



Impacts of Quality Assurance In Managing Education In Nigerian Schools

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ABSTRACT

Overpopulation, poor quality facilities, inadequate staff, lack of thorough supervision, lack of update of researches are in existence as a result of poor education and thus led to the low quality of education. Quality education is the desire of every nation and the bedrock of sustainable development and as such, this paper tend to discuss the impact of quality assurance in managing education in Nigerian schools by paying attention to how it can be promoted, relevant quality and quantity wise, and responsive to the need of the society. In recent times, quality education was brought to focus owing to the neglect and mass production of educated people without regards to set standard, procedure and process in education. The importance of quality assurance in the educational sector as initiated by Common Wealth of Learning is not without many daunting challenges. This paper assesses, and reviews related issues which include management of education system, quality assurance, and impacts of quality assurance in Nigerian educational system and finally recommendations were made that quality assurance instrument and scoring guide should be provided, adequate funding of schools, accreditation of courses for teachers, inclusion of ICTs, provision of educational materials and special allowance for teachers.

Keywords: Quality, Control, Quality Assurance, Education, Management, Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

Quality education is the right of every citizen that may be granted or withheld by whosoever is in charge. Quality education can be achieved when all the needed factors such as the teachers, the learning environment and the students are in place. Many times, limitations in terms of growth and global competitiveness are being propelled by the operations and output of the educational system and this has been traced to the quality of teaching and learning in schools. It has equally been observed that teaching and learning have declined due to ineffective and inefficient monitoring, evaluation, inspection and supervision (UNESCO, 2000). One major trend in the development of education in many countries especially in Nigeria is the effort being made to introduce a reform in the inspectorate system. The responsibility for school inspection and supervision was seen as that of external in actions and quite often, inspection and supervision were seen as synonymous. However, it has now been realized that they are not only different, but also inspection visit by external actors alone however frequent are not enough for the achievement of the objectives of school inspection (UNESCO, 2000). According to Act 16 of 1985 (FGN), quality standards in education have been the responsibility of the Minister of Education which he executes through the Federal Inspectorate Services, carry out her functions through various forms of inspections of schools. It also provides national guidelines for inspection, accreditation of schools and support states to develop their own inspectorate services. The deficiencies and weaknesses which have

been found to be a clog in the wheel of the inspectorate services elsewhere are presently quite evident in Nigeria. For example, it has been observed that there are no uniform standard expression guidelines for formal and non-formal institutions nationwide. All along, different states and federal inspectorate services have been using different instruments for school inspection leading to incongruence in inspection departments while in others, they exist only in name and the country has continued to rely mainly on the Federal Inspectorate Service to provide leadership in the area of school inspections. In practice, the responsibility of monitoring and evaluation of schools was seen as that of people outside the school, and quite often limited to inspectors alone. However, it has been realized that monitoring and evaluation cannot be left to external agents alone no matter how frequent they are done as the opinion of other stakeholders like teachers, pupils and parents are relevant. Moreover, the top down approach to the formulation and application of inspection policies tended to create friction between evaluators and teachers. This makes schools receive the recommendations from evaluations with some degree of apathy and a feeling of helplessness. In addition, the general clamour for an improvement in the quality and standard of education can no longer be ignored (WestBurham, 1994). The Federal Inspectorate Service has continued to cling to the inspection methodologies it copied from the United Kingdom (UK) model, fondly called Her Majesties Inspectorate whereas this system has been undergoing fundamental changes since 1980s. Thus, the Nigerian inspection practice has continued to be characterized by the traditional inspections. Useful as these efforts are, they have failed to stop or even slow down the rapid wearing down in the quality of education offered in schools. However, owing to the constant neglect in recent time by successive government to the educational sector, there have been rapid increase in the establishment of private schools and institutions in Nigeria which has adversely affected the quality of education and in turn, retarding the development of nation.

The educational system in Nigeria is expanding at a very fast rate and so do the problems of its planning, administration, monitoring and control. Okemakinde and Okemakinde, (2006) interestingly say it becomes vital for the management section of education to be in charge of the quality assurance unit of schools for the achievement of the sustainable goals. Education will continue to be highly rated in the national development plans because it is the most important instrument of change in the intellectual and social outlook of any society. Ebong and Efue (2005) perceive quality as a standard against which to measure performance or actions. Quality has to do with comparison, measurement and degree of conformity to standards. Consequently, it helps to improve productivity, competitive edge and position, knowledge and power, and reduces wastage and cost. Quality education is a multi-dimensional concept which embraces all functions and activities such as teaching, and academic programmes, research and scholarship, staffing, students, building facilities, equipment, services to the community and academic environment (Onuh, 2007). In Nigeria, the national policy on education spells out the nature and purpose of education thus: instrument per excellence for affecting national development, to use education to level its national objective, to make education relevant to the need of the individual, to set its goal in terms of the needs of society desired in relation to the environment and relatives of the modern world, and rapid social change (FRN, 2014). In order to ensure that educational programmes meet up the national objectives, the FRN (2013) section 1; sub-section 8 states that the quality of instruction at all levels of Nigerian educational system should be oriented towards inculcating the following values: respect for the worth and dignity of the individuals; faith in man's ability to make rational decision; moral and spiritual principles in inter-personal and human relations; shared the responsibility for the common good of the society: promotion of the physical, emotional and psychological development of all children and acquisitions of competencies necessary for self-reliance.

The Concepts of Quality, Quality Control and Quality Assurance

Quality is defined as conformance to requirements (Crosby, 1979). In other words, quality is conformity to established standards. The British Standards Institute defines quality as the totality of features and characteristics of a product or service that bear on its ability to satisfy needs (Babalola, Adedeji, and Erwat, 2007). Adegbesan (2011) describes quality control as a means of establishing quality assurance. Okojie (2013) noticed that most organization use quality control and assurance

interchangeably; when quality assurance inspects the process then quality control takes a lead over the process and the end product. Quality assurance, therefore, refers to deliberate, evidence based strategies and processes of satisfying quality expectations based on the processes, environment and products (Okebukola, 2010; Okojie, 2013). Quality assurance is often used interchangeably with quality control to refer to ways of ensuring the quality of service. It is a wider concept that covers all policies and systematic activities implemented within a quality system. Quality assurance is a process-driven approach that facilitates and defines goals regarding a particular product. It is a term that is used by all works of life and used in different contexts. It means different things to different groups of people but for the purpose of this paper the word quality assurance would be within the educational context. Centrex (2004) opined that quality assurance is the means by which an organization confirms that conditions are in place for students to achieve the standard set by the training organization. Quality of education is often considered an indefinable construct and at best abstract. Adegbesan (2011) points out that product in education is different from product in industry since the latter is a definable and tangible item (output) manufactured according to specifications. However, the fact that even the uneducated lament the poor quality of education is an indication that there must be something tangible with which to assess the quality of education. Therefore, quality education, according to Mosha (1986) is measured by the extent to which the training received from an institution enables the recipient to think clearly, independently and analytically to solve relevant societal problems in any given environment meaning that the quality of education is equal to the quality of teachers. A more holistic perspective of education quality is that offered by Maduwesi (2005) who sees educational quality as summarizing learning content, how learning is organized and managed, what goes on in the learning environment and the outcome of learning. Furthermore, Ciwar (2005) believes an index of quality is the admission policy and that other indices include supervision, quality of teachers and facilities, course content and quality of exam items also indicate quality. Quality assurance is a total, holistic term, which is directed toward education as an entity, concerned with ensuring the integrity of outcomes. It entails the supplier and consumer and the various activities put in place to produce quality products and services (Mkpandiok, 2007). The general meaning of quality assurance is very applicable to the production of functional teachers. It is the management of goods, services and activities from the input stage, through processes, to the output stage of production (Onocha, 2002). Ajayi and Adegbesan (2007) argue that, quality assurance is related to accountability both of which are concerned with maximizing the effectiveness and efficiency of educational systems and services in relation to their contexts, of their missions and their stated objectives. In his own definitions, Ehindero (2004) says quality assurance focused on the following: i. Learner's entry behaviour, characteristics and attributes including some demographic factors that can inhibit or facilitate their learning. ii. The teacher entry qualification, values pedagogic stalls, professional preparedness, subject background, philosophical orientation, iii. The teaching/learning processes including the structure of the curriculum and learning environment. iv. The outcomes, which are defined for different levels in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes including appropriate and relevant instruments to assess these objectives. Fadokun (2005) sees 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 their existence and use, and together with quality control activities, ensure that appropriate academic standards are being maintained and enhanced in and by each programme. Quality assurance aims at preventing quality problems and ensuring that only conforming products reach the customer. The characteristics of an effective quality assurance mechanism are periodic audit of the operation of the system; periodic review of the system to ensure it meets changing requirements. Quality assurance recognizes the autonomy of organizations and seeks to enhance their capacity to operate in a responsive way. Three approaches to the definition of quality would be used and these are the reputational approach, the outcomes approach and the total quality approach. The reputational approach sees quality as exceptional and it is seen as exclusive. It is something that some have at the exclusion of others. It is distinctive and intuitive recognizable. This approach regards quality as excellence, it is a standard attained in our education sector; the outcomes approach regards quality as efficient production, there are no absolute standards but specifications, the quality of a product is measured by the extent to which it meets

customer's specifications. This approach is more related to practices in industry while the total quality approach is seen as value added to the abilities of students who have passed through the system regardless of their ability levels. These are different views of quality however, one can accept quality with regard to the output of teacher education as the level of excellence in performance on the strength of the quality of the context, inputs, process transaction and output (Onocha, 2002). This shows that to attain or assure quality in output, a lot quality inputs and processes would have been made. Quality in output does not come by chance. It requires carefully planned and deliberate efforts. Quality assurance, in its broad sense, is any action taken to prevent quality problems from occurring. In practice, this means devising systems for carrying out tasks which directly affect product quality. A simple example of quality assurance is a well prepared lesson plan. A lesson plan is a detailed description of the course of instruction for a particular class. A daily lesson plan developed by a teacher to guide class activity or instruction and it is drawn from the scheme of work. It describes all that are necessary to deliver the lesson, the entry behavior, specific behavioural objectives, instructional materials, references, steps taken to teach. Adequate lesson preparation produces better and more consistent results.

Education Quality Assurance in Nigeria is a paradigm shift from the former practice of school inspection to a monitoring and evaluating process that provides a new operative mode of evaluation. These innovations in inspection activities go under terminologies as: whole school evaluation, school self-evaluation or self-review. All aim at producing a good school or an effective school. What then is a good school? It is a school which knows what its standard should be, asks itself whether it has attained them, and if not where it has reached on the scale and what it should do to close the gap. It is a school whose head has a well-articulated plan of what the school should be doing and who also motivates the pupils, staff, parents, the community and the proprietor to join hands in reaching the goals. In fact, this kind of collaboration should be the driving force of the innovation.

Concept of Management

Different opinions and interpretations have been given to the meaning of management. Mullins (1999) observed that management is a generic term and it is subject to many interpretations. Okunlola (2001) while corroborating Mullin's observation expatiated further by asserting that while some people see management as implying a group of individual in an organization, others believe that it is rather a process that demands the performance of specific functions. Also, to students, management is a pure academic discipline, thus people study the art of management science. Management can be defined from two perspectives as an entity is conceived of as a group of people that constitute members of the top executive of an organization such as the management team in a typical College of Education in Nigeria consists of the Provost, Deputy Provost, the Registrar, the Bursar and the Librarian; and as an activity, management is seen as the process of getting things done through the cooperative effort of other people with the performance of certain functions. Scholars, authors and experts in the field of management however, normally emphasize management as an activity when it comes to definition. Cole (1986) defined management as a process which enables an organization to achieve its objectives by planning, organizing and controlling their resources including gaining the commitment of their employees. In similar views, Gordon, Monday, Staplin and Premeaux (1990) submitted that management is the process of getting things done through the efforts of other people, while according to Oladejo and Ige (2004), it is the process of achieving the organizational goals through the guidance and cooperative efforts of other people in the organization, carried out by performing planning, organizing, controlling and coordination function.

Concept of Education

Education is a tool for nation building and teachers are the drivers of education in all spheres of life, be it capacity building, training and retraining programme therefore, it is very important to take the quality assurance of teachers in schools seriously. Education of teachers is not only responsible for the improvement of school education but also for preparing well qualified teachers who are professionally competent committed, resourceful, confidence and reproductive to meet the demand of the society. Therefore, a high quality teacher must be able to acquire occupational skill and competence to deal with

various situation and team work and in the development of one's personality and inability to act with greater autonomy, judgement and personal responsibility. Generally, for education to be worthwhile it must be able to produce a refined mind, body and soul. Okobiah (2007), sees education as the vital transformation tool, and the fulcrum around which the economic growth of the individual and the entire nation revolve. Every society irrespective of its simplicity or complexity has a way of transmitting its valued culture formally, non-formally or informally from one generation to another, that is, the process by which the traditions and culture of a society are passed on from one generation to the other, from the older to the younger ones which takes different forms of education.

Origin of Quality Assurance

Quality is seen as the basic and primary commitment of any organization, particularly educational organization. The Minister of Education was empowered to maintain standards, and quality of education in the country in line with the National Minimum Standards on Education and Establishment of Institutions Act 16 of 1985 in conjunction with the 1999 constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria. This function was carried out by setting minimum standards, maintaining and constantly improving all schools in the Federation. In an attempt to achieve uniform standards, the Federal Ministry of Education delegated the task to the Federal Inspectorate Service department but not legally backed up by legislation to cover all schools. This is seen as a major shortcoming which was rectified through the Act 16 of 1985 as amended to provide adequate legal backing for ensuring quality assurance at elementary and post-elementary education levels. Alaba (2010) emphasized that the Amendment Act provided the opportunity for quality assurance in Nigeria education to shift from the old system of school inspection to constant and continuous monitoring accompanied with new operative mode of evaluation. He equally identified eight (8) components of quality standards as highlighted by the National Educational Quality Assurance Policy:

- Learners Welfare and Participation;
- Learners Achievement and Standards;
- Care guidance and Support;
- Leadership and Management;
- School Community Relationship;
- Learning Environment;
- Teaching and Learning;
- Curriculum and other activities.

Impacts of Quality Assurance in Managing Education in Nigerian Schools

Educators have long acknowledged the significant impacts of quality assurance in education. The quality of education provided in every country determines the wealth and treasure of such country and therefore all over the world, education is conceived to be the vital instrument through which every nation could attain development in all ramification. UNESCO (2003) reasoned that the processes of systematic and ongoing innovation and qualitative reforms of education as well as those required for learning to live together need the proactive support of teachers and trainers and are doom to fail if they are not able to find it. Thus, to reposition education to play a beneficial role in societies, the importance or the roles of quality assurance should be adhered to. UNESCO (2005) stated some of the roles of quality assurance in education to be to ensure that: standards are set in order to guarantee a minimum quality for every aspect of the educational programmes; facilities correspond with latest requirements and technologies available in sufficient numbers and well-maintained; the value and success of educational programme is achieved; a strong link between the curricular and the needs of the labour market are established through close interaction; with the results that graduates are most likely to find suitable employment as this will help to lower unemployment rates; the delivery methods allow for a maximum learning effect; higher status are improved upon; attractiveness in the educational programme is guaranteed; the learner benefits from sufficient practical and theoretical elements through the training; educational system developed in ways that allow enough flexibility for the individual to move from one educational thread to another; and that

teaching and training staffs are well qualified, knowledgeable about the world of work and available insufficient numbers.

CONCLUSION

Education is a weapon for acquiring skills, relevant knowledge and habits for surviving in the changing world. Since the essence of education is to make an individual useful and succeed, there must be quality assurance monitoring and evaluation carried out on a regular basis in order to sustain and improve the quality of our educational system. A shift from the traditional view of quality control to modern and revolutionary quality assurance in the system of education in Nigeria offers the opportunity for close and continuous monitoring of the educational programme, a sure need to enhance school effectiveness and wastage minimization. In order to evaluate the efficiency and appropriateness of teaching and learning in schools so as to ensure the delivery of high quality education and ascertain whether the stated objectives are achievable try quality assurance managers who would also help to make amends in the areas where there seems to be shortcomings. Quality assurance deals with the proactive or preventive means of ensuring quality inputs, teaching-learning process, the outcome and the academic achievements of student. Quality assurance aimed at getting things done right at the first time and every time. It is also a holistic method of identifying and resolving problems within the educational system in order to ensure continuous quality improvement. The need to enhance education quality in all levels of education in Nigeria becomes necessary in the sense that education has been seen as the single best development investment a nation can pursue and achieved through quality assurance monitoring and evaluation carried out on a regular basis to maximize the use of limited educational resources for desirable and specific goal attainment. Assurance for quality education must never be toyed with because it is a total and entire process concerned with credibility and integrity of products.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made amongst others that:

1. Quality assurance (accreditation) instruments and scoring guide developed for teacher education should be done continuously to monitor an institution's curriculum inputs, processes and products in order to help in rating the level of achievement of the intended target of educational programmes.
2. Quality assurance model should be adopted like Total Quality Management (TQM) to improve quality in all our educational system.
3. Government should make adequate provision to fund schools to enable smooth running of the school activities and to support implementation of programmes.
4. Government should ensure that every teacher possess enviable and mouldable qualities to achieve the maximum standards.
5. Provision of facilities like electronic library and ICTs should be made compulsory for the accreditation of teacher education institutions
6. There should be provision of educational materials like textbooks in all subjects for better understanding
7. Special allowance should be given to teachers which will serve as motivation and can equally serve as a strategy of payment of inducement allowance to teachers serving in areas with difficult terrain.
8. Re-introduce institutions responsible for the training of non-professional tertiary teachers.
9. Every class, up to junior secondary to be taught by a qualified and competent teacher with a minimum of Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE), and minimum of a first degree in relevant subject(s) in the senior secondary school.
10. Every learner should be continuously assessed to ensure that sufficient progress is being made.
11. Every school should have a school development plan which is based on rigorous self-evaluation and spells out the areas for improvement.
12. Research into new teachers' education technologies to ensure increase in teacher's efficiency.

13. Government is to give support to teachers for greater improvement in the pedagogical skills.
14. The school is to provide a safe working and learning environment for learners and teachers.

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