



AWARENESS OF QUALITY ASSURANCE MECHANISMS IN BUSINESS EDUCATION PROGRAMME IN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION IN NORTH-EAST NIGERIA FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

This study on awareness of quality assurance in teaching and learning among business educators has to do with the information business educators have on quality assurance, the expectation of government, the society, students and all relevant stakeholders have on their finished products, the students especially as stated in NCCE minimum standard. The study was conducted in Federal College of Education (Technical) Gombe, Federal College of Education (Technical) Potiskum and College of Education Zing, all in the North East, Nigeria. One research question and hypothesis each was used. The descriptive survey research design was adopted. The population was 180 business educators from colleges of education in North East Nigeria. A sample of 92 business educators were selected using the cluster sampling technique. A structured questionnaire of 24 items on knowledge, eliciting responses from respondents was used. Data was analyzed using mean standard deviation and t-test for the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The result revealed amongst others that most of the business educators in colleges of education in North East Nigeria were aware of quality assurance mechanisms put in place and standards expected of them. However, a few others do not. This has the tendency to reduce standards in business education programme as all components of quality assurance are important. It was recommended that government and relevant agencies should periodically organize in-house seminars and workshops for Business Educators on quality assurance in colleges of education for national development and quality supervision of programme should be regularly carried out by the school authorities.

Key words: Quality assurance, Mechanisms, Business Education, Minimum standard.

Introduction

Education has become a key factor in the development of human and material resources in every society. It provides the much needed manpower required for tapping and utilizing the resources of a society, and it is relied upon as the bedrock and tool for nation building. Business teacher education programme is established to produce manpower required for national development. Aisha (2016) opined that business teacher education programme is strategic to the building of a strong and self-reliant economy. This implies that, no meaningful development can take place in a country that lacks trained manpower no matter how well-endowed such a nation might be. This was rightly viewed by Adegbesan (2011) who affirmed that people and nations are what they are because of the nature and types of education they have been exposed to.



Nigeria among the nations of the world recognized the need for qualified manpower in the nation's educational system. This demand for quality made, past governments at various levels (Federal, State and Local) to take steps by ensuring that the training of teachers of her primary, secondary and tertiary Institutions is for quality education delivery. (Arikawei&Torubeli, 2015). Quality can be described as standard of something in comparison to other things. It is the degree of excellence (Idialu&Alli, 2013). Oladosu (2012) viewed quality as "the process of monitoring and ensuring that standards are not only continuously sustained but also improved upon". This, he implies constant evaluation, assessment, maintenance and improvement of quality by an institution, a programme or a tertiary education. Quality is equated with maintenance of internationally acceptable standard of evolving a product or service, such that the recipients of such service or product enjoy commensurate value for money paid. (Odukoya, Chinedu, Tayo&Olowookere, 2015).

Quality in education according to Eze (2016) refers to "appropriateness, value or worth associated with educational service provision in relation to expected educational outcome". Education of good quality refers to educational services/products that meet the expectations of relevant stakeholders". Makujo, Nwangwu, Abolade and Newton (2004) posited that, quality assurance in education refers to the monitoring and evaluation of the different levels of educational system to determine the extent to which the objectives at each level of education are being achieved. The continuous monitoring and evaluation would, serve to: Determine the quality of the school using nationally established standards, enhance the level of accountability in the system, provide basis for further support given to schools by funders, Provide feedback to stakeholders based on findings; and Identify the areas of strength and weaknesses.

In order to achieve quality education the principal actors of learning who are, the teachers, learners and the school environment must be cooperatively organized. In other words, the teachers must be adequate in quality and quantity, the students must be well trained and facilities must be provided for the training (Adegbesan, 2011). It is obvious that education cannot rise above its teachers therefore, Quality assurance being canvassed here should ensure that teachers develop sound academic minds, equipped with appropriate pedagogy, understand the diversities among students and their individual differences in order to deepen their roles as nation builders. The making of a successful teacher goes beyond the mastery of the subject matter. It also includes delivery skills as well as the "creation and possession of ideological and philosophical environments in which these other components are immersed" (Okpanachi, 2012).

UNESCO (2013) contended that "the challenge of recruiting teachers is not on the numbers, but in... quality... far more often, teachers remain under qualified." In contemporary Nigeria, there seem to be a negative entry objective into the teaching profession as many people seem to embrace teaching as a last resort, with the intention of bolting out at any time. Quality assurance activities most of the time receive attention when National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) exercises are imminent and are promptly abandoned after the statutory exercise. This discontinuity is paid for in the form of institutional dropping of guard, decline in



standards and when such decays accumulate over time they render colleges of education in Nigeria unsure of their suitability for teaching, learning and research.

College of education was viewed by Nigerian academy of management administration (2014) as an educational programme created to prepare individuals to be leaders and practitioners in education and related human service fields by expanding and deepening understanding of education as a fundamental human endeavour in helping society define and respond to its educational responsibilities and challenges. At this level of education, the programme prepares the individual for a career in teaching, employment in industries, civil service and business establishment as well as self-employment (Ubong&Wokocha, 2009). Quality assurance in colleges of education is aimed at ensuring consistency in the qualitative and quantitative outcome of learning. It is a continuous process of inbuilt mechanism for monitoring of the quality of tertiary education, for the sustainability of high standards detection of lapses and quick response to redeem anomalies in the academic environment and programmes. The mechanisms for its application are both proactive and reactive. In scope, quality assurance incorporates internal and external monitors and evaluators for continuous relevance of higher education programmes to students and humanity

Business education programme is offered at various levels of tertiary education: universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education. Business Education is the type of education that assist individuals to acquire skills, which can be applied to solve problems in business and office occupations (Ogunmayi, 2008). Business education is an educational programme that prepares students for entry and advancement in jobs within business and to handle their business affairs as well as to function intelligently as consumers and citizens in a business economy. Njoku (2006) defined business education as “an educational programme that equips individuals with functional and sustainable skills, knowledge, attitude and value that would enable the individuals operate in the environment such individuals find themselves”

Business education is the key to national development. It is a programme of activities that unlock the economic potentials of a people, empowers, and equips them to participate in and benefit from the national economy, facilitate economic development, and also provides the basis for transformation. It is the essential tool for skill acquisition, knowledge and attitudes needed to function as a producer or consumer of goods and services (Aluwong, 2008). Awareness refers to cognitive ability of a person to discern, decipher and judge a given phenomenon. It refers to the knowledge about an object or event, the competencies of skills as well as methods of operation; it has to do with background knowledge about the object, event or any other phenomenon (Reinhardt, Mletzko, Sloep and Drachsler, 2016). Awareness therefore, is seen as the ability of a person to discriminate among several possible stimuli, it enables a person to make right judgment and decision as well as attain high level performance.

The study on awareness of quality assurance in teaching and learning among business educators has to do with the information business educators have on quality assurance i.e the expectation government, the society, students and all relevant stakeholders have on their, finished products, that is, the students, especially as stated in NCCE minimum standard. It is not beyond rational thinking that, with this wide range of quality assurance measures lined up in tertiary institutions in Nigeria, one



would expect colleges of education to have high rating internationally. On the contrary, even colleges whose programmes have been fully accredited are still far behind in international rating (Ebisine, 2013).

Statement of Research Problem

Despite mechanisms of quality assurance put in place by the Federal, State Governments and all relevant authorities to ensure quality in Education there has been repeated Mass failures and half-baked products from our various educational institutions in Nigeria, these trend over the years has not helped the economic, industrial, technological growth of the country. Ebisine (2013) viewed that, “a close look at Nigerian colleges of education indicates that, most of its certified products lacks acceptable level of competence in their area of specialization”. As a result of this, the society has been denied the maximum benefits that are to be derived from education through higher institutions of learning. If this scenario continuous unabated, then the challenge will become more compounded because the colleges of education in the country from which Nigerian expect to produce well trained teachers will continue to re-produce half-baked teachers and they will in turn produce half-baked students and the circle will continues at the detriment of national development.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to determine the awareness of quality assurance mechanisms among of business educators in colleges of education in north-east Nigeria for national development. Specifically, the study sought to determine the degree of awareness of quality assurance mechanisms by business educators in colleges of education in North East, Nigeria.

Research Question

What is the degree of awareness of business educators in colleges of education in North-East Nigeria on quality assurance?

Research Hypotheses

There is no statistical difference in the mean responses of business educators in federal colleges of education and state colleges of education on their awareness of quality assurance.

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study would be of benefits to the Government by enabling her through her agencies to take appropriate steps towards ensuring that business educators are periodically given in-house seminars and workshops on quality assurance in education. This will further help in keeping business educators abreast with the standard that is expected of them from the Government, Parents, Labor market and the society at large.

The study will be of benefit to students by exposing them to better conditions of teaching and learning as business educators sit up in their responsibilities thereby graduating qualified students that are employable either by self or labor market. This in turn will reduce drastically the rate of unemployment woes, improving the standard of living of the society, reducing youth restiveness etc.

Scope of the study



The study was delimited to colleges of education, and in North-east Nigeria only. The content coverage was awareness of quality assurance among business educators in north-east Nigeria for national development.

Method

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study, as the study sought responses from business educators on their awareness of quality assurance mechanisms. The population for the study consisted of all 180 business educators in colleges of education in North-east Nigeria. The cluster sampling technique was used to select 92 business educators in colleges of education in North East Nigeria. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire which consisted of 24 items on awareness of business educators on quality assurance, which elicited responses from the respondents. The researchers made use of two research assistants to administer copies of the questionnaire. The research assistants were only responsible for administering and retrieving of the questionnaire from the respondents. Ninety two (92) copies of the questionnaire were distributed but, 73 were collected after completion for analysis.

Results

Research question: What level of awareness do business educators have on quality assurance in colleges of education in North-east Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean ratings on the awareness of Business Educators on quality assurance in colleges of education in North-East Nigeria

S/No	Items	\bar{X}	SD	Rmk
1	Intended learning outcomes should be clearly written and disseminated to students;	3.41	.64	A
2	Students' learning is to be assessed using a variety of methods	3.49	.60	A
3	Students are to be informed in writing of the criteria for evaluation;	2.86	.75	A
4	Prompt feedback (written or oral) on all learning activities is supposed to be provided to students	3.16	.74	A
5	All assessment tools designed by the lecturer are to be reliable, transparent.	3.47	.69	A
6	Results of coursework is to be made known to the student before examination is written	3.16	.83	A
7	Schools are to establish transparent descriptions and goals for all academic programs.	3.47	.67	A
8	Schools and departments should be committed to ongoing monitoring of quality in their area of specializations; and I know what is expected of me as a lecturer	3.43	.64	A
9	The lecturer is expected to use a combination of two or more methods of teaching that match the students and the contents being taught.	3.39	.84	A
10	We are expected to team-teach our courses	2.73	.86	A
11	In supervising students project, the project committee should be involved in ensuring quality	3.31	.81	A



12	Student teacher ratio is should be 1:25	2.82	.94	A
13	To ensure quality enough laboratories and equipment for teaching skill courses should be provided	3.41	.62	A
14	The provision of spacious classes for lectures is important for conducive learning environment	3.49	.58	A
15	Counseling Centre with appropriate professionals, para-professionals, administrative/teaching staff with equipment should be in place in my school;	3.30	.68	A
16	School and Departmental libraries should have enough books to cover all the areas of the subject in the ratio of one student to ten books.	3.14	.97	A
17	The minimum of Master’s degree with teaching qualification is the requirement for appointment as a Lecturer in a College of Education.	2.78	.98	A
18	Examination questions should cover to a large extent the course contents.	3.31	.64	A
19	Lecturers are supposed to cover the course contents for their course before examination	3.23	.71	A
20	Marks should be awarded according to the right or wrong responses given	3.19	.87	A
21	Only students who are qualified should be given admission into the Colleges of Education	3.20	.91	A
22	Reasons for setting minimum academic standards in colleges of education is to ensure that no institution operates below the minimum prescribed standard	3.32	.72	A
23	Minimum standards are set so that graduates of colleges of education are adequately and sufficiently prepared for the world of work.	3.27	.76	A

Table 1 shows the mean ratings of respondents on the knowledge of business educators on quality assurance in colleges of education in North-East Nigeria. Items 1-24 recorded mean ratings and standard deviations ranging from 2.73-3.49 and 0.58 – 0.98 respectively, which are above the cut off mark of 2.5 thus indicating that all 24 items are knowledge expressed by Business Educators on quality assurance in colleges of education in North-East Nigeria.

Hypothesis

There is no statistical difference in the mean responses of business educators in federal and state colleges of education on awareness of quality assurance.

Table 2. Analysis of Variance test for the mean ratings of business educators on their awareness of quality assurance.

<i>Source of diff</i>	<i>Sum of Square</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>Mean square</i>	<i>F-ratio</i>	<i>P-Value (sig)</i>	<i>Rmk</i>
Between groups	.295	2	147	.563	.57	
Within groups	18.591	71	.262			NS
Total	18.886	73				



Table 2 presents the summary of Analysis of Variance test of the responses of business educators in federal and state colleges of education on their awareness of quality assurance. The table reveals an f-ratio of .563 with a P- value of 0.57 at 73 degree of freedom, which is above 0.05 indicating that there is no significance difference in the mean responses of the business educators in federal and state colleges of education on their awareness of quality assurance. Therefore, hypothesis is accepted.

Discussion of Results

Results displayed in table one are the analysis for research question one, which sought to find out the awareness of business educators in colleges of education in North-East Nigeria on quality assurance. The mean responses and standard deviation displayed ranged from 2.73-3.49 and 0.58-0.98 respectively which were above the cut off mark of 2.5 indicating that, most of the business educators in colleges of education in North-East Nigeria are aware of quality assurance mechanisms put in place and standards expected of them. But, a closer look at the mean ratings indicated that, there were some mechanisms involved in quality assurance that are enshrined into the NCCE minimum standard that some lecturers are not aware of. These are; “the fact that students need to be informed of the criteria the teacher uses for evaluation”, this item had a mean rating of 2.86 and S.D of .75. Another item that had low mean rating was team teaching handled by business educators. This had a mean of 2.73 and S.D. .86 and student teacher ratio being 1:25. All these items are clearly stated in the NCCE minimum standard for every business educator to note and imbibe.

Conclusion

The study concludes that, the larger number of business educators in colleges of education in North-East Nigeria are aware of the quality expected of them as written in NCCE minimum standard. However, there are some few others who do not know the indicators of quality as stipulated by NCCE minimum standard and ignorance of these indicators have the ability to reduce standards in business education programme in North East Nigeria. No one quality assurance component is negligible. All are important and needful.

Recommendations

1. Government and relevant agencies should periodically organize in-house seminars and workshops for business educators on quality assurance in colleges of education for national development.
2. Quality supervision of business education programme should be regularly carried out by the school authorities.
3. All stakeholders and institutions should put up concerted effort in ensuring quality in education.



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