

Strategies Considered Effective by Business Educators for Quality Assurance in Business Education Programme in Universities in South-South Nigeria

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Abstract

The study was designed to find out the strategies considered effective by business educators for quality assurance in business education programme in universities in south-south Nigeria. Two research questions were posed and two hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Population of the study comprised fifty four business educators in universities in south-south Nigeria. The study was on a descriptive survey design. Data were collected for the study through the administration of validated questionnaire on the respondents. The test-retest method was used to establish the reliability of the instrument and the overall correlation coefficient of 0.94 was obtained. The mean statistics were used to answer the research questions while z-test statistic and analysis of variance (ANOVA) were used to test the hypotheses. The findings of the study revealed that business educators considered Moderation of examination results and In-service training given to career academic as effective strategies for quality assurance in business education programme. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that these strategies be properly monitored to ensure quality assurance in business education programme in universities.

Introduction

Business education which is a sub-set of the general education programme falls within the spectrum of vocational education. Jimoh-Kadiri and Bupo (2011) described business education as the transfer of pedagogical and business competencies necessary for teaching business attitudes, concepts, skills and knowledge. Business education is therefore that aspect of educational training which an individual receives with the primary motive of enabling him to acquire adequate attitudes, concepts, knowledge, understanding and skills in business activities for vocational usage in careers as an administrator, manager or teacher wherever he may find himself in the business world.

According to Aliyu (2006), the objectives of business education includes to develop a mature understanding of the general nature of business, provide the needed background for teaching in business subjects, provide training in specialized phases of business activity and to lay a cultural and ethical foundation for the development of the fore-going objectives. For the objectives of business education and other inherent benefits of education to be realized, there is need therefore, to ensure quality and sustainable standards in the education system. With respect to education, quality is seen by Oladipo, Adeosun and Oni (2009) as the ability or degree to which an educational system conforms to established standard and appropriateness. Therefore, quality in education means the relevance and appropriateness of the education programme to the needs of the community for which it is provided.

On the other hand, strategy is the technique or mechanism put in place to maintain the degree of quality of excellence of a product or service. As it applies to quality assurance in education, strategy is the mechanism by which an educational system ensures that the service it delivers or intends to deliver serves the purpose for which it is intended and remains relevant and appropriate to the needs of the society. It involves series of operational techniques and activities which include all actions taken when requirements for quality are met.

Quality assurance in the educational system implies the ability of the institution to meet the expectations of the user of manpower (employers of labour) in relation to quality of skills acquired by their output (Ajayi & Akindutire, 2007). Oladipo, (2009) posited that quality of educational programme could be measured in terms of quality of input, quality of process, quality of context and quality of output. Therefore, ensuring quality in business education requires the right quantity and quality in everything that goes into the teaching/learning process or system as input and process. Until this objective is achieved, education and business education in particular may not be accorded its respect in the society. Ekumayo (2012) submitted that the non-inclusion of any of the nation's universities in the world best 1500 universities is unsavory and worse still, Nigeria ranked number 22 after South Africa, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya in the ranking of African universities. Presently, Nigeria ranked 2633rd position in the world. Similarly, Okebukola (2006) decried the quality of graduates produced in Nigerian tertiary institutions especially in the last four years and thumbed down the quality of those that would graduate in three years time. Due to the declining quality in recent years, hence, the accolade attached to Nigerian universities seems to be fading away fast. This is informed by the flood of criticisms that beclouded the quality of graduates produced. Parents now seek alternative for their children education in South African and

Ghanaian universities and even beyond. This ugly situation in Nigeria tends to negate the tenet of quality university education which is essentially an industry established to produce high quality workforce for national development.

It is against this background that Ugodulunwa and Mustapha (2005) and Adegbesan (2011) identified the following strategies for quality assurance in Nigeria educational system to salvage the deplorable situation. They are: moderation of examination, in-service education of teachers, proper funding of education, supervision and inspection, mentoring and monitoring, regular evaluation of the system among others. However, this study assessed the effectiveness of some of these strategies considered to be more important in business education programme in Nigerian universities. Since business educators form part of the key players in ensuring quality business education programme, it is therefore important to assess in the opinion of business educators the strategies for quality assurance in business education programme in universities in South-South Nigeria.

Problem Statement

Recent development in the Nigerian educational system business education inclusive seems to indicate that all is not well as expected with quality assurance of the system. The scenario appears more worrisome when viewed against the background that Nigeria which once served as the hub of university education in the West African sub-region, is now in a deplorable state. It could be deduced from the present events and trends in the country (whereby many graduates cannot secure meaningful job or become self employed) that Nigerian education is not meeting its expectations in terms of the quality of teaching and services. Although Adegbesan (2011) and Ugodulunwa and Mustapha (2005) have identified some strategies for quality assurance, but on a practical ground, how effective are these strategies considered for quality assurance in business education programme in universities in South-South Nigeria? This was what informed this article.

With mind cast on these academic problems, the authors had set out to determine the strategies considered effective by business educators for quality assurance in business education programmes of universities in South-South Nigeria. Specifically, the authors determined using the opinions of business educators in universities;

1. the effectiveness of moderation of examination as a strategy for quality assurance in business education programme in universities in South-South Nigeria.
2. the effectiveness of in-service training given to career academics as a strategy for quality assurance in business education programme in universities in South-South Nigeria

Benefits

The findings of this paper are expected to be beneficial to university business education students, business educators, university management and curriculum planners. The findings of this study can also be beneficial to business education students in universities in South-South Nigeria, because the outcome of this study has made it clear to students those areas in university business education programme that really require proper attention vis-à-vis their learning process. Business educators in universities in South-South Nigeria will also benefit from the findings of this study because it will identify those strategies that will ensure quality in business education programme which business educators are the major implementers. Similarly, curriculum planners will benefit from the findings of this study by getting to know the quality assurance strategies considered effective by business educators for improving the quality of business education graduates. This will aid business education curriculum planners in designing business education curriculum to suit the present innovations, trends and practices in global education.

Additionally, management of universities in South-South states of Nigeria will benefit from the finding of the study as it will reveal the constraints relative to the attainment of quality business education in Nigeria. It will also aid university management in knowing the roles they have to play in ensuring that the strategies considered effective are followed and adopted in their various universities in order to achieve qualitative business education programme in South-South Nigeria.

Finally, the findings of this study will be beneficial to business education students in universities in South-South Nigeria. This is because the outcome of this study will identify those areas in university business education programme that really requires proper attention vis-à-vis their learning process.

Literature

Strategies for Quality Assurance

Quality assurance can be seen as all the attitudes, objectives, actions and procedures that through their existence and use, and together with quality control activities, to ensure appropriate academic standards are being maintained and enhanced in and by each programme. It therefore demands that appropriate framework and strategies for its realization be properly laid down and faithfully implemented. In the words of Obeka, Peter and Isaiah (2013), quality assurance in business education serves a couple of purposes;

- It serves as indispensable component of quality control strategy in business education

- It ensures and maintain high standard of business education at all levels
- It assists in monitoring and supervision of business education
- It determine the quality of the teacher input
- It determine the number of classrooms needed based on the average class size to ensure quality control in business education
- To determine the level of adequacy of the facilities available for quality control in business education
- To ensure that the financial resources available are prudently and judiciously utilized.

Adegbesan (2011) asserted that the strategies that would ensure quality assurance in business education are such like monitoring, evaluation, supervision, inspection and quality control. Quality control according to the author is one strategy that can be used in establishing quality assurance in the interior education system at all levels. For it 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 process involved in the various skill to ensure that the finished products are of high standard. This connotes external moderation of examination results.

External moderation of examination result will help to ensure that institutions do not go below the required minimum standard. In the minimum Standard for NCCE, it is one of the basic requirements for quality assurance in business education. Odo (2010) noted that external moderation of NCE business education examination is a requirement and if this aspect is well implemented it will be very obvious and suitable for enhancing quality of graduates from the school system.

According to Chibuikwe (2013) internal and external moderation of examination should be also a major strategy of ensuring quality assurance in the academic system. This will keep academic staff assessment within the acceptable standard. Others similar to this are such criteria like internal and external peer review of learning materials, course evaluation, specifying how programme delivery will be managed including who is accountable for doing what.

The external examiner system gave legitimacy and credibility to examination results. In many institutions, external examiners are given substantial power over final marks, and lend credibility and legitimacy to final grade in the eyes of the students, the institution and public. Although the external examination system continued to provide a level of quality assurance well beyond the end of colonial era, it began to weaken in the 1990s (Ezeani & Eze, 2013); and this current weakening posture should be guarded against.

Since no educational system can grow above the level of its teachers, academic excellence begins with high quality faculty (quality teachers). Achieving quality output through curriculum implementation demands that teachers should update their knowledge to be resourceful. When teachers attend seminars, workshops and conferences, their efficiency and productivity is enhanced. In the same vein, when teachers have opportunity to run developmental programmes in relevant fields, they are empowered for effective delivery. To ensure effective delivery, it implies that teachers' quality which means the ability of a teacher to raise students' performance on incourse tests as well as in skills, and also work well with other teachers and school administrators for the purpose of raising the performance of the students must be assured (Leigh 2007). Based on these assertions, Amoor (2010) postulated that it is pertinent to say that teachers' quality entails effective and excellent teaching that improves students learning and satisfaction. The author maintained that it also ensures that learners possess adequate knowledge, skills and competencies that are appropriate for their areas of responsibility that would meet the needs of the labour force.

Even though teacher effectiveness and efficiency have been mentioned severally in meetings and discussions, its importance requires that more detailed discussion should be carried out on it. A teacher cannot teach what he /she do not know. Therefore, in the discourse of quality assurance in business education, it should start with the quality of the teachers who are supposed to implement the school programme. Much as the teacher is discussed, the quality of the students who are supposed to undergo the training will be affected. The current advancement in technology requires that teachers be given the opportunities to be trained and retrained regularly to make them to be abreast of the advancement in technology. With allegiance to the literature and objectives of this paper

Research Questions

With allegiance to the literature and objectives of this paper, the authors posed these questions to guide the paper. In the opinion of the business educators;

1. How effective is moderation of examination as a strategy for quality assurance in business education in universities in South-South Nigeria
2. How effective is in-service training given to career academics as a strategy for quality assurance in business education in South-South Nigeria.

In line with the objectives and questions posed to guide the paper, the authors formulated the following null hypotheses that were tested at 0.05 level of significance

1. Male and female business educators do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the effectiveness of moderation of examination as a strategy for quality assurance in business education.
2. Respondents (first degree, master and Ph.D holders) do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the effectiveness of in-service training given to career academics as a strategy for quality assurance in business education in universities in South-South Nigeria.

Methodology

How effective is examination moderation as a strategy for quality assurance in business education in universities in South-South Nigeria?

Answer to research question 1 involved data collected in respect of items 1 – 6. It is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Respondents' Mean Rating on Moderation of External Result

(N = 48)

S/N	Means of Examination Moderation	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Moderation of examination questions	4.19	0.60	Highly Effective
2	Moderation of marking scheme	3.98	0.56	Highly Effective
3	Moderation of answer scripts	3.94	0.55	Highly Effective
4	Moderation of continuous assessment scores	3.85	0.53	Highly Effective
5	Moderation of examination result	3.67	0.51	Highly Effective
6	Moderation of students' research project	3.85	0.53	Highly Effective
Grand Mean		3.91		Highly Effective

The data in Table 1 indicate how business educators in universities in South-South Nigeria rated various means of examination moderation as a strategy for quality assurance in business education. It is obvious that business educators in universities in South-South Nigeria considered examination moderation as an effective strategy for quality assurance in business education in universities in South-South Nigeria as indicated in Table 1. All the items have mean ratings above 3.5 which indicate that business educators in universities in south-south Nigeria considered moderation of examination as an effective strategy for quality assurance in business education programme.

Research Question 2

How effective is in-service training given to career academics as a strategy for quality assurance in business education in South-South Nigeria?

Data collected to provide answer to research questions 2 involve items 7 – 15, and are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Respondents' Mean Rating on In-service Training for Career Academics

(N = 48)

S/N	In-service Training	Mean	SD	Remark
7	Conferences	3.88	0.54	Highly Effective
8	Seminars	4.00	0.56	Highly Effective
9	Workshops	3.85	0.53	Highly Effective
10	Summit	3.96	0.55	Highly Effective
11	Train-the-trainer programme	3.83	0.53	Highly Effective
12	Demonstration lesson	3.94	0.55	Highly Effective
13	Part-time/sandwich courses	4.15	0.59	Highly Effective
14	Intellectual debates	3.98	0.56	Highly Effective
15	Academic events (inaugural lecture)	3.10	0.54	Highly Effective
Grand Mean		3.94		Highly Effective

The data in Table 2 indicate how business educators in university in South-South Nigeria considered in-service training for career academics effective as a strategy for quality assurance in business education programme in universities in South-South Nigeria. The result revealed that business educators in universities in South-South Nigeria considered provision of various forms of in-service training for career academics as an effective strategy for quality assurance in business education programme in universities in South-South Nigeria. All the items listed on this section received mean rating greater than 3.5 which indicated that in the opinion of business educators, provision of in-service education and training for career academics is an effective strategy for quality assurance in business education programme. The close range of standard deviation of the responses showed that the respondents were not far apart in their response to this research question. It can therefore be adjudged that providing in-service education and training for career academics is an effective strategy for quality assurance in business education programme in universities in South-South Nigeria.

Hypothesis 1

Male and female business educators do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the effectiveness of moderation of examination as a strategy for quality assurance in business education.

The test analysis for hypothesis 1 is presented in Table 3

Table 3

Summary of z-test Analysis of Hypothesis 1

Gender	N	X	S	z-cal	α	df	z-crit	Remark
Male	29	4.22	0.86					
Female	19	3.65	1.79	1.36	0.05	46	2.02	Accepted

As shown in Table 3, male and female business educators rated the use of moderation of examination as a means of ensuring quality assurance in business education with mean scores of 4.22 and 3.65 respectively. The z-calculated value of 1.36 is greater than the z-tabulated value of 2.02 at 46.0 degree of freedom and 0.05 level of significance and this suggests that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female business educators in universities in South-South Nigeria with respect to the extent to which the use of moderation of examination ensures quality in business education programme. This therefore means that the null hypothesis is accepted.

Hypothesis 2 (First degree, Master and Ph.D holders)

Respondents do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the effectiveness of in-service training given to career academics as a strategy for quality assurance in business education in universities in South-South Nigeria as a result of educational attainment (First degree, Master and Ph.D).

The test analysis for hypothesis 2 is presented in Table

Table 4

Summary of Analysis of Variance for Hypothesis 2

Qualification	SS	Df	MS	F-ratio	F-tab	α	Remark
Between Group	4.99	2	2.49				
Within Group	6.9	45	0.49	5.41	3.68	0.05	Accepted
Total	6.29	47					

The result in Table 4 indicates the summary of the ANOVA statistical analysis of the business educators who possesses B.Sc. (Ed), M.Sc./M.ED and PhD holders on the effectiveness of in-service training for career academics as a strategy for quality assurance in business education. The table shows the following ANOVA statistical values: F-cal 5.41, F-crit 3.68. As the F-calculated is less than F-tab values, the hypothesis of no significant difference among business educators with varying qualification was not rejected. This indicates that there was no significant difference among the mean response of business educators with varying qualifications on the extent to which provision of in-service training for career academics ensure quality in business education programme in South-South Nigeria.

Conclusion

Nigeria in recent times has been witnessing a significant proliferation of tertiary institutions. However, it is saddening to note that many of the indices that can guarantee qualitative university business education are not taken into cognizance in the country's quest to make university education accessible to all; the quality of education is deteriorating as the days keep unfolding. However, to salvage this deplorable situation in Nigeria educational system, strategies have been assessed and considered for quality assurance. Such strategies as assessed by this study are moderation of examination, in-service education and training for career academics. Therefore, to enthrone and maintain quality and sustainable standards in business education, these strategies must be harnessed and implemented properly.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study and to ensure quality in business education, the following recommendations were made:

1. There should be moderation of the entire examination system by the department, faculty, senate and of course, an external moderator in business education. Moderated materials should also be checked-off by heads of departments before administration.
2. Institution should regularly organize in-service training and retraining of staff in business education to improve and equip them with new ideas, knowledge and skills. Apart from the retraining programmes organized by various institutions, individual lecturers should make spirited efforts to acquaint and upgrade themselves with current global trends in the education industry.

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