

Full Length Research Paper

Establishing quality assurance in Nigerian education system: Implication for educational managers

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The importance of quality education in nation building cannot be over emphasized. There have been several calls on the educational managers on how to make the educational system to be more vibrant in the quality of its products after several quantity of mass failure and half baked products from our various educational institutions in the country. These over the years have generated a lot of debate and argument among Nigerians on the newspapers, radio and television programmed, including parent's religious bodies and non governmental organizations. They often expressed their concern about the manner in which the system is loosing its confidence as regards to the effective and efficient nature of the system. However, this paper therefore, discusses the role of educational managers in assuring quality in the Nigerian education system. Consequently, the paper looks at the concept of quality assurance and strategies for establishing quality assurance in education and finally it also examines Educational managers' role in assuring quality in Nigeria education system.

Key words: Quality control, quality assurance, educational managers, educational system.

INTRODUCTION

Education has been described as the bedrock of every society and tool for nation building. For quality education to be achieved in a nation the principal actors of learning who the teachers, learners are and the environment must be cooperatively organized. In other words, the teacher must be adequate in quality and quantity, the students must be well trained and facilities must be provided as well. In recent time, the upspring and rapid establishment of private schools and institution in Nigeria is as a result of lack of confidence the Nigeria's education system which has adverse effect in the development of the nation.

Adepoju (1999) was right when he implied that, people and nations are what they are because of the nature and types of education they have been exposed to. However, the modern view, even where only lip service is being paid to it, is that, quality education is the right of every citizen, not a privileged that the rulers may grant or withhold

withhold. This, view has been given greater urgency by demands of the modern industrialized and technological age. Education today must have the effect of making it possible for a country to have a steady supply of highly creative citizens who help to keep improving the living conditions of the general citizenry, and to solve the existential problems that are thrown up from time to time. Such problems are now being further and it is complicated by the theory and reality of the so-called global village.

As is well known, the problem that government has is in reconciling access with quality in the provision of education. But, it is abnormal to describe education as anything that lacks quality. (Yoloye, 2005) agrees that quality must characterize education at every stage and the real problem that governments have to face is deciding the mix of levels, of how many of its citizens must go beyond the basic education and how many must have higher education? What goes on in Nigeria primary and secondary schools today bears little resemblance to the situation first described. One seldom hears of inspectors of education today at least of the variety which actually goes round and ensures good standards in primary and secondary schools.

It was claimed that, it is partly because they are now

Abbreviations: **SMOE**, State Ministries of Education; **SUBEB**, State Universal Basic Education Board; **LGUBEA**, Local Government Universal Basic Educational Authority.

many more schools, but this need not to be so. The real reason is that, particularly after their ill-advised taken over all primary and secondary schools by the government of the federation. Education has become bureaucratized and subjected to the unenterprising attitude of the Nigerian Public Service. It is doubtful, if children in schools today have seen an inspector visit their schools. That is why today many primary and secondary schools are in fact turning into shopping malls. The learning environment has equally woefully deteriorated many so-called primary schools that have no furniture, in many cases even no doors or windows, and all in such hideous structures. Little wonder, then, that all those who can afford it give the government school a wide berth, a trend which is now raising the cry of commercialization of education in the country.

NEED FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN NIGERIAN SCHOOL

The need for quality assurance in Nigerian schools cannot be overemphasized in order to ensure quality of teaching and learning. However, the following are the major needs of quality assurance in our education system in Nigeria:

- (i) To serve as indispensable component of quality control strategy in education,
- (ii) To ensure and maintain high standard of education at all levels,
- (iii) To assist in monitoring and supervision of education,
- (iv) To determine the quality of the teacher input,
- (v) To determine the number of classrooms needed based on the average class size to ensure quality control of education, and
- (vi) To determine the level of adequacy of the facilities available for quality control
- (vii) It would ensure how the financial resources available could be prudently and judiciously utilized.

QUALITY AND QUALITY ASSURANCE IN EDUCATION

The concern for quality has been at the core of the motivating forces for reforms in education. Ajayi and Adegbesan (2007) see quality as the total of the features of a process, product or service on its performance, in 'customers' or clients' perception of that performance. It is not just a feature of a finished product or services but involves a focus on internal processes and outputs and includes the reduction of wasted and the improvement or productivity. Taking a cue from the above definition, Fadokun (2005) characterized quality by three interrelated and interdependent strands;

- (i) Efficiency in the meeting of its goals,
- (ii) Relevance to human and environmental conditions and needs,
- (iii) Something more" that is the exploration of new ideas, the pursuit of excellence and encouragement of creativity.

With regards to education, the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) views quality from different perspectives. The first is from the internal criteria of the system such as profile expiration and the external criteria which are the fitness and relevance of such an education to its environment.

Arikewuyo (2004) views quality in education to be judged by both its ability to enable the students performs well in standard examinations and relevance to the needs of the students, community, and the society as a whole. He finally concluded that quality serves as determination of gradations based on standard of excellence beneath which a mark of inferiority is imposed or adduced and above which grades of superiority are defined. However, quality assurance is related to quality control, but it functions in a rather proactive manner in the sense that quality control serves as series of operational techniques and activities used to fulfill that requirement are met. While, quality assurance goes beyond that, because it extends the focus from outcomes or outputs to the process which produces them.

Similarly, 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:

- (i) Learners entry behaviours, 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 etc,
- (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.

Finally, Fadokun (2005) sums the definition of quality assurance in education as a programmed, an institution or a whole education system. In such 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 programmed.

Table 1. The teachers in the sampled schools are professional qualified.

Qualification	Male	Female	Total	Female ratio (%)
B.Ed	664	524	1188	44.1
B.Sc	418	118	536	22.0
B.Sc with Educ.	439	279	718	38.9
MSc / MEd	106	63	169	37.3
NCE Tech	668	444	1112	39.9
ND / OND with Educ	167	82	249	32.9
HND with Educ.	281	88	286	30.8
Total	27616	1589	4305	36.9

FME, Abuja ESA Report (2005). Adapted from Ojedele (2007).

STRATEGIES FOR ESTABLISHING QUALITY ASSURANCE IN EDUCATION

The strategies used for quality assurance in education include:

(a) Monitoring: It refers to the process of collecting data at intervals about ongoing projects or programmed within the school system. The aim is to constantly assess the level of performance with a view of finding out how far a set objectives are being met (Ehinder, 2001).

(b) Evaluation: This is a formal process carried out within a school setting. It is based on available data which are used to form conclusions. It could be formative or summative. The aim of evaluation, a quality assurance strategy, is to see how the system can be assisted to improve on the present level of performance (formative) (Ijaiya, 2001).

(c) Supervision: Supervision might involve inspection, but it goes beyond inspection and includes attempt at bringing about improvement in the quality of instruction. It involves staff as essential part of the process. It is a way of advising, grinding, refreshing, encouraging and stimulating staff (Onocha, 2002).

(d) Inspection: Usually involves an assessment of available facilities and resources in an institution with a view to establishing how far a particular institution has met prescribed standards, it is more of an assessment rather than an improvement induced exercise (West-Burham, 1994).

(e) Quality control: The issue of quality control cannot be over-emphasized. It is one of the strategies for establishing quality assurance in the inferior education system at all levels. Ojedele (2007) views that; quality control should be of concerns to the country in its drive towards technological development. For this to be successfully carried out, there is need to examine the qualification of teachers, teachers by gender, the adequacy of the curriculum, 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. On the qualification of teacher ESA (2005)

findings show that about 16.7% of teachers in technical colleges for instances in the country have B.Sc in addition to their professional qualification in education while 22.5 and 6.5% have NCE and HND in education to professional qualification in education, respectively. The overall study reveals that 76.7% of the teachers in the sampled schools are professionally qualified (Table 1).

(f) Access and equity: Ojedele (2007) asserts that the trend of students transiting from the junior secondary school to other level of education has not been encouraging as it has been falling short of the expectation. He argued further that, the issue at the tertiary level presents a situation that calls for concerns in terms of variation in access at the Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of education and in terms of gender disparity.

It is not a gain to say that Universities from time have been recording higher percentage in Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) Examination than Polytechnics and Colleges of education in Nigeria. Table 2 shows the trends of admission

ROLE OF EDUCATIONAL MANAGERS IN ASSURING QUALITY IN NIGERIA'S EDUCATION SYSTEM

The roles of educational managers range from administrative to professional. Professional staff in the education industry should be concerned about how they manage the educational resources allocated to them for use as well as the control of their schools and students.

The teacher's managerial functions by the same token should go beyond those of the beginning classroom teacher. He should be responsible not only to himself and his pupils but also to other staff members and their pupils. Not only that, he is faced with the responsibility of determining the priorities of management and the management style to be used for achieving qualitative educational results.

Arikewuyo (2004) had listed the following tasks which must be done by education managers in order to have a qualitative education these include:

Table 2. The trends of admission.

Institution	Admission		Total	Percentage
	Male (%)	Female (%)		
Universities	57993 (60.9)	37206 (39.1)	95199 (100)	74.30
Polytechnics	15444 (64.5)	8508 (35.5)	23952 (100)	18.71
Colleges of Education	3542 (39.7)	5421 (60.3)	8963 (100)	6.99
Total	76979	51135	12814	100

FME Abuja Education sector Analysis Report (2005). Adapted from Ojedele (2007).

1. Measurement and standardization of academic attainments.
2. Evaluation of quality of work during supervision,
3. Use of competent teachers and administrative / supervisory personnel.
4. Dissemination of information to teachers and students,
5. Use of educational technologies with a view to increasing the efficiency of teaching,
6. New research and development to invigorate all educational activities.
7. Guidance and counseling.
8. Placing students in suitable employment.
9. Efficient management of all education.

However, educational managers are classified by their functions that is, by the role they play in their position as managers. To fulfill our purpose of quality assurance in Nigerian education system, there is need to identify educational management as a body of systemized knowledge, based on general principles which are certifiable in terms of school of practice.

Ogunsaju (2006) argues that, a school manager may manage with good or bad judgment, with great or little experience, with exemplary or undesirable character traits, that educational management functions for quality assurance in our education systems may be practiced in similar terms by all kinds of people, in all kind of schools by educational managers. These are:

- 1 Planning: This is an essential aspect of good management. It requires the ability of the manager to look ahead and be able to formulate and select appropriate objectives and procedures to be followed within the school system.
- 2 Organizing: This is the ability of the managers to create structural work. That is, he should focus attention on the structure and process of allocating tasks to achieve common objectives.
- 3 Staffing: This is another essential role of educational managers. It requires his ability to search for the right people and to place them on the right job both in quality and quantity which would reflect their experience and capability for the school objectives to be achieved.
- 4 Motivating: This is the energizing force behind all other activities of educational managers. Managers should

know how to keep good morals of their workers in order to obtain maximum efficiency and effectiveness from them. This includes constant payment of salaries and other emoluments needed for their welfare.

5 Evaluating: This is the ability of managers to assess and know the outcome of the school aims and objectives. He ensures that, set down goals and objectives are achieved through quality control system which includes:

- (a) An effective quality school system,
- (b) Periodic audit of the operation of the system,
- (c) Periodic review of the school system to ensure it meets changing requirements.

Ogunsaju (2000) however, concluded that, for a school manager to perform his roles effectively in assuring quality in the school, he should be able to play these parts: be a listener, an encourager, a dissuader, a reporter, a watcher, a judge, a critic, a decision taker and on occasion of a model.

ACHIEVING QUALITY ASSURANCE IN NIGERIAN EDUCATION SYSTEM

- (i) Education curriculum and standards of education in Nigeria should be reviewed to reflect the needs and aspiration of the society.
- (ii) There is need to harmonize the internal and external criteria of quality assurance raising standard of excellence of the education systems.
- (iii) There is need to improve or employ modern teaching methods and techniques in the classroom.
- (iv) A more developed and reformed curriculum content is highly desirable. There is also the need for curriculum evaluation to allow innovations and new techniques/methods to be incorporated.
- (v) Effective supervisory system should be injected into the system.
- (vi) Full professionalization of teaching in the country to set a standard under which a qualified and well trained teacher must operate is highly imperative.
- (vii) Government should endeavour to properly fund education institutions in the country to meet the expectation of the society.

Conclusion

It is clear and evident that the educational managers' role in achieving quality education cannot be over emphasized. Nigeria's educational system is totally in shambles as inadequacies are the order of the day with human and material resources. Teachers are not employed on quality basis. Rather, they are now being employed on political basis.

Evaluations are not carried out by school managers in the State Ministries of Education, (SMOE), State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) and Local Government Universal Basic Educational Authority (LGUBE) even heads of schools are not concerned with the set-objectives of the school any longer, even enthusiasm in the community as to have schools at their door step in order to eradicate illiteracy is not there again and under these conditions, quality can never be assured. Therefore, an assurance process recognizes the need for a school to accept responsibility for its own management process. It is in this regard that the main difference between inspection and evaluation and assurance arises. Assurance for quality education is a total holistic process concerned with ensuring integrity of outcomes. Thus, the responsibility for quality assurance rests with the schools' managers and this is expressed through its relationship with other stakeholders in the school system. Lastly, quality assurance recognizes the autonomy of educational institutions and seeks to enhance their capacity to operate in a responsive way.

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