



QUALITY ASSURANCE IN THE MANAGEMENT OF BUSINESS EDUCATION IN TERTIARY EDUCATION IN NIGERIA: A THEORETICAL REVIEW

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Abstract

The importance of quality assurance in nation building cannot be over-emphasized. Over the years there have been several calls on the educational managers for the need to make the education system proactive, especially in business education programme with the view to producing quality products instead of half baked graduates from our various educational institutions. These calls by parents, religious bodies and non-governmental organizations have generated a lot of debates and arguments on the pages of newspapers, radio and television programmes. Concerns are often expressed about how confidence is being lost as regards the effectiveness and efficiency of the education system. The glorious era must therefore return, beginning with a redevelopment or re-design of the curricular at all levels. This entails complete overhaul of business education with a view to returning the lost values and innate skills of business educators in its totality. This paper looked at the variables, need for quality assurance in business education in Nigeria, strategies mapped out to ensure quality assurance in business education, roles of educational managers to ensure equality assurance, etc. The writers suggested a way forward based on the problems identified and finally concluded by saying that utilization of instructional materials and regular evaluative strategy in the teaching and learning process would enhance quality assurance in business education and its sustainability.

Keywords: Quality, Assurance, Management, Business education, sustainable development, Education

Introduction:

Education has been described as the bedrock of every society and tool for nation building. For quality education to be achieved in a nation, the principal actors of learning who are the teachers, learners and the environment must be cooperatively organized. In other words, the teacher must be well trained and facilities must be provided as well. In recent time, the upsurge and rapid establishment of private schools and institutions in Nigeria is as a result of lack of confidence in Nigeria's education system which has adverse effect in the development of the nation.

Adepoju (2006) was right when he implied that people and nations are what they are because of the nature and types of education they have been exposed to. However, the modern view, even where only lip service is being paid to it, is that quality education is the right of every citizen, not a privilege that rulers may grant or withhold. This view has been given greater urgency by demands of the modern institutionalized and technological age. Education today must have the effect of making it possible for a country to have a steady supply of highly creative citizens



who help to keep improving the living conditions of the general citizenry, and to solve the existential problems that are thrown up from time to time.

Definition of Concepts:

Quality and quality Assurance:

Many definitions of quality in education exist, testifying to the complexity and multifaceted nature of the concept. It however, has to do with the quality of inputs and outputs in its entirety. Quality is a process that drives people away of the short term goals through a mindset of excellence,(Butcher 2015).In education, a good quality education is one that provides all learners with capabilities they require to become economically productive, develop sustainable livelihoods, contribute to peaceful and democratic societies and enhance individual well-being. On the other hand, assurance according to Eya, Igbojinwaekwu and Ekpanoban (2013) connotes “feeling of certainty or confidence.” Taking a cue from the above definitions, quality could be characterized by three interrelated and interdependent strands:-

- Efficiency in the meeting of its goals.
- Relevance to human and environmental conditions and needs.
- Something more than that is the exploration of new ideas, the pursuit of excellence and encouragement of creativity.

Quality assurance, therefore, is the fitness of an organization, in accomplishing the goals for which it is established, and also maintaining comparable standards. Quality assurance in the opinion of Ayodele (2007) entails the quality of teaching personnel, quality of available instructional teaching materials, equipment and facilities, school environment and pupils, and quality education delivery.

Eze, Achuonye and Uzochina (2015) are of the view that quality assurance is an organizational plan of action formed by those involved in the delivery of service to the recipients of the service. It is an action aimed at excellence for service delivery. He went on to state that quality assurance programme must ensure effectiveness, efficiency, excellence, that criteria are met and costs contained. It embraces all functions and activities that will ensure that quality of teaching, curriculum, structures, etc, well allow an objective review of the quality of the instructional delivery. It also refers to the determination of standards, appropriate methods and quality requirements by an expert body, accompanied by a process of inspection or evaluation that examines the extent to which practice meets these standards (Morgatrod and Morgan in Fredricksson, 2004).Commenting too, Ehindero (2004) posits that quality assurance focused on these:-

- Learners entry behaviours, characteristics and attributes including some demographic factors that can inhibit or facilitate their learning.
- The teacher entry qualification, values, pedagogic skills, professional preparedness, subject background, philosophical orientation etc.
- The teaching/learning processes including the structure of the curriculum and learning environment.



- The outcomes, which are defined for different levels in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes including appropriate and relevant instruments to assess these objectives.

Finally, Fadokun (2005), sums the definition of quality assurance in education as a programmed, an institution or a whole education system. In such a case, quality assurance is all these attitudes, objectives, actions and procedures that through existence and use, together with quality control activities, ensure that appropriate academic standards are being maintained and enhanced in and by each programme.

As part of the government effort to ensure that educational programmes meet up with the national objective, the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2016) National Policy on Education, section I (8) states that the quality of instruction at all levels of one's educational system should be oriented towards inculcating the following values:

- i. Respect for the worth and dignity of the individuals.
- ii. Faith in man's ability to make rational decision.
- iii. Moral and spiritual principles in their personal and human relations.
- iv. Shared responsibility for the common good of the society.
- v. Promotion of the physical, emotional and psychological development of all children and
- vi. Acquisition of competences necessary for self-reliance.

By implication, if the instructions given in our educational system particularly in the secondary schools are not designed in line with the afore-stated values, it all means that the quality of individuals being trained and produced in this system will in no way make any positive contribution to the well being of the Nigerian society. On the other hand, if the programmes of instruction adhere strictly to the stated values, the reverse would be the case. Nation building is a process that can be enhanced through quality education; thus quality education according to Adebela and Ademola (2007) is viewed as the cornerstone on which effective nation building rests. From all indications, quality assurance in education means the certainty of ability of the products from our schools at the early stages to meet up with the challenges of the society by putting into practice the relevant skills they acquired while in schools. This is why emphasis has now been shifted to business education or vocational education as the case may be.

Management:-

Management is an interactional and economic process involving a sequence of co-ordinated events namely, planning, organizing, directing, controlling, co-ordinating, reporting and budgeting in order to use available resources to achieve a desired objective in the fastest and most efficient way. Management is seen as the total system of organization – getting organization personnel to accomplish their work so as to achieve organization's objectives (Okeke, 2010).

According to Anyaogu, (2016), management refers to a set of activities which can be classified as concerned with planning, organizing or controlling. It is the job of getting things done through people. Looking at the explanations above by different



authors, management can be viewed as the process undertaken by one or more individuals to co-ordinate the activities of others to achieve results not achievable by one individual acting alone.

In the field of academics, business education in particular, management can be described as the art of working through people for the achievement of the broad educational goals. In a bid to achieve these goals, persons charged with the responsibilities of managing business education in any institution have to map out strategies, find the qualified people and materials to do the job, assign different people to accomplish different jobs, and ensure that the jobs are done as planned.

Business Education:

A lot has been said about business education or vocational education. Oduh (2010) defined business education as a formidable force in equipping the youths with appropriate skills, knowledge, abilities and competences to enable the individuals to be self-employed and self-reliant leading to sustainable economic growth and poverty eradication in our society. The researcher believes that business education inculcates in its products the right attitude, skills, knowledge, confidence and independence for them to survive and excel as self-reliant, self-employed, employers as well as successful employees and managers of their own. This is why it has become imperative to further emphasize on proper management of business education to ensure that standards are maintained at any point in time to avoid derailing from the aims and objectives of business education. This is also why managerial acumen is needed for one to function effectively as a manager and a business educator.

Need for Quality Assurance In Tertiary Education:

The need for quality assurance in tertiary institutions cannot be over-emphasized in order to ensure quality of teaching and learning. According to Dhaka (2011), the following are the major needs of quality assurance in the education system, especially in business education:

- To serve as indispensable component of quality control strategy in education.
- To ensure and maintain standard of education at all levels.
- To assist in monitoring and supervision of education.
- To determine the quality of the teacher input.
- To determine the number of classrooms needed based on the average class size to ensure quality control of education; and
- To determine the level of adequacy of the facilities available for quality control.

From the above, it would not be over statement if one says that it takes little or nothing for a good manager of education to know that when all these are not in place, achievement of quality assurance in education would be difficult.

Strategies for ensuring quality Assurance In Education:

As we have been told earlier on, quality assurance is the systematic review of educational programmes to ensure that acceptable standards of education and infrastructures are being maintained. Judging from this statement therefore, the



following strategies have been itemized for ensuring effective quality assurance in the education system and in the management of Business education Ekpanban, Eya and Igbojinwaekwu (2013).

- **Monitoring** – This refers to the process of collecting data at intervals about on-going projects or programmes within the school system. The aim is to carefully assess the level of performance with a view to finding out how far set objectives are being met.
- **Evaluation** – This is a formal process carried out within a school setting. It is based on available data which are used to form conclusions. It could be formative or summative. Evaluation is to see how the system can be assisted to improve on the present level of performance (formative).
- **Supervision** – Supervision might involve inspection, but it goes beyond inspection and includes attempt at bringing about improvement in the quality of instruction. It involves staff as essential part of the process. It is a way of advising, guiding, refreshing, encouraging and stimulating staff.
- **Inspection** - Usually, this involves an assessment of available facilities and resources in an institution with a view to establishing how far a particular institution has met prescribed standards, it is more of an assessment than an improved induced exercise.
- **Quality Control** –The issue of quality control cannot be over-emphasized. It is one of the strategies for establishing quality assurance in the inferior education system at all levels. Ojedele (2007) views that: quality control should be of concern to the country in its drive towards technological development. For this to be successfully carried out, there is need to examine the qualification of teachers, teachers by gender, the adequacy of the curriculum, availability of equipment in the required number as well as the proper use of the processes involved on the various skills to ensure that the finished products (graduates) are capable of competing favourably in the labour market.

Ensuring Sustainability of Business Education through maintenance of Quality Education:

The world has moved to the knowledge economy, where knowledge as found in human beings is driving economic growth and development. Sustainable development in Nigeria through qualitative education will require that the teachers will go back to the drawing tables, that students and job seekers possess the skills for participation in the knowledge economy of today. Adebayo (2010) maintains that the concept of sustainable development is the effort at improving the environment or natural resources for the purpose of improving the quality of human life in such a way that the needs of the future generation are not jeopardized. To this end, sustainable development is the ability to preserve the existing resources of the state for the collective use of the citizens while conscious efforts are made to conserve the resources for the use of future generations. From all indications, one can see that business education as a course of study is one of the courses that will help in achieving sustainable development if quality is maintained by ensuring that relevant skills are inculcated in students early enough.



Quality Assurance in business education range from administrative to professional. Business education is a course of study that is special in nature. It requires a lot of human and material resources to achieve quality assurance. This in other words entails that heads of institutions should be concerned about how they manage the educational resources allocated to them for use as well as the control of their schools and students. Contributing on this, Esene (2012) equally sees business education as education for and about business or training in relevant skills in office occupation and listed the following which the educational managers must not look down on in order to ensure quality assurance in the management of Business education in any higher institution:-

- Ensuring that accreditation for the programme is not taken for granted.
- Measurement and standardization of academic attainments.
- Evaluation of quality of work during supervision.
- Use of competent skilled teachers and administrative/supervising personnel.
- Dissemination of information to teachers and students.
- Use of educational technologies with a view to increasing the efficiency of teaching as the area is technical in nature.
- New research and development to invigorate educational activities.
- Guidance and counseling necessary to new entrants in the course before they fall by the way side.

However, for a head of an institution to function effectively and ensure quality assurance in the management of business education in tertiary institutions according to Okoro (2015), the person must be well grounded in:

- **Planning** – This is an essential aspect of good management. It requires the ability of the manager to look ahead and be able to formulate and select appropriate objectives and procedures to be followed within the school system.
- **Organising** – This is the ability of the manager to create structural work. That is, he should focus attention on the structure and process of allocating tasks to achieve common objectives.
- **Staffing** – This is another essential area which the education manager needs not to toil with. It requires his ability to search for the right people to impact the knowledge and place them on the right job both in quantity and quality which would reflect their experience and capability for the education/school objective to be anchored.
- **Motivating** – This is the energizing force behind all other activities of educational managers. Managers should know how to keep the morale of their workers high in order to obtain maximum efficiency and effectiveness from them. This includes constant payment of salaries and other emoluments needed for their welfare.
- **Evaluation** – This is the ability of managers to assess and know the outcome of the school aims and objectives. They ensure that set down goals and objectives are achieved through quality control.



Educational Implications/Way Forward:

- To ensure quality assurance in the management and sustainability of Business Education in tertiary institutions in Nigeria, efforts must be geared by government towards ensuring that evaluation of curriculum and standards of education in Nigeria should be carried out from time to time by the curriculum planners with a view to reflecting the needs and aspiration of the society as the need arises. For instance, emphasis now is on skilled courses and entrepreneurship development. Efforts should be geared towards inculcating mentoring as part of the skilled areas in education, especially business education.
- Harmonizing the internal and external criteria of quality assurance, thereby raising standard of excellence in business education
- Improving or employing modern methods and techniques in classrooms. For instance, introducing e-learning to reduce the stress on both lecturers and students. In other words, the government should make efforts to see that facilities for this are put in place in all tertiary institutions.
- Ensuring that a more developed and curriculum content is sustained. There is also the need for curriculum evaluation to allow innovations and new techniques/methods to be incorporated.
- Making sure that effective supervisory system is injected into the system
- Ensuring that adequate funds are released to educational institutions to meet the expectations of the changing world.

Conclusion:

Based on the discussions in this write-up, it is clear beyond every reasonable doubt that quality assurance is essential in the management of business education in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. The quality and standards set by various institutions offering business education has proved that there is no short cut in business education course. However, it has been emphasized that the educational managers need to stick to their guns by ensuring that evaluation, supervision, inspection, auditing, assessment, etc are carried out to ensure that high standard is in place at any point in time. Also, teaching methods in line with the new technological advancement enhances quality hence the management of business education in tertiary institutions have been advised to adhere and fall in line.

Finally, the utilization of instructional materials and regular evaluative strategy in the teaching and learning process also enhances quality assurance in business education.

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