



Quality Assurance In The Management Of Nigeria University Education

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ABSTRACT

This paper examined quality assurance in the management of Nigeria university education. It gave a background of the current situation of Nigeria university education and its need for quality assurance. The paper also revealed the several challenges facing quality assurance in the university education. The study adopted a descriptive survey design with population comprising all the lecturers in two public universities in Rivers State (i.e. University of Port Harcourt and Rivers State University). The researcher employed random sampling technique to draw respondents (lecturers) for the study. Two research questions were answered. The research instrument for this study was titled: 'Quality Assurance in the Management of University Education Questionnaire' (QAMUEQ). The reliability of the instrument was established through the Cronbach alpha method; which produced a reliability coefficient of 0.74. The data obtained was analyzed using mean and standard deviation. The findings of the study showed that the respondents (i.e. lecturers) agreed to the fact that challenges of quality assurance in the management of Nigeria university education includes: Inadequate funding, frequent labour disputes and closures of universities, lack of information communication technology facilities, poor policy implementation, inadequate/poor quality of teaching staff, poor leadership and brain drain.; respondents also agreed that the strategies for quality assurance in management of Nigeria university education include effective records management system, instructional supervision, facility inspection, monitoring, staff quality control, implementation of minimum academic standard, students support and mentoring services, equitable disbursement of funds, etc. Among others, it was recommended that effective supervision of activities within the tertiary institutions should be enforced in order to attain quality assurance in tertiary institutions.

Keywords: Quality, Quality Assurance, Management, University Education.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of establishing the school as an institution is to ensure that effective learning and teaching takes place. Learning plays a pivotal role in the all-round development of an individual and the school is purposefully organized to facilitate effective teaching and learning process by eliminating aversive stimuli in the environment and increasing satisfying stimuli (Ezewu, cited in Eriega, 2013), but where this is lacking it becomes a big challenge to the school itself and the society at large. There is the common phrase we now hear around the circles of university students and some persons in the society and that is: 'las las school na scam.' This phrase captures the ugly condition of university education lately; and explains the unserious attitude and behavior of students towards it especially, in public schools. The students argue that the schools just extort money from them without making any significant

good on their offer. For instance, some schools course content or lecturers give outdated information and extort more money through sales of textbooks and some even take bribe to grade students good. Also, in some universities learning facilities are either non-functional or inadequate, learning environment is not conducive, teaching staff are too few and over labored, there is poor or no retention of outstanding students, good students are unemployed etc. Yet, the number of undergraduate and PG admissions and graduation keep soaring without improvement to the quality of the education system. This is crystal clear and has become the story of our university education lately, plagued with several issues of quality assurance.

In relation to educational institutions, quality refers to a measure of how good or bad the products of higher institutions (particularly university products in Nigeria) are in terms of academic performance and meeting globally established standards. That is the ability of universities to conform to established standards and appropriateness, and the availability of imputes to meet the needs of the society for which it was established (Alaka & Obadara, 2013). This sets the background for meaning of quality assurance. Therefore, quality assurance has been variously defined making it a multidimensional process of arriving at established standards that culminate in fitness of purpose. Be that as it may, Kpolovie (2013) described quality assurance as “a process centred approach for certifying that an organization is providing the best possible products or services; it focuses on enhancing and maintaining the processes that are used to create the end result, rather than focusing on the result itself”. It is the process of maintaining standards in products and services by testing the sample in order to ascertain that it meets required standards (Ramson-Yusuf cited in Asiyai, 2013).

However, quality assurance in education is a mechanism for ensuring that education received by individuals is for efficiency, for use by the society and for developing inner self (Audu, 2005). Okebukola (2010) opined that quality assurance is an umbrella term that embraces a spectrum of activities that are intended to improve the quality of inputs, process and outputs of the higher education system. Quality assurance in the university system implies the ability of the institutions to meet the expectations of the users of manpower in respect to the quality of skills acquired by their outputs. Kisailowska (2002) noted that quality assurance principles are a certain form of naming and ordering the actions that are necessary for assuring the quality, for instance of teaching, it is internally measured and evaluated at a given university, and also externally, during an accreditation process. As a result of this, quality assurance principles are to be used as indicators to ensure compliance.

It is noteworthy that quality assurance principles regulate both the external and internal activities of an educational institution. The Nigerian Universities Commission (NUC) is saddled with the responsibility of achieving quality in university education through its accreditation of academic programmes and course content and admission amongst others. When quality education is delivered high enough to meet set standards, the products of education should be able to perform well in the world of work and in real life situations.

Statement of Problem

Looking at the world ranking of universities today, one will attest to the fact that the university system in Nigeria has almost become a shadow of itself, as academics and veteran ask what has happened to the good old days of university education in Nigeria. During the inception of universities in Nigeria, like University College Ibadan in 1948, tertiary education was held in high esteem due to the ability of students to perform excellently in scholastic tasks, they had conducive learning environment and boosted of staff man power in the world of work. The graduates of those days had high moral standards and contributed to the development of society through efficiency in the labour market, community service and exuding values that

society held in high esteem. Staff of universities were adequate with a good knowledge of the subject matter, they took their work seriously and were eager to motivate students towards achieving excellence; these teachers believed that teaching was a God-ordained vocation.

More so, during this period, opportunities for employment abound for Nigerian graduates from Technical colleges and universities. It was a period when companies and public establishments were hunting for people to give jobs, employers went to colleges and NYSC orientation camps to seek for employees. In fact, it was the case that each recent graduate had at least three jobs from which to choose. It can be said then, that “if you have a degree then you have a job but, if you didn’t have job then you didn’t want one.” This was so because education which is a process of acquiring knowledge, skills and other capabilities was the fulcrum of national development and international competitiveness (National Board for Technical education, NBTE, 2011). Today, the case is difference as many school environments are characterized with inadequate class rooms, dilapidated buildings, absence of modern instructional materials, shortage of teachers and government insensitivity to the plight of the educational system in its entirety. It is against this backdrop that this paper attempts to explore the topic “Quality assurance in the management of Nigeria university education.”

Purpose of the Study

The aim of this study is to quality assurance in the management of university education in Nigeria. Specifically, the objectives of the study sought to:

1. Identify the challenges of quality assurance in the management of Nigeria university education.
2. Ascertain the strategies for quality assurance in management of Nigeria university education.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What are the challenges of quality assurance in the management of Nigeria university education?
2. What are the strategies for quality assurance in management of Nigeria university education?

Research Hypotheses

H0₁. There is no significant difference between mean score rating of federal and state university lecturers on the challenges of quality assurance in the management of Nigeria university education.

H0₂. There is no significant difference between mean score rating of male and female universities lecturers on the strategies for quality assurance in the management of Nigeria university.

METHODOLOGY

Descriptive survey design was employed in the study. The study sought the opinion of university lecturers on the quality assurance in the management of Nigeria university education. The population of this study was made up of two (2) public universities (i.e. one federal and one state) in Rivers State which are University of Port Harcourt (UPH) comprising twelve (12) faculties with one thousand four hundred and seventy-two (1472) lecturers (1151 males and 321 females) and Rivers State University (RSU) comprising seven (7) faculties with six hundred and seventy four (674) lecturers (391 males and 203 females) The total numbers of respondents were two thousand one hundred and forty-six academic staff (2146) from two (2) public universities under study.

The sample size for this study was two hundred and fifty-nine (214) representing 10% of the entire population of academic staff of the public universities. Kpee (2015) considered such percentage appropriate to serve as an acceptable sample for a population running into thousands. The sample size comprised of 141 male and 73 female academic staff drawn using the proportionate stratified random sampling technique. This ensured that all members of the population are given equal opportunity of being selected. The instrument used titled 'Quality Assurance in the Management of University Education Questionnaire' (QAMUEQ). The instrument was structured with a four point modified Likert rating scale of Strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly disagree (SD) to elicit information from the respondents, and was validated. Using test-retest method, the reliability test was calculated with Person's Product Moment Correlation, which yielded an index of 0.74. Mean scores and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, and z-test to test the hypotheses at 0.05 alpha significant level.

RESULTS

The results of the analysed data for each research questions and its corresponding hypothesis are presented on tables.

Research Question 1: What are the challenges of quality assurance in the management of Nigeria university education?

Table 1: The challenges of quality assurance in the management of university education

| S/No | Items | Mean | SD | Decision |
|------|---|---------------------------|-----|----------|
| 1. | Inadequate funding | 2.64 | .98 | Agreed |
| 2. | Frequent labour disputes and closures of universities | 2.52 | .97 | Agreed |
| 3. | Lack of information communication technology facilities | 2.67 | .93 | Agreed |
| 4. | Poor policy implementation | 2.93 | .81 | Agreed |
| 5. | Inadequate/poor quality of teaching staff. | 2.61 | .83 | Agreed |
| 6. | Poor leadership | 2.61 | .90 | Agreed |
| 7. | Brain drain | 2.62 | .84 | Agreed |
| | Criterion Mean (x) = 2.50 | Average Mean= 2.66 | | |

Note: In the above table, the decision of "Disagreed" means that the respondents did not agree with the item statement (which is below the criterion mean of 2.50) while "Agreed" means that the respondents agree with the item statement (which is above the criterion mean of 2.5).

Therefore, based on the Grand mean of 2.66 which is above the criterion mean of 2.50, it was observed from Table 1, that all the items were accepted, showing that respondents (i.e. lectures) agreed to the fact that challenges of quality assurance in the management of Nigeria university education includes; Inadequate funding, frequent labour disputes and closures of universities, lack of information communication technology facilities, poor policy implementation, inadequate/poor quality of teaching staff, poor leadership and brain drain.

Research Question 2: What are the strategies for quality assurance in management of Nigeria university education?

Table 2: The strategies for quality assurance in management of university education

| S/No | Items | Mean | SD | Decision |
|------|---|---------------------------|-----|----------|
| 7. | Effective records management system. | 3.16 | .86 | Agreed |
| 8. | Instructional supervision | 3.06 | .85 | Agreed |
| 9. | Facility inspection | 2.89 | .86 | Agreed |
| 10. | Monitoring | 3.20 | .70 | Agreed |
| 11. | Staff quality control | 2.67 | .94 | Agreed |
| 12. | Implementation of minimum academic standard | 3.09 | .84 | Agreed |
| 13. | Students support and mentoring services | 2.66 | .97 | Agreed |
| 14. | Equitable disbursement of funds | 2.91 | .89 | Agreed |
| 15. | Provision of quality school equipment | 2.98 | .92 | Agreed |
| 16. | Encouragement of private sector participation | 3.40 | .84 | Agreed |
| 17. | Review of school curriculum | 3.49 | .67 | Agreed |
| 18. | Evaluation | 3.60 | .63 | Agreed |
| | Criterion Mean(X) = 2.50 | Average Mean= 3.36 | | |

Results from table 2 shows that the Grand mean of 3.36 is far above criterion mean of 2.50, and it was observed from the result that all the items were accepted, showing that the lecturers generally agree to the above stated strategies for quality assurance in management of Nigeria university education. They include; effective records management system, instructional supervision, facility inspection, monitoring, staff quality control, implementation of minimum academic standard, students support and mentoring services, equitable disbursement of funds, provision of quality school equipment, encouragement of private sector participation, review of school curriculum and evaluation.

Test of Hypotheses

Ho₁: There is no significant difference between mean score rating of federal and state university lecturers on the challenges of quality assurance in the management of Nigeria university education.

Table 3: z-test Analysis on the Difference between the Mean Scores of Federal and State university lecturers on the challenges of quality assurance in the management of Nigeria university education

| | GROUP | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Df | Zcal | Zcrit | Sig. (2-tailed) | Level of Sig. | Decision |
|---------------------------------|----------------|-----|------|----------------|-----|-------|--------|-----------------|---------------|--------------------------|
| Challenges of Quality Assurance | Federal | 147 | 3.16 | 0.86 | 2 | 0.561 | ±1.960 | 0.290 | 0.05 | Ho ₁ Accepted |
| | State | 67 | 3.09 | 0.84 | 212 | | | | | |
| TOTAL | | 214 | | | 214 | | | | | |

Table 3 showed that federal lecturers have mean and standard deviation scores of 3.16 and 0.86 while state lecturers have mean and standard deviation scores of 3.09 and 0.84 respectively. With a degree of freedom of 212 at an alpha level of 0.05, the calculated z-value of 0.561 is lesser than the critical z-value of 1.960. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted. By implications, there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of federal and state university lecturers on the challenges of quality assurance in the management of Nigeria university education.

HO₂. There is no significant difference between mean score rating of male and female universities lecturers on the strategies for quality assurance in the management of Nigeria university education.

Table 4: z-test Analysis on the Difference in the Mean Scores of male and female lecturers on the strategies for quality assurance in the management of Nigeria university education

| | GROUP | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Df | Zcal | Zcrit | Sig. (2-tailed) | Level of Sig. | Decision |
|----------------------------------|---------------|-----|------|----------------|-----|-------|--------|-----------------|---------------|----------|
| Strategies for quality assurance | Male | 141 | 2.64 | 0.98 | 2 | 0.955 | ±1.960 | 0.290 | 0.05 | H01 |
| | Female | 73 | 2.52 | 0.81 | 212 | | | | | Accepted |
| TOTAL | | 243 | | | 214 | | | | | |

Table 4 showed male lecturers have mean and standard deviation scores of 2.64 and 0.98 while female lecturers have mean and standard deviation scores of 2.52 and 0.81 respectively. With a degree of freedom of 241 at an alpha level of 0.05, the calculated z-value of 0.955 is lesser than the critical z-value of 1.960. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted. By implications, there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female lecturers on the strategies for quality assurance in the management of Nigeria university education.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study revealed that the challenges of quality assurance in the management of Nigeria university education include; Inadequate funding, frequent labour disputes and closures of universities, lack of information communication technology facilities, poor policy implementation, inadequate/poor quality of teaching staff, poor leadership and brain drain. The test of hypothesis one showed that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of federal and state university lecturers on the challenges of quality assurance in the management of university education in Nigeria. In line with the finding, Ukeje, (1996) rightly point out that without adequate number of inspiring, well-informed teachers, fully prepared to meet their responsibilities in our schools, we cannot have good education and without good education, we cannot hope for long to meet successfully, the challenges of a changing world. The few available lecturers are seriously overworked. Where there is inadequate teaching staff and poor quality of lecturers, the attainment of good quality in higher education will be difficult.

The findings also revealed that, the strategies for quality assurance in management of university Nigeria education. They include; effective records management system, instructional supervision, facility inspection, monitoring, staff quality control, implementation of minimum academic standard, students support and mentoring services, equitable disbursement of funds, provision of quality school equipment, encouragement of private sector participation, review of school curriculum and evaluation. The test of hypothesis two showed that, there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female lecturers on the strategies for quality assurance in the management of university education in Nigeria. In agreement with the findings, Oduma (2013) noted that in the pursuit of quality assurance in the education system the following strategies may be viewed as pertinent. They include: review of school curriculum, monitoring, instructional supervision, facility inspection, staff quality control, implementation of minimum academic standard, students support and mentoring services, equitable disbursement of fund, provision of quality school equipment and supplies, encouragement of private sector participation and evaluation.

CONCLUSION

The quality of tertiary education reflects in the performance and competence of its products; those that have acquired education through it such as its graduates. It is no doubt that the

situation of university education in Nigeria is faced with diverse challenges and has fallen below the standards and objectives on which it was built. Therefore, for restoration and sustainability of quality education in Nigerian university, a robust quality assurance model is needed to ensure internal and external evaluation and decision making of the entire learning process.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following measures have been recommended for the sustenance of standards in Nigerian universities:

- Tertiary institutions should carryout Strategic Planning of Programmes using Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis.
- Availability of adequate and competent human resource in the university system. Employment of academic personnel into tertiary institutions should be through merit and not *god fatherism*.
- Effective supervision of activities within the tertiary institutions should be enforced in order to attain quality assurance in tertiary institutions.
- Use of educational technologies with a view to increasing the efficiency of teaching.
- New research and development to invigorate all educational activities.
- Provide guidance and counseling services to improve students' life and experiences.
- Positive attitudinal change on the part of government, school administrators and management, lecturers and of course the students. The governments, school administrators, teachers and students need to be committed and dedicated to the core objectives of the educational system.
- Modification of curriculum in tertiary institutions to meet the changing needs of the industries and for global relevance
- The National University Commission (NUC) should be apt and thorough in accreditation of tertiary institution and their programmes.

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