

Quality Assurance of Business Education Programme in Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This paper discussed the concept of business education programme and the need for quality assurance in tertiary institutions. It examined the important roles of NUC, NCCE and TRCN in assuring quality in business education programme in Nigeria.

Design/methodology/approach: This paper focused on the underlined heading as follows: objectives of business education, needs for business education ,quality assurance measuring parameters, constraints of quality assurance in business education such as; inadequate funding; staff recruitment; inadequate teaching and learning materials , control measures of quality assurance in business education, current efforts of ensuring quality in business education in Nigeria were discussed.

Findings: On this note, it was recommended that Business Education curriculum should be revisited and tailored towards equipping for self-employment, among others. Therefore, cooperation and collaboration among Business Education's stakeholders are needed in an attempt to achieve the stated objectives in Business Education by providing ample and proper modern facilities in tertiary institutions. Also, accreditation teams should be selected based on their integrity and not who you know, by this institutions will comply to put in place all the needful in order to be accredited.

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I. INTRODUCTION

There is no doubt that education is the bedrock of every society and one of the tools for building a country. In order to achieve higher quality education, the key players in the sector, that is teachers, the students, as well as the environment must work harmoniously. Education in Nigeria today centre around the quality of education imparted to the citizenry and the relevance of that education to the individual in particular and the whole country at large, which is why attention is increasingly focused on the quality of existing teachers with greater emphasis on potential teachers. This is so because nothing can be as important to learning as the quality of teachers in training. Educational institutions perform significant functions of providing learning experiences to lead their students from the darkness of ignorance to the light of knowledge. It is well known that the quality and extent of learning achievement are determined primarily by the teacher competence, sensitivity and teacher motivation.

Business education is an educational process of which its main goal is to prepare people for the field of work. It would make anyone who goes through this field of study to become capable employees, employers or self-employed individual who managed self-business enterprise.

In Nigeria today, business education subjects are offered in both junior and senior secondary school levels to impact vocational skills. Therefore, it is expected that the teachers in training will have to acquire all the necessary skills required to impact the students correctly.

In tertiary institutions, business education encompasses training in marketing, accounting, office technology and management, entrepreneurship, banking and finance, business administration and some other relevant courses to develop their career and earn a living. In view of this, Obanya, (2019) states that business education is an educational programme offered in higher education institutions to prepare students for their future business careers, as it involves the inculcation of skills, business knowledge or being useful in the business world. Business education is offered at Universities and Colleges of Education, and is concerned mainly with the development of relevant and saleable skills and knowledge that would enable an individual function effectively in the world of work. Business education programme processes relevant skills, competencies and knowledge in these major areas which can only be acquired through effective teaching and learning. Business education must have the following essential attributes: (a) must form an integral part of general education (b) have a means of preparing for occupational fields and for effective participation in the world of work in business environments; (c) be an aspect of lifelong learning and a preparation for responsible citizenship; (d) be an instrument for promoting environmentally sound sustainable development. Business education is the education for and about business or training in business skills. Business education according to Okoli, (2019), is the aspect of total educational programme that provides the knowledge, skills, understanding and the attitudes needed to perform effectively in the business world as a producer and or consumer of goods and services. In ensuring the quality of business education, factors such as curriculum, lecturer's qualification, accreditation, available facilities and methodology employed to pass across the instruction are essential.

II. METHODS

A. Objectives of Business Education

According to Yagboyaju & Akinola, (2019); Aluwong, (2019), listed objectives of business education as given below:

1. To prepare recipients for employment after graduation.
2. To meet the manpower needs of the society.
3. To increase the options available to each recipient and serving as motivation in order to enhance all types of learning.
4. To present a laboratory in which the practice of skill, knowledge and attitude are learnt to make the classroom instruction more meaningful and relevant.
5. To provide an opportunity through the use of local business for the student to acquire additional skills and knowledge.
6. To make recipients' development of such personality traits as punctuality, dependability, accuracy, for effective and good sense of responsibility that makes for effective work.
7. To give recipients background of training that will contribute to rapid advancement on the job.
8. To help develop the right attitude and habits conducive to the proper use of technology.
9. To provide the knowledge and skill necessary for industrial, commercial and economic development.
10. To train people who can apply scientific knowledge to the improvement, solution and convenience of man.
11. To give training, and impart the necessary skills leading to the promotion of craftsmanship technicians and other skilled personnel.
12. To stimulate and encourage creativity and to enable young men and women to have an intelligent understanding of the increasing complexity of technology.

B. Needs for Business Education

Business education is said to be the education for the acquisition and development of skills, competencies and attributes which are necessary for efficiency of the economic system. Thus, business education is necessary for entrepreneurship development with emphasis on pre-vocational preparation for the individual. Yagboyaju & Akinola, (2019); Aluwong, (2019) observed "business education is concerned with education that seeks to educate individuals for and about business". Thus, business education is necessary for entrepreneurship development with a view to creating mass employment.

Similarly, Nwanwezi, M.C., (2020) describes business education as encompassing education for office occupations, business teaching, business administration and economic understanding. In all, Abdulkadir, A. A., (2019) noted that one remarkable important characteristic of business education program is that, its products can function independently as self-employed and employers of labor. To this end, the tenet of business education embraces basic education for teaching career, entrepreneurship, business understanding, office environment and vocational practices.

Education in this field occurs at several levels, including primary, secondary and higher education, with the greatest activity in the later. However, Igboke, (2018) enumerated the following as the objectives of Business Education at all levels of education:

1. To develop basic skills for personal use in the future
2. To acquire the basic knowledge and skills of business education
3. To relate the knowledge and skills acquired to national development
4. To develop basic skills in office occupation
5. To provide the needed background for teaching in business subjects
6. To prepare students for further training in business studies
7. To provide orientation and basic skills with which to start a life of work for those who may not undergo further training.

To accomplish any set objectives on business education programme, the regulatory body of all tertiary institutions together with Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria must put up a procedures that is meant to be a guideline for accomplishing the set objectives that can be referred to as quality assurance. Quality assurance is the entire process of ensuring maximum effectiveness and efficiency of educational programmes and services in relation to their context, mission and stated objectives. Igborgbor, G.C., (2018), states that quality assurance refers to all measures taken to ensure a better educational system and meet society's needs. Also, Kontio, J., (2019) explains that quality assurance is seen as all procedures, processes and systems that develop and assist education and other higher education's activities. On the other hand, Ehindero, (2020) postulates the following as the basic indices for quality assurance in education:

1. Learners' entry behavior, characteristics and attitudes including some demographic factors that can inhibit or facilitate their learning.
2. The teachers' entry qualifications, values, pedagogic skills and professional preparedness
3. The teaching/learning processes including the structure of the curriculum and learning environment.
4. The flow of operational funds including its adequacy and regularity. The interplay of these and other related factors will go a long way in determining the outcome of any educational program.

For education to really serve as a veritable vehicle for socioeconomic growth and development as well as for the actualization of these lofty objectives of business education in tandem, educational institutions and its systems must function optimally in relation to its set standards. It therefore becomes imperative for a systemic quality assurance in the administration, teaching and learning of business education in Nigeria. Quality is described by Idialu in Amesi, (2017) as standards of something as compared to other things, that is, the degree of goodness for excellence. Quality assurance in the views of (Okereke, 2014) is a systematic management and assessment procedures adopted by higher educational institutions and systems to monitor performance against objectives, and to ensure achievement of quality outputs and improvement. Also, Okoli, B.E et al., (2018) stated that quality assurance is a proactive measure of ensuring quality in any organization. They added that in education, quality assurance aims at preventing problems and ensures that the system conforms to the expected standard. Ensuring quality of education delivery in Nigeria is a fundamental and contemporary challenge in the education subsector. Quality assurance is designed to prove and improve the quality of an institution's methods and educational processes and products. According to Igborgbor, G.C., (2018), quality assurance connotes all the measures taken to ensure that the educational system is better able to meet the needs of each society. In the view of Kontio, J., (2019), quality assurance means all the procedures, processes and systems that support and develop the education and other activities of the higher education. To Kontio, quality assurance and auditing are one way to support education to improve its quality of delivery.

Similarly, Oladipo et al., (2019) see quality assurance as the relevance and appropriateness of the education program to the needs of the community for which it is provided. They further assert that it is the arrangement made or the mechanism put in place to maintain the degree of excellence of an educational product or services. Quality assurance involves series of operational techniques and activities which include all action taken for standards to be met. In summary, quality assurance is the entire process of ensuring maximum effectiveness and efficiency of educational programs and services in relation to their context, mission and stated objectives. However, Adegbasan, S.O., (2020) enumerated the following as the major needs for quality assurance in Nigeria education system:

1. To serve as indispensable component of quality control strategy in education
2. To ensure and maintain higher standard of education at all levels
3. To assist in monitoring and supervision of education
4. To determine the quality of the teachers' input
5. To determine the number of classrooms needed based on the average class size to ensure quality control of education

6. To determine the level of adequacy of the facilities available for quality control
7. To ensure how the financial resources available could be prudently and judiciously utilized.

In Nigeria, according to Offorma, (2018) the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria is empowered by law, Degree No. 31 of 1993, now Act Cap3 of 2004, to:

1. Determine persons to be called teachers, for the purpose of the Act establishing it.
2. Determine what standard of knowledge and skills are to be obtained by persons seeking to become registered as teachers and raising the standards from time as circumstances may permit.
3. Regulating and controlling the teaching profession in all its aspects and ramifications.
4. Classify from time to time members of teaching profession according to their level of training and qualification among other responsibilities.
5. Performing to the council established under the Acts 31 of 1993, the functions conferred on it by the Act.

Subscribes to this observation and feels that the depreciating performance may be attributed to lapses and inadequacies that have besieged the process of education. However, the desire to ensure that business education programmes meet the expected standard lead to external measures, beside the internal mechanism within various institutions in order to enhance quality of programmes offered by them. Some external measures include establishment of agencies to regulate, accredit and maintain acceptable standards of the programme (quality assurance in the training institutions). These include:

- a. National Universities Commission (NUC)
- b. National Commission for College of Education (NCCE)
- c. Teacher Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN)

The NUC and NCCE are bodies established by the Federal government to moderate the activities of Universities and Colleges of Education in Nigeria in terms of monitory, accredit, evaluate programmes implementation from time to time to the constitution of visitation panel or external audit panels empowered to examine the relevance and adequacy of the input process and output elements of the teaching, learning, research and other activities of the business education programmes based on the set minimum standards. The teacher registration council of Nigeria is the professional teachers regulatory body, empowered by law to register teachers of different categories such as; NCE graduates, B.Sc / B.Ed graduates, M.Sc and PhD teachers . Okebukola, (2018)

Furthermore, Oluwafemi & Olu, (2012) and Sunarmi, (2019) considered quality assurance as the planned and systematic activities implemented in a quality system to ensure the fulfillment of all quality requirements for a product or services. In summary, quality assurance is the entire ensuring maximum effectiveness and efficiency of educational programmes and services regarding their context, mission and stated objectives.

C. Quality Assurance Measuring Parameters

To measure the quality of a program is very important in an educational system. Zunaed, C., (2020) opines that quality of education could be measured based on several criteria such as market demand of graduates, admission in foreign universities, research and publication and institutional affiliations. However, Oladipo et al., (2019) submitted that quality of education could be measured in terms of quality of input, quality of output, quality of process and quality of content.

1. Quality of Input:

Input here includes both human and material resources put into educational production process. They are the teachers, administrators, classrooms, facilities, equipment and other infrastructures. What is the status of these resources in terms of quality and quantity in the schools?

2. Quality of Output:

The quality of education does not depend only on resource inputs, but also on the output, which include academic achievement on tests, scores and progression and pass rates, thus, the internal and external efficiency. How efficient are the products of the schools? If the input is faulty, the output may likely be faulty.

3. Quality of Process:

This implies student/teacher interaction, level of learner's participation and engagement in learning. The process of teaching and learning should be fair and firm to the students. This is another indicator of quality education program.

4. Quality of Content:

The curriculum content of our educational system had been criticized as being overloaded, obsolete and does not sufficiently attend to the needs of the Nigerian learner. The data from the Monitoring of Learning Achievement (MLA) project has also shown that there is a wide gap between the intended curriculum and the achieved curriculum. So, the content of learning is yet another indicator of the quality of a program. A systematic and consistent quality assurance system helps to establish an institution's good reputation, image and credibility.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Constraints of Quality Assurance in Business Education

The answer to the question in the preceding paragraph may be found in the following: Poorly coordinated supervision mechanism: There is no properly managed structure on ground to adequately monitor and supervise business teachers in Nigeria tertiary institutions in order to ensure quality teaching Amoor, S.S., (2019). It can be observed that once a business teacher is employed, he is assigned with courses to teach and nobody cares to monitor or supervise what and how he teaches. If such a teacher is inexperienced and not supervised, the students are at a risk of learning things that may not lead to the desired knowledge, skills and competencies. In another dimension, some teachers take up adjunct appointments in two or more tertiary institutions, thereby ignoring their primary assignment where they are on full appointment. This can seriously affect the teacher's quality, input and output. According to Franklin Ohiole Ohiwerei & Okoli B.E., (2010), supervision has been a great challenge in business education as it lacks the needed commitment and coordination to survive. Both the internal and external organs of quality assurance in business education in this regard have failed.

1. Under Funding

The issue of funding of education has been a recurrent decimal in the history of Nigeria's educational system. The establishment and running of tertiary institutions is capital-intensive. Every item within the formal learning environment is subject to availability of fund. Oladipo et al., (2019) noted that lack of adequate funding has clearly impaired the performance and the standard of Nigerian institutions. They added that Nigerian institutions cannot meet their expectations especially in terms of the quality of teaching and research due to inadequate funding. This shortage of fund has affected the infrastructural development and research in Nigeria tertiary institutions.

2. Student Explosion

The issue of over enrolment of student has become a common feature in the Nigerian tertiary institutions. This could be as a result of the quest for higher education and population explosion in Nigeria. Many of the facilities on ground are being overstretched. Business education is in forefront of this enrolment explosion because students and parents want a course that can make the graduates self-reliant considering the present economic situation of the country where graduates unemployment is soaring high.

3. Poor Management and Governance

The way and manner some of the Nigerian tertiary institutions and programs are being managed by administrators is also having a consequential effect on quality assurance in the education sector. For most of the tertiary institutions, management means little more than playing the role of a "Caretaker." This vital function has been largely reduced to the maintenance of the status quo. This unfortunate development negates the concept of higher education, particularly in a developing country like Nigeria. It seems certain and sure that as long as management continues to play this nonchalant role, quality assurance will continue to be jeopardized in the nation's tertiary institutions.

4. Attitudinal Failure

Closely related to poor management is attitudinal failure. Many pitfalls in quality assurance measures in business education are actually avoidable but for attitudinal failures on the part of stakeholders and educators. On the part of governments as stakeholders, several reports from commissions, conferences and agencies have highlighted many deficiencies in the education system nationwide. Instead of addressing the issue, governments take the attention seeking measures on television screens to show that it is working while the decay continuous unabated at the roots Igborgbor, G.C., (2018). Worse still, even the meager proportion of the budget allocated to education is not left to the end user. Government and its functionaries would rather use it on behalf of the institutions to award politically motivated contracts which may never get completed until the end of the life of that regime. On the other hand, do the educators interact with students in the most productive ways? What are

these rumors about sales of marks, payments for project supervision or writing, what about planning and execution of examination malpractices by school heads and teachers in our schools? Do we recruit educators on merit or by ethnic or political considerations? When schools face accreditation panels, do they show only what they have or what they have borrowed in order to 'succeed'? These are what Amadi, (2019) termed the "ethic problem in Nigerian education". The point being made here is that without a positive attitudinal change and internal integrity being maintained, any attempt by both internal and external bodies to assure quality in education will remain nothing but a mirage.

B. Control Measures of Quality Assurance in Business Education

For quality assurance in business education to be guaranteed, the following measures should be noted and implemented.

1. Evaluation and Monitoring

The aim of evaluation and monitoring as a quality assurance strategy is to see how the system can be assisted to improve on present level of performance. There is therefore, need to examine the qualification of teachers, availability of equipment in the required number as well as the proper use of the processes involved in the various skills to ensure that the finished products are of high standard. Evaluation will show (if any) the gap existing between the intended objectives of the school program and the actualized objectives. Through constant evaluation and monitoring of business education activities in terms of effective control by the heads of departments and constant feedback to management and good utilization of reports, the standard of business education would be raised high and sustained. So, evaluation and monitoring of business education programs should be regularly done to ensure high quality of the programme.

2. Adequate Funding

Business education needs to be funded adequately to enable its programs to achieve the aim of ensuring quality in education. The funding needs of business education are quite enormous and they need to be addressed promptly. These needs include the purchase of equipment and facilities for typing laboratories, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) laboratories, model offices, provision of infrastructure, maintenance of equipment and facilities, training and retraining of staff, funding of students work experience programs amongst others. We cannot compete in today's world if we continue with the insufficient public investment in education under the excuse of financial constraints. Business education departments should look beyond funds from governments and proprietors of schools, through partnership with the organized private sector, nongovernmental organizations and philanthropists. This would help to supplement government funding and enhances the wellbeing of the program.

3. Enhanced Supervision

A well-coordinated supervision creates the awareness of sound education philosophies in teachers and makes them to be aware of educational policies and reforms. Thus, supervisors are to play leadership roles that would stimulate and encourage both staff and students in the system to perform their duties as to achieve the institutional tasks or objectives.

4. Retraining of Teachers

Business teachers should be aware of the support services available to students. All these awareness and development can only come through a process of training and retraining. Therefore, the business educators should be trained from time to time because some skills that are relevant and useful today may likely be irrelevant and obsolete tomorrow as result of advancement in technology and learning. Retraining of business teachers will put them in the balanced stand to ensure quality of business education program.

5. Research Improvement

Absence of research is synonymous to absence of development and innovations. The gap that has been created by the current trend of technology and demands in work places need to be covered through research efforts. Research in business education should be encouraged and motivated in order to surmount some of the contemporary challenges in the discipline.

6. Attitudinal Change

For the above control measures of quality assurance in business education to be effective and sustained, there is a strong need for positive attitudinal change on the part of government, school administrators and management, business education teachers and of course the students. Integrity is highly required in this regard. Integrity on the part of governments, administrators, business educators and students. Commitment and dedication is also a vital tool in the war against poor quality of education. The governments, school

administrators, teachers and students need to be committed and dedicated to the core objectives of the educational system.

C. Current Efforts at Ensuring Quality in Business Education in Nigeria

Tertiary educational institutions in Nigeria have enjoyed more provisions for quality assurance than the lower levels. With the establishment or expansion of each specialized type of institution, a separate coordinating organ is instituted. These organs are government agencies charged with the responsibility of regulating and supervising tertiary institutions. Thus, for universities, there is the National Universities Commission (NUC), for polytechnics, there is the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) and for Colleges of Education, there is the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) and there is Teacher Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN).

Each of these bodies is empowered to set up its own mechanisms for quality assurance for institutions under its supervision. These bodies from time to time draw up Minimum Academic Standards (MAS) in terms of floor space for lectures, minimum laboratory facilities per students, minimum library space, minimum staff/student ratio, minimum teaching facilities/equipment and office accommodation for effective teaching and learning in any given discipline Uvah, I.I., (2017). They also stipulate the curricula for these institutions as well as minimum entry and graduation requirements for each discipline.

Furthermore, to ensure that these Minimum Academic Standards (MAS) are adhered to by the tertiary institutions, the NUC, NBTE and NCCE conduct routine accreditation exercise for courses and programs of institutions under its watch. The essence of this whole exercise is to maintain standard and quality of higher education (including business education) in Nigeria.

Similarly, in order to enhance the infrastructures and facilities of tertiary institutions, development of staff and research, the federal government through the ministry of education has established agencies such as the Education Trust Fund (ETF), Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) amongst others. These bodies support the schools in terms of infrastructural development, training and retraining of lecturers and aids for research development. Also, the Industrial Training Fund (ITF) is a government agency that tends to bridge the gap between students' theoretical or classroom knowledge and practical or workplace experience. All these efforts are aimed at ensuring standard and quality of tertiary education in Nigeria.

Furthermore, the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) is also instituted to conduct matriculation examinations for admission into all the tertiary institutions in Nigeria. This is a way of maintaining standard and ensuring high quality of students' intake into the institutions. Besides all these superstructures like the NUC, NBTE, NCCE, ETF, TETFUND, ITF and JAMB, each tertiary institution also set up its own internal organs for quality assurance such as the lecturers' appraisal systems, internal and external examination moderation system, the Post Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examinations (PUTME) and the general supervision by governing councils and visitors of each institution. Business education as an academic program has benefited from all these attempts aimed at quality assurance of the education industry. Again, Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria helps in regulating and control teaching profession at all levels of the Nigerian Education system, both in the public and private sectors. The body assures excellence and professionalism among teachers at all levels of the nation's registration, licensing, accreditation, monitoring and supervision of teacher education programmes, promoting continuing professional development and maintenance of discipline as paradigms for the overall renaissance of the teaching profession in Nigeria.

Similarly, the programme accreditation has to be carried out considering both the human resources and available facilities by the NCCE to ensure that the programme has the quality it is supposed to maintain. Business education is a skilled course that cannot be taught in abstract. Almost all the courses will have to be taught with instructional facilities to enhance the learner's quality of knowledge and skills. More so, the lecturer's teaching method will impact the quality of learners to be produced. It is against this background that it is necessary to conduct this study to assess the quality of business education programme in tertiary institutions.

IV. CONCLUSION

A. Conclusion

Quality of any programme, especially business education programme lies solely on curriculum, lecturer's qualifications, and accreditation exercises in all tertiary institutions. Therefore, it is called on the stakeholders to come out with a dynamic curriculum that will reflect the demand of the Nigeria society through the employment of business educators that are capable in handling business courses and significantly make provision of modern teaching materials in order to provide up-to-date information to the students. The accreditation exercise should be conducted with all sincerity, system of window dressing should be ignored where the institution will go and

hire lecturers for the exercise. Again, teacher registration council of Nigeria (TRCN) certificate should be issued based on merit. Also, quality assurance in business education serve as an indispensable component of quality control strategy in education, assist in monitory and supervision of education and ensure a higher standard of education at all levels. Strict adherence to the submission will be of great help to the development of business education programme.

B. Recommendations

1. Business education curriculum should be revisited and tailored towards capacity building among the students because it will help accelerate their readiness for business.
2. Business educators should update themselves through training and retraining to be abreast of new fashion of technology development required in business education programme
3. Cooperation and collaboration among business education's stakeholders are needed in an attempt to achieve the stated objectives in business education by providing proper modern facilities and monitoring in all tertiary institutions.
4. Accreditation teams should be selected based on their integrity and not 'who you know', integrity is the hallmark of a successful team. This will help in insisting on quality assurance and institutions will in turn comply with what is needful in order to be accredited.
5. In recruitment, the authorities concerned should screen applicants to ensure that only those that are qualified with competent and desirable skills, and are interested in teaching should be given certificate and license for teaching profession.

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