

ANALYSIS OF QUALITY ASSURANCE IN BUSINESS EDUCATION: THE PERCEPTION OF BUSINESS TEACHERS IN ENUGU STATE JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to determine the criteria for measuring quality assurance in business education in Enugu State junior secondary schools and the instruments to assure quality business education in the schools. The population of the study consisted of all the business teachers at the junior secondary schools in Enugu State. From the entire population, a sample of 185 business teachers was purposely selected for the study. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. Mean with standard deviation was used to analyze the research questions, while t-test was used to test the hypotheses. The findings revealed that the criteria for measuring quality assurance in business education include, market demand for business education graduates, research and publications, status of business education curriculum and syllabus and so on. Recommendations were made that, business educators must have adequate academic qualifications to assure quality in business education, and that business education curriculum must be designed to meet international standard and the requirements for the world of work.

Introduction

Quality assurance (QA) refers to the planned and systematic activities implemented in a quality system so that quality requirement for a product or service will be fulfilled. It is the systematic measurement, comparison with a standard monitoring of process and an associated feedback that confers error prevention (Wikipedia Dictionary.com). This can be contrasted with quality control which is focused on process outputs whose principles include fit for purpose. The product should be suitable for the intended purpose and right first time, mistakes should be eliminated (Dhaka, 2011).

Business education involves teaching students the fundamentals, theories and processes of business. Education at this level occurs at several levels including secondary education and higher education with the greatest activity in the latter. Business education typically prepares students for an occupation in business or a business related field or a teaching career in academics (Dhaka, 2011). There are numerous institutions in Nigeria both private and public which are providing business education. The question is, “are all these institutions providing quality business education?” This is where the issue of quality assurance comes in.

In business education, the need for definite standards as the basis for determining performance cannot be overemphasized. Measuring education quality is very much important and demanding and that is what the study intends to address.

In trying to measure education quality there must be a standing unit of measurement or a boundary of performance depending on the standard set. Standard is seen as a measure to which others must conform. It is defined as something set up and established by authority as a rule for the measurement of quality, weight, extent or value (Atakpa, 2004). This definition presupposes a central control of the thing to be measured. Atueyi (2004) insisted that standard is a level of quality, skill, ability or achievement by which someone or something is judged that is considered to be necessary or acceptable in a particular situation.

This supports the propositions that schools preparing young people for work need to be sure that their students are prepared to meet the job entry demands of business. Students are not naturally likely to meet these demands unless job standards coincide with terminal education standards.

Statement of the Problem

The inability of schools to acquire relevant teaching materials together with the present emphasis on electronic driven method of teaching have generally posed a treat to quality education in our school system. Anioke, (2011) noted that most Nigerian schools (Enugu State inclusive) lack modern teaching facilities, laboratories, workshops and instructional facilities to impart the knowledge and skills needed to maintain quality education in our school system. Anioke emphasized that even when those facilities are available, it is either they are not enough for the learners or they are obsolete to stand the taste of time.

Obelega, (2010) in Anioke, (2012) also noted that in all the disciplines in businessteacher education in Nigerian colleges, there is a wide gap between what is studied in such programmes and what is practiced in the employment industry. Obelega noted that Nigerian colleges train their products in skills, methodology and teaching that are hardly available in our public school system for them to practice what they have been taught and this situation has negatively affected the quality of our business education graduates and the their demand in relevant industries. Business and economic changes are now altering the workplace, so the need to provide for the changes so that business education graduates can cope with the transition from school to career becomes imperative. This is what quality assurance in business education is all about. The concern of this study was how do we measure quality business education? How do we assure quality in business education? How do we develop best practice in business education?

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this paper was to analyze the quality of business education in Enugu State junior secondary schools. Specifically the study was intended to:

1. Assess the criteria for measuring quality assurance in business education in Enugu

- State junior secondary schools..
2. Assess the instruments to assure quality business education in Enugu State junior secondary schools.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study.

1. What are the criteria for measuring quality assurance in business education in Enugu State junior secondary schools?
2. What are the instruments to assure quality business education in Enugu State junior secondary schools?

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female business teachers on the criteria for measuring quality assurance in business education in Enugu

- State junior secondary schools.
2. The instruments to assure quality business education do not differ significantly by gender in Enugu State junior secondary schools.

Method

The population of the study consisted of all the business teachers in Enugu State junior secondary schools. From the entire population, a sample of 185 business teachers was purposely selected for the study. The study adopted a survey research design. The design typically employed a self- structured questionnaire containing 20 items on a 4-point scale of Strongly Agree = 4points, Agree = 3points, Disagree = 2 points and Strongly Disagree = 1point in assessing the opinions and preferences of business teachers on the criteria for measuring quality assurance and the instruments to assure quality business education in Enugu State junior secondary schools. Mean values were interpreted as follows: Strongly Agree = 3.50-4.49, Agree = 2.50-3.49, Disagree = 1.50-2.49 and Strongly Disagree = 0.05-1.49. The instrument was appropriately validated by three experts (two in business education area and one in measurement and evaluation area), all from Enugu State University Science and Technology. By the opinions of the experts, the instrument covered the objectives of the study in three sections: A = Personal data; B = Criteria for measuring quality assurance in business education and C = Instruments to assure quality business. To establish the reliability of the instrument, a trial test was conducted on a sample of twelve (12) business teachers who were not used in the main study. After two weeks interval, the same instrument was re-administered on the same group of business teachers.

The Spearman rank order correlation coefficient was used to determine the internal consistency of the instrument, a reliability coefficient (r) of 0.68 was established. The instrument was administered to the respondents through personal contact at NECO marking

School, Enugu). By this, a total of 200 copies of questionnaires were distributed to the respondents. However, a total of 185 were found usable representing 92.5%. The data collected were analyzed using mean with standard deviation. From the calculation of the mean of the respondents to the research questions, any item with a mean cut-off point that is equal or less than 2.49 was rejected.

Results

Research Question 1

1. What are the criteria for measuring quality assurance in business education in Enugu State junior secondary schools?

Table 1: Mean with standard deviation of respondents' ratings of the criteria for measuring quality assurance in business education.

N = 185

centers in Enugu State (Federal Government College, Enugu and Urban Girls Secondary

S/N	Criteria	x	SD	Remarks
1	Market demand for business education graduates	4.16	1.41	Accept
2	Quality of business education graduates	3.58	1.48	Accept
3	Research and publications	3.94	1.34	Accept
4	Administration into other institutions e.g. Foreign universities	3.33	1.31	Accept
5	Affiliations	2.41	1.33	Reject
6	Credit transfer	2.46	1.32	Reject
7	Status of curriculum and syllabus	3.91	1.31	Accept
8	Professional exposure	3.44	1.40	Accept
9	Infrastructure and facilities available	3.46	1.45	Accept
10	Ability to deliver and flow with current trends	3.37	1.49	Accept
	Grand Mean	3.30	1.38	Accept

Table 1 above revealed that two items with means lower than 2.5 were rejected as not being criteria for measuring quality assurance in business education. The other eight items were accepted as criteria for measuring quality assurance in business education. This is because their means were above the cut-off point of 2.5 indicating acceptance.

Research Question 2:

1. What are the instruments to assure quality business education in Enugu State Junior secondary schools?

Table 2: Mean with standard deviation of respondents' ratings on the instruments to assure quality business education

N=185				
S/N	Instruments	X	SD	Remarks
11	Quality of syllabus and curriculum	3.55	1.58	Accept
12	Accreditation council	3.27	1.30	Accept
13	Quality of teachers	3.31	1.39	Accept
14	Discipline of students and teachers	3.48	1.46	Accept
15	Available infrastructure and facilities	3.62	1.41	Accept
16	Selective in admitting students	3.21	1.48	Accept
17	Good governance	3.39	1.48	Accept
18	Constant supervision	3.32	1.56	Accept
19	Training and development of teachers	3.45	1.48	Accept
20	Assessing quality of work/ research	3.31	1.51	Accept
	Grand Mean	3.39	1.46	Accept

The result in Table 2 shows that all the instruments are factors that assure quality business education. In other words, if these instruments are available in a given institution offering business education, such institution will be adjudged as having quality assurance in business education.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the respondents by gender on the criteria for measuring quality assurance in business education.

Table 3: t- test summary for significant difference between male and female business teachers on the criteria for measuring quality assurance in business education.

Variables	No	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Male business Teachers	57	3.31	1.39	183	1.337	1.90	Accept
Female business Teachers	126	3.36	1.43				

From Table 3 above, the test of the hypothesis revealed that there is no significant difference as perceived by the male and female business teachers on the criteria for measuring quality assurance in business education.

Hypothesis 2: The instruments to assure quality business education do not differ significantly by gender.

Table 4: t- test summary for significant difference between male and female business teachers on the instruments to assure quality business education.

Variables	No	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Male business Teachers	57	3.30	1.38	183	1.722	1.96	Accept
Female business Teachers	126	3.39	1.46				

The test of the hypothesis as shown in Table 4 revealed that there is no significant difference as perceived by the male and female business teachers.

Discussion of Findings

Findings of the study revealed that both male and female business teachers agreed that measuring quality in business education is a factor of many variables which among others include; market demand for business education graduates, research and quality publication, admission into other universities, etc. Definitely, all students make way of their career paths but not all of them are captured by renowned corporate organizations. Here the market value of graduates is determined by the academic institutions where they are trained. There are some corporate bodies which specifically mention institutions to seek resume. So the question is after completion of the degree, how many graduates are being employed by renowned corporate bodies? Moreover, one of the important parameter of evaluation of an institution or a researcher is the range of research work and related publications. Of all the 10 criteria for measuring quality assurance in business education, items 5 and 6 were rejected as not being relevant for measuring quality education in Enugu State.

Findings of the study as can be seen in Table 2 revealed that there are several instruments that can be used to ensure quality business education among which are, quality syllabus and curriculum, quality of teachers, use of accreditation council, availability of relevant infrastructure and facilities, good governance, discipline of students and teachers and being selective in admitting students in academic institutions. This corroborates with Azuka (2004) that for business education to meet standard, there must be improvement in government funding, recruitment of qualified teachers, improvement in equipment and facilities etc.

The analysis in Table 2 revealed that both male and female business teachers agreed that all the items from eleven to twenty are relevant instruments for assuring quality business education. This is because they have means between 2.5 and above which was within the cut- off point for acceptance. The findings corroborate with the views of Dhaka (2011) that quality syllabus and course outline are necessary to ensure quality education. Dhaka insists that for a business education programme to meet international standard it must be

recognized globally. The syllabus must be objectively oriented so that the graduates get proper value in the job market. Quality of any service depends a lot on the discipline. Dhaka (2011) maintained that a strictly administrative system is necessary for both students and teachers. Business teachers must have adequate academic qualifications with remarkable result in the relevant field and ratings from accreditation council (NERDC) can also be a criterion for quality assurance in business education.

Conclusions

The concept of setting targets for people is a common business practice, but it does not guarantee (right first time) results. The approach rather takes to setting performance boundaries within which people must work. Measuring quality assurance in business education requires such performance boundaries which can be achieved through the following criteria, market demand for business education graduates, ability of the graduates to deliver, status of infrastructure and facilities available, etc. Consequently, to assure quality business education the following instruments must be in place, such as, quality of syllabus and curriculum, accreditation council (to check from time to time what the business education programme is offering from one institution to another, infrastructure and facilities available for the programmes, etc.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study the following recommendations are hereby made:

To assure quality business education, business teachers must ensure that the business education syllabus must be designed to meet international standard and the requirements for the world of work.

- 1.
2. The business educators must have adequate academic qualifications, with remarkable result in the relevant field.
3. There should be enough infrastructure and facilities such as classrooms, exam hall, library, computer lab, research lab, multimedia support, air conditioning, auditorium, online communication, canteen etc in which case, if an institution does not provide these support, it cannot provide quality education.
4. Accreditation council such National Education Research and Development Council (NERDC) should from time to time check and monitor the offerings of business education programme in our Junior secondary schools.

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