similarly, Okowa (2019) investigation revealed a positive and significant influence of supervisors' constructive criticism on quality of instructional delivery, classroom management and student learning outcomes. This brings into focus the importance of impartial performance evaluation which ensures that teachers are appraised based on merit rather than bias or favouritism.

Moreover, impartial performance evaluation is an ethical supervisory practice that involves assessing teachers based on objective criteria, professional standards and actual classroom performance, rather than on personal relationships, biases or external influences. According to Adekunle (2017), impartial evaluation fosters fairness by ensuring that all teachers are appraised under the same set of expectations, using tools such as classroom observation checklists, lesson delivery standards and student engagement indicators. A study by Ezenwa (2021) established a positive and significant relationship between impartial performance evaluation and quality assurance, noting that transparency in supervisory feedback significantly correlated with improved teacher effectiveness and better quality assurance outcomes. Okafor (2018) investigation also revealed that impartial supervisory outcomes had a significant impact on teachers' classroom effectiveness, curriculum delivery, and student learning outcomes. Biased or politically motivated evaluations could demoralize staff and weaken the credibility of the entire supervisory system. Impartiality in supervision has to be accompanied by confidentiality of supervisory reports to protect the privacy of teachers and encourage honest and constructive supervisory relationships.

More so, public secondary schools in Benue North East Senatorial District, Nigeria, require strong ethical supervision due to persistent concerns about declining instructional quality, poor adherence to professional standards and limited progress in achieving measurable improvements in teaching and learning outcomes, factors that threaten the realization of quality assurance in public education (Benue State Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2025). To address these challenges, educational administrators have to enforce strict compliance with core ethical practices of supervision. This could include constructive criticism and impartial performance evaluation. Understanding the impact of these ethical supervisory practices on quality assurance is essential for their effective implementation in public secondary schools. It is against this background that this study sought to investigate impact of ethical supervision on quality assurance in public secondary schools in Benue North East Senatorial District, Nigeria.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Strong ethical school supervision has recently emerged as a global best practice that promotes fairness, trust and professionalism, thereby strengthening quality assurance in educational institutions worldwide (Odejide, 2017). However, despite various efforts by educational stakeholders to improve supervision practices in Nigeria, public secondary schools in Benue North East Senatorial District continue to grapple with issues of quality assurance, as evident in declining academic performance, poor instructional delivery and lack of teacher commitment. These challenges culminate in broader consequences such as high failure rates in external examinations, dwindling public confidence in the quality of public education, and the inability of schools to produce learners equipped with 21st-century competencies. These setbacks are often linked to lapses in ethical standards during supervision, including the absence of constructive feedback and bias in performance appraisal. The researchers observed that in many secondary schools in Benue North East Senatorial District, supervisors tend to criticize teachers unfairly, often without offering constructive guidance for improvement. Similarly, impartiality in performance evaluation appears compromised in most schools as personal biases and favoritism influence appraisal outcomes. This situation seems to widen the gap between ethical supervision and quality assurance in public secondary schools leading growing concern among relevant stakeholders such as principals, teachers and parents. It is against these backdrops that the researcher sought to investigate impact of ethical supervision on quality assurance in public secondary schools in Benue North East Senatorial District.

### **Aim and Objectives of the Study**

The aim of this study is to investigate the impact of ethical supervision on quality assurance in public secondary schools in Benue North East Senatorial District, Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. ascertain impact of constructive criticism on quality assurance in public secondary schools in Benue North East Senatorial District, Nigeria.
2. determine impact of impartial performance evaluation on quality assurance in public secondary schools.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study.

1. What is the impact of constructive criticism on quality assurance in public secondary schools in Benue North East Senatorial District, Nigeria?
2. What is the impact of impartial performance evaluation on quality assurance in public secondary schools?

### **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. Constructive criticism has no significant impact on quality assurance in public secondary schools in Benue North East Senatorial District, Nigeria.
2. Impartial performance evaluation has no significant impact on quality assurance in public secondary schools.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study adopted James MacGregor Burns (1978) Transformational Leadership Theory in his seminal work, *Leadership*. The theory argued that transformational leaders go beyond exchanges of rewards for performance and instead inspire, motivate and morally uplift followers by appealing to higher ideals, shared values, and collective purpose. Such leaders stimulate intellectual growth, demonstrate individualized consideration, model ethical conduct, and foster commitment to organizational goals, thereby transforming both the leader and the followers. This theory is relevant to a study on ethical supervision as a correlate of quality assurance in public secondary schools in Benue North East Nigeria because ethical supervision requires school principals and supervisors to exhibit integrity, fairness, transparency, and moral example in monitoring teachers' instructional practices. Through transformational leadership, supervisors can build trust, encourage professional commitment and promote adherence to quality standards in teaching, assessment and school management, ultimately strengthening quality assurance mechanisms and improving students' learning outcomes in public secondary schools.

### **Methodology**

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population of the study was 1,496 teachers from the existing 114 public secondary schools in North East Senatorial District of Benue State, Nigeria (Ministry of Education Makurdi, 2025). A sample of 239 teachers representing 16% of 1,496 teachers drawn from 18 secondary schools representing 16% of 114 public secondary schools was used for the study. According to Emaikwu (2021), for a population of one hundred to thousands, 10% and above is considered adequate for a researcher to use as a sample. A multi-stage sampling procedure was used. The instrument used for data collection was "Ethical Supervision and Quality Assurance Questionnaire (ESQAQ)". The questionnaire contained 10 items on the two variables of the study. The instrument was structured on four-point rating scale of Strong Agree (SA)=4, Agree (A)=3, Disagree (D)=2 and Strongly Disagree (1)=1. Face and content validity of the questionnaire was carried out by three experts in the Department of Educational Foundations, Rev. Fr. Moses Orshio Adasu University, Makurdi. Cronbach Alpha was used to determine the reliability of the instrument and it yielded reliability coefficient of 0.86. Data collected were analyzed using Mean scores

and Standard Deviations to answer the research questions. If an item has a Mean score of 2.50 cut-off point and above, ethical supervision practices have significant negative influence on the quality assurance in public secondary schools. On the other hand, if it scored less, ethical supervision practices have no impact on the quality assurance in public secondary schools. The hypotheses were tested using Chi-square test of goodness of fit at 0.05 level of significance.

## Results

**Research Question 1:** What is the impact of constructive criticism on quality assurance in public secondary schools in Benue North East Senatorial District, Nigeria?

**Table 1:** Mean Scores and Standard Deviation Rating on Impact of Constructive Criticism on Quality Assurance in Public Secondary Schools in Benue North East Senatorial District, Nigeria

S/No	Item Description	N	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD	Decision
1	Supervisors who give constructive criticism encourage teachers to remain consistent with educational standards.	239	46	107	52	34	2.67	0.93	Agree
2	Constructive criticism during supervision motivates teachers to adjust their teaching methods for better learning outcomes.	239	67	87	83	2	2.90	0.80	Agree
3	Supervisors provide valid inputs to improve teachers' lesson plan.	239	67	87	57	28	2.79	0.97	Agree
4	Constructive criticism reminds teachers of ethical responsibilities.	239	58	105	66	10	2.89	0.82	Agree
5	Supervisors who give constructive criticism ensure teachers' practices remain aligned with curriculum requirements.	239	33	114	76	16	2.71	0.77	Agree
<b>Cluster Mean</b>							<b>2.79</b>		<b>Agree</b>

**Source:** Researchers' Field Work, 2026

Table 1 shows mean ratings of 2.67, 2.90, 2.79, 2.89, 2.71 and cluster mean of 2.79 with a corresponding Standard Deviation ratings of 0.93, 0.80, 0.97, 0.82 and 0.77 respectively. The result indicated that the respondents agreed that supervisors who give constructive criticism encourage teachers to remain consistent with educational standards, constructive criticism during supervision motivates teachers to adjust their teaching methods for better learning outcomes, supervisors provide valid inputs to improve teachers' lesson plan, constructive criticism reminds teachers of ethical responsibilities and supervisors who give constructive criticism ensure teachers' practices remain aligned with curriculum requirements. The cluster mean value of 2.79 was above the mean score benchmark of 2.50. This shows positive impact of constructive criticism on quality assurance in public secondary schools in Benue North East Senatorial District, Nigeria.

**Research Question 2:** What is the impact of impartial performance evaluation on quality assurance in public secondary schools?

**Table 2:** Mean Scores and Standard Deviation Rating on Impact of Impartial Performance Evaluation on Quality Assurance in Public Secondary Schools

S/No	Item Description	N	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD	Decision
6	Teachers are more motivated to put in their best when evaluations are impartial.	239	36	135	34	34	2.71	0.88	Agree
7	Teachers become more accountable for their duties when performance evaluation is impartial.	239	36	123	57	23	2.70	0.82	Agree
8	A fair evaluation system fosters a culture of continuous improvement among teachers.	239	36	116	75	12	2.72	0.76	Agree
9	Impartial performance evaluation discourages laxity, since teachers know their efforts will be measured objectively.	239	40	127	38	34	2.71	0.90	Agree
10	Schools maintain higher educational standards when performance evaluation is impartial	239	58	107	59	15	2.86	0.84	Agree
<b>Cluster Mean</b>							<b>2.74</b>		<b>Agree</b>

**Source:** Researchers' Field Work, 2026

Table 2 shows mean ratings of 2.71, 2.70, 2.72, 2.71, 2.86 and cluster mean of 2.74 with a corresponding Standard Deviation ratings of 0.88, 0.82, 0.76, 0.90 and 0.84 respectively. The result indicated that the respondents agreed that teachers are more motivated to put in their best when evaluations are impartial, teachers become more accountable for their duties when performance evaluation is impartial, a fair evaluation system fosters a culture of continuous improvement among teachers, impartial performance evaluation discourages laxity, since teachers know their efforts will be measured objectively and schools maintain higher educational standards when performance evaluation is impartial. The cluster mean value of 2.74 was above the mean score benchmark of 2.50. This shows positive impact of impartial performance evaluation on quality assurance in public secondary schools.

### Test of Hypotheses

**Hypothesis 1:** Constructive criticism has no significant impact on quality assurance in public secondary schools in Benue North East Senatorial District, Nigeria.

**Table 3:** Chi-square Analysis of Impact of Constructive Criticism on Quality Assurance in Public Secondary Schools in Benue North East Senatorial District, Nigeria

Responses	Observed Frequency	Expected Frequency	P	Df	$\chi^2$	Decision
SA	52	59.75				
A	100	59.75	0.000	3	54.814 <sup>a</sup>	Significant
D	66	59.75				
SD	21	59.75				

**Source:** Researchers' Field Work, 2026

Table 3 shows Chi-square calculated value of 54.814<sup>a</sup> at 3 degree of freedom; P=0.000 is less than 0.05. With this result, the null hypothesis which states that constructive criticism has no significant impact on quality assurance in public secondary schools in Benue North East Senatorial District, Nigeriawas therefore, rejected. This means that constructive criticism has positive significant impact on quality assurance in public secondary schools in Benue North East Senatorial District, Nigeria.

**Hypothesis 2:** Impartial performance evaluation has no significant impact on quality assurance in public secondary schools.

**Table 4:** *Chi-square Analysis of Impact of Impartial Performance Evaluation on Quality Assurance in Public Secondary Schools*

Responses	Observed Frequency	Expected Frequency	P	Df	$\chi^2$	Decision
SA	38	59.75				
A	122	59.75	0.000	3	130.542 <sup>a</sup>	Significant
D	53	59.75				
SD	26	59.75				

**Source:** Researchers' Field Work, 2026

Table 4 shows Chi-square calculated value of 130.542<sup>a</sup> at 3 degree of freedom; P=0.000 is less than 0.05. With this result, the null hypothesis which states that impartial performance evaluation has no significant impact on quality assurance in public secondary schools was therefore, rejected. This means that impartial performance evaluation has positive significant impact on quality assurance in public secondary schools.

### Discussion of Findings

The first finding of the study revealed that constructive criticism has positive significant impact on quality assurance in public secondary schools in Benue North East Senatorial District, Nigeria. This finding implies that when supervisors provide feedback in a constructive, supportive and professional manner, teachers are more likely to improve their instructional practices, classroom management and adherence to educational standards. This finding is in line with the findings of Adolla (2017) who reported that supervisors' constructive criticism, effective report writing and timely supervisory feedback significantly influenced quality assurance in public secondary schools. Adolla further observed that schools where supervisors adopted constructive criticism and maintained systematic report writing recorded higher levels of instructional quality and student achievement. The finding also agrees with Okowa (2019) whose investigation revealed a positive and significant influence of supervisors' constructive criticism on quality of instructional delivery, classroom management and student learning outcomes. This finding suggests that constructive criticism encourages self-reflection, professional improvement and compliance with supervisory recommendations among teachers. This finding justify the fact that transformational leaders practice individual consideration, meaning they guide and mentor teachers to develop their professional capacities. Through constructive criticism, principals and supervisors can help teachers recognize their strengths and weaknesses while providing guidance for professional growth. Such supportive feedback can foster a culture of continuous improvement and accountability in schools, thereby strengthening quality assurance mechanisms.

The second finding of the study showed that impartial performance evaluation has positive significant impact on quality assurance in public secondary schools. This finding implies that fairness, objectivity and transparency in evaluating teachers' performance enhance

trust in the supervisory process and motivate teachers to improve their instructional effectiveness. When teachers perceive evaluations as unbiased, they are more willing to accept feedback and implement recommended improvements. This finding is consistent with the findings of Ezenwa (2021) who established a positive and significant relationship between impartial performance evaluation and quality assurance, noting that transparency in supervisory feedback significantly correlated with improved teacher effectiveness and better quality assurance outcomes. The finding also aligns with Okafor (2018) whose investigation revealed that impartial supervisory outcomes had a significant impact on teachers' classroom effectiveness, curriculum delivery, and student learning outcomes. This is to say that generally, impartial performance evaluation positively influences quality assurance in public secondary schools because it promotes fairness, reduces tension, and strengthens teachers' commitment to instructional standards. This finding justifies the fact that impartial evaluation also reflects idealized influence and inspirational motivation, which are core components of transformational leadership. When teachers trust that evaluations are conducted objectively, they become more committed to professional standards, adhere to instructional guidelines, and strive to enhance students' learning outcomes. This increased commitment can contribute to effective monitoring of teaching processes, adherence to educational standards, and continuous improvement in instructional delivery.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that ethical supervision practices such as constructive criticism and impartial performance evaluation have positive significant impact on quality assurance in public secondary schools in Benue North East Senatorial District, Nigeria. This implies that the more constructive criticism and impartial performance evaluation are practice in the process of supervision, the more quality assurance will be achieved in public secondary schools in Benue North East Senatorial District, Nigeria.

### **Recommendations**

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

1. School administrators in public secondary schools should promote the consistent use of constructive criticism during school supervision by organizing professional forums and meetings where feedback is improvement-oriented rather than fault-finding.
2. Supervisors should ensure that teachers' performance evaluations are conducted impartially and based strictly on objective and transparent criteria. This will increase teachers' trust in supervision and strengthen quality assurance.

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