

Education for Sustainability: Quality Education Is A Necessity in Modern Day. How Far do the Educational Institutions Facilitate Quality Education?

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The research is financed by Botho University (Sponsoring information)

Abstract

From generation to generation time changes affecting culture and the way people live and their society as well. A change in time prompts new inventions and technologies, the twenty-first century where scientific inventions and the latest of technologies are the basis of trade. It is evident that as years go by there comes along sophistication and need for education that fits the times that we live in arises. The transition in the teaching system offered in educational institutions and the introduction of technology in educational institutions are a clear indication that education has to be of certain quality to meet the certain standards in the market. Therefore it is relevant to train and equip individuals within the tertiary institutions with quality skills to attain sustainability. By equipping university graduates with the necessary skills to meet the standard of the demand in the market, would this mean organisations they are to be recruited in would able to be at par with sustainable environment they operate in. This research however is aimed at showcasing the importance of producing quality graduates by tertiary institutions that meet the market demand and also with relevant qualifications thus making these graduates employable and most suitable for the job. Furthermore this research seeks to explore how far Botho University provide quality education basing on the perspective of the students.

Keywords: Technology, quality-education and sustainability.

1. Introduction

Education is the most powerful weapon we can use to change the world and for self-enlightenment. This is so because quality education equips one with capability to interpret things rightly and applying the gathered information in real life scenarios. Quality education entails the following aspects; learning resources, technology, program enrolled, modules done, lecturing methodology, attachments, qualifications, co-curricular activities, performance awards, students and lecturers perspective in the institution operating management also their opinions and appraisal toward education (Hammond, 2013). Tertiary institutions have over the years been erupting in Francistown, and as of recent there is up to about 13 tertiary education facilitators in Francistown (Mikulas, 1977). The purpose of education has been and always will be to empower and impart skill and knowledge in learners, thus it is important that the education one gets has to be of certain quality. Quality in education is important given the fact that what a person learns affects their philosophy “mind-set”. Thus saying that the education one gets affects their day to day lives depicting their lifestyle and the decisions they make on a daily basis. Psychologically, learning is said to have occurred if there has been a change in behaviour of a subject, meaning that a person acclimatizes to what being taught. This statement provokes questions like; could education be used as a tool to forge a well-rounded and employable graduate? If at all there was a certain amount of quality in education facilitated by tertiary institutions, would this affect the graduate’s employability? These questions portray the interest of this paper, to investigate the importance of quality in education and to find out whether Botho University provides such.

Zooming in on Botho University, it was established in 1997 as one of the first tertiary institutions in Botswana. Botho University is driven by the core values of excellence, leadership, and innovation, and aims to become a centre of excellence in higher education. It has three branches in Botswana: Francistown, Gaborone, Maun campuses and one in Maseru (Lesotho). Botho University is accredited by the Human Resources Development Council (HRDC) and all programmes offered are accredited by the Botswana Qualifications Authority (BQA) and the Council on Higher Education (CHE) in Lesotho. As of current Botho university offers programmes through four faculties namely Faculty of Business and Accounting, Faculty of Computing, Faculty of Engineering and Applied Sciences and the Faculty of Education and Distance Learning. It offers courses from certificate level to Master's degree level and has over 6000 students and almost 500 staff members.

Problem statement

However the provision of quality comes along with challenges of shortage of resources as financial instability, cost, time and devotion. In addition the main problem may be the awareness of what are the necessities of

offering brand standard of quality education. Therefore it is vital for monitoring if there is provision of quality and advance education in all tertiary institutions to meet this mission to enlighten the world and individuals which is the intention of this research. This study seeks to find out how far Botho University facilitate quality education.

Objectives

- To find out at what degree does students are satisfied by educational system and resources provided in terms of quality.
- To come up with recommendations on how to solve the challenges faced based on students perspective about educational quality provided by the institution.
- To find out if quality education and employability are inter-related.

Research questions

- What is the perspective of students about the facilitation of quality education their institution is providing?
- Do tertiary institutions live up their expectations?

Definition of terms

- **Quality**- the standard of something when it is compared to other things like it, how good or bad something is.
- **Education**- Is a process of teaching, training and learning especially in schools or colleges to improve knowledge and develop skills. Also it can be defined as it is an interesting experience that teaches you something.
- **Perspective**- is defined as a particular attitude toward something or a way of thinking about something (viewpoint).
- **Sustainability**- involving the use of natural products and energy in a way that does not harm the environment or the current situation and that can be continued for the long time.
- **Job market** – a pool of potential employers willing to buy a services, skill/ qualifications.

Scope of the study

The mind-set of this study is to concentrate on the evaluation of quality education provided in tertiary institutions. The ideology of many developing countries in the recent years is to be self- sufficient and to produce products in their own industries. Therefore this lay down the foundation that quality education is a must in tertiary institutions for the exploration of alumni to the local industries production and management. This may help to grow an exporting country in many fields, producing experts capable of working on higher positions. Therefore this research is to find out to what degree does tertiary institutions takes effort to provide quality education.

Significance of the study

This paper seeks to discover if quality in education affects the employability of the graduates. Furthermore it seeks to unveil the quality of education which Botho university and other tertiary institutions in Francistown offer, and if there are shortcomings, suggest ways to improve on quality in learning.

Literature Review

Quality in education: There is no single definition for quality in Education and there is no universal consensus on what is the appropriate strategy to assure and manage quality in higher education (Becket, 2006 as cited in Brucaj, 2014) Quality can be defined in terms of excellence, perfection, value for money, fitness to purpose. (Harvey, 2005 as cited in Brucaj, 2014). Quality in education is a multi-dimensional concept with different components (Sallis, 2002). According to some researchers the definitions of quality are: Quality is fulfilling & exceeding customer's needs, Quality is everyone's job and quality is continuous improvement. Quality is recognition and reward. Quality is leadership, teamwork, measurement and systematic problem solving.(Lewis,1994; Gibbs,2010; Flores-Molina,2011 as cited in Brucaj,2014).

Quality education is a necessity to a sustainable economy of any nation. Sustainability is the ability to be sustained, supported, upheld, or confirmed so as to maintain a certain state or position. Necessity refers to an imperative requirement or need for something. The trends in the economic activity worldwide show that new methods, techniques and solution to crisis that may arise in the economy of any nation is vital to avoid the collapse of that economy. Therefore the nations worldwide have been forced to adopt hence the development of newly founded IT programs that facilitate the production in any economy, the use of auto machines in factories etc. The main question is do the custodians of the firms in business possess the necessary skill. Now zeroing in

to the training and education that an individual would have got quality or the value of it does it make them competent individuals, does that particular skill they possess match that is required in the business market world. What would it mean if they don't possess the necessary and what if they do? Quality education has got no universally accepted definition however The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, (2010), defines education the act or process of imparting or acquiring particular knowledge or skills, as for a profession and quality as referring to character with respect to fineness, or grade of excellence. The combination of these words however may mean different things depending on the perception of the one person to another. Also The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, (2010), defines quality education as equipping learners with skill and knowledge that would help develop psychologically and benefit them in future, being able to employ the skills they learnt in the days to day lives to sustain themselves even after graduation.

The quality of education provided by institutions however may vary based on multiple factors, the teaching system, programs provided, quality of lecturers, and the learning environment under which the education is being provided (McAleese, 2013). The lecturers in charge of imparting knowledge in students have to be of certain qualifications; therefore a selection procedure has to be followed separating expert lecturer from the mediocre ones living only the best lecturer's to do the teaching. Also the teaching system that a particular institution employs has a detrimental effect on the quality, the kind of system that encourages research, citation and a plagiarism policy would prove more useful than one that does not in providing quality education. Furthermore considering the programs or courses (Bollag, 2004) the institution provides they should be of relevance to time and trend of the business world, avoiding the situation where graduates would roam on the streets straight after graduation due to lack of jobs. Furthermore whether the environment in which teaching is conducted, does it meet the standards in order to be termed as conducive for learning. Lastly how a particular institution caters for diversity in its students for example catering for those with visual impairment or any other disability and the fact that the students might be of different backgrounds and international cases of different origin. Facilities with the attributes mentioned earlier could be said as those that provide quality education to students who enrol with them.

Importance of quality in education

Higher education plays an important role for the student and the society in which he lives. It represents the growth of the individual which allows him to lead a better life as there are more chances of getting a highly paid job; in turn the society is benefited as the ideal citizens are created who will keep the society peaceful. "According to a research done by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), the average earnings become high and the level of unemployment falls, with each education level acquired" (Pavel, 2012)

Uhuru Kenyatta, President of the Republic of Kenya (2015), said that provided quality education brings about a glittering future to individuals, society and whole world at large. Graduates who acquire quality skill and education from their respecting institutions are most likely to be employable. If not so the graduates may be able to use what they have learnt to start up their own business for example a graduate from an accountancy college may in the event that they do not find a job or if they so choose, start up their own accountancy consultancy agency offering accounting services and also by being able to employ their skills and start their own business, the graduates would be creating employment for other individuals in the society thus also helping in diversifying the economy of that particular nation investing in its private sector. Tertiary education also helps provide graduates with basics of understanding about economic activities that occur worldwide. A nation that possesses such people would be safe to be termed as a literate nation, a wise nation would in turn be able to prevent and run anti economic actions such as corruption.

Quality education provided to the society inspires creativity and innovation, moreover improves the nation's economy. Graduates and internship students do interact with the society to share knowledge, help the nation in making the decisions and coming up with new ideas of doing things better as stated by British Council, (2014). That by its own increases the productivity of the nation thereby improving its economy. Example can be alumni from technical college during electricity down failure; they can apply knowledge acquired from their programs to make solar street lights with the help of community members. The idea of coming up with solar street lights is creativity, diversification and its amending ordinary ones to advance ones. The transition of skills and knowledge from one individual with expertise to another of less expertise would result in the increase in experts in that particular thus creating a pool of employees that organizations could recruit from. The graduates with expertise in certain fields would be in a better position to be leaders in their particular field of expertise, therefore good education produces ideal leaders.

Negative impacts of lacking quality in education

According to Carroll (1982), the economy of any state is reliant on its micro and macro economies; however if there is a lack in quality of education provided this would affect factors such as entrepreneurship, creativity, innovation and employability. The failure to invest in quality of education offered to pupils threatens the long-

term competitiveness of nation's economy. With the rapid growth of manufacturing and tech jobs worldwide nations would face a challenge in being economically competitive if the graduates produced do not meet international standards. Due to globalization the students should compete not only with people from their country but also with people throughout the world for jobs. The students should possess some unique skills which make them eligible for the job which is possible only through quality education (Pavel, 2012). The level of entrepreneurship and the level of employment have an influence on household income, which is a determinate in Gross private domestic investment spending by firms and households which in turn affects the Gross National Product(GNP): is the output by citizens (irrespective of where they were produced) at home or abroad. And the Gross Domestic Product (GDP): refers to the output within a given economy over a given period of time usually one year. This output must be within the boundaries of the country by all the people in that country at the time regardless of nationality. Due to the rapid growth of global economy, education has become an imperative aspect for innovation, growth and development. Investment in education is investment in human capital, and lack of the former equals a lack of the latter (Albada,2010).

How to improve quality in education

In a response to tackle the lack in quality of education tertiary institutions should engage, project based learning where students get to learn hands-on, this would insure that they learn beyond context of textbooks (Edutopia Team, 2005). The advantage of this initiative is that students would know field experience unlike the traditional book-based lecturing where students are more likely to memorize the content not mastering it. Institutions should consider apprenticeship for teaching and lecturing the aim being to equip lectures with experience and teaching skills before getting to work. While improving quality tertiary institutions should consider adapting to changes in technology blending technology to learning through different platforms. Neal and Gonch, (2013), Tertiary institutions should revise their core curriculum and ensure that it meets required standards. It is very imperative that quality of education facilitated by tertiary institutions should be of certain standards.

The great Nelson Mandela once said “education is the most powerful weapon we can use to change the world.” Its importance is immeasurable because it is a self-enlighten up process for a life time as added by Victor H, (n.d). This is so because quality education equip one with capability to interpret things rightly and applying the gathered information in real life scenarios (Victor H, n.d), therefore it wipes out the wrong beliefs from one's mind and that makes one be civilised and innovative. In summary, quality education is important in anyone's life, to have it, access to it by all means for sustainability.

Methodology: This paper seeks to discover the importance of quality in higher education and also to investigate how far do Botho University do offer quality in education. Questionnaires were used to collect the data from students in Botho University Francistown campus. Questionnaires were distributed to students to fill in as this was convenient and was time saving considering data collection and analysis also this gave the respondents an opportunity to answer freely and honestly knowing their identity would not be revealed.

Questionnaire was divided into three sections.

Section A: This section consisted of the demographical questions such as gender of the participant, level & course of study.

Section B: This section consisted of Closed ended questions addressing the extent to which Botho University provide quality education which should be rated from excellent, good and fair. The other question was does the quality of education one get influences their employability which should be answered by a yes or no. The open ended questions were stated as strengths and short comings and suggestions of the institution in providing the quality education. Reasons for how the quality influences one's employment. Lastly in this section were the suggestions for the institution to provide well rounded and employable graduates.

Section C: In this section the questions were on a Likert scales of 5 ranging from strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree to strongly disagree.

Results & Discussion

Results analysis

The questionnaires were distributed to students.

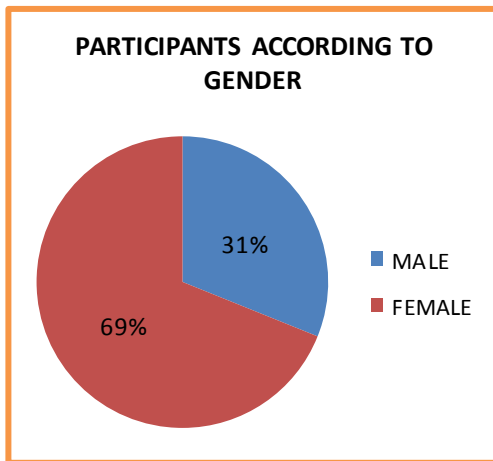


Fig: 1 GENDER OF THE PARTICIPANTS

69% - females
 31% - males.

Questionnaires were distributed across all faculties offered in Francistown Botho University and below are how they rated the quality of education facilitated in this institution.

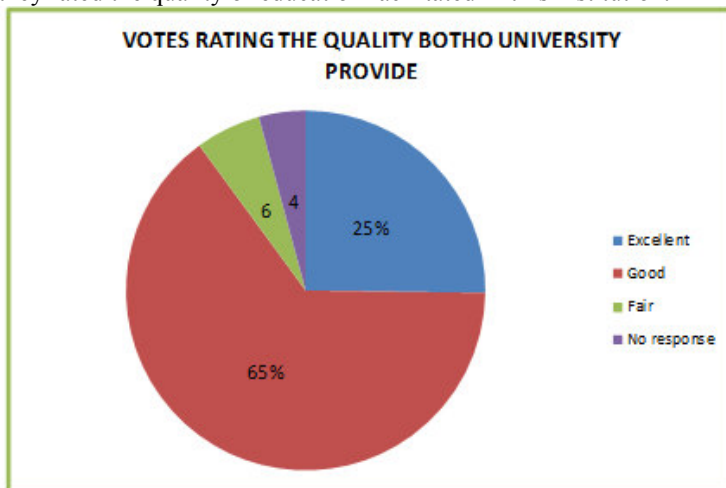


Fig: 2 SHOWING THE QUALITY PROVIDED IN BOTHO UNIVERSITY

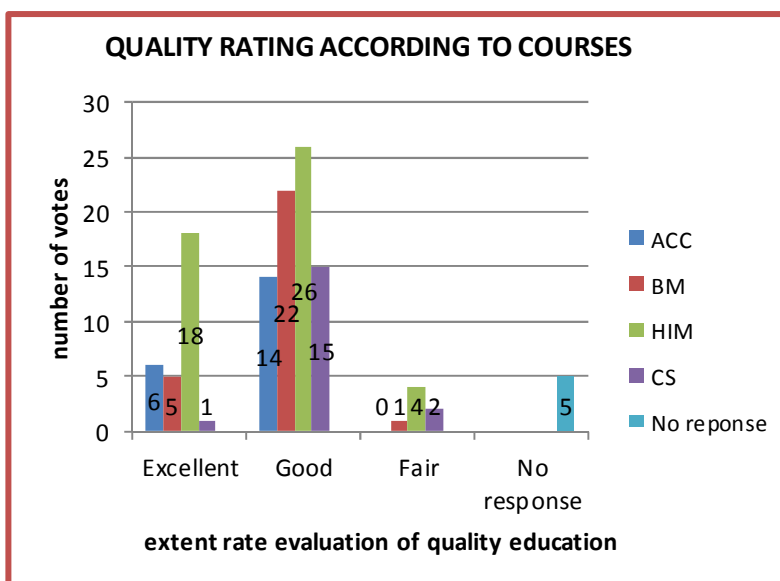


Fig: 3 QUALITY AS RATED BY STUDENTS OF DIFFERENT COURSES

The results above indicates that most students rate the quality education offered as good, followed by excellent then fair. The difference between good voted with 77 students and excellent with 30 votes is 47, not excluding fair and no response is 35. This marks out that there are some areas that are given a short sight on but are also important.

Based on the faculty or courses student's perspectives differ from the results above they indicate that Health and Information Management students are the top best to appreciate facilities provided then followed by Business Management, Accounting and least been Computing students.

In relation to quality education provided with the outside world, question on its influence on the employability was asked to question students if they are aware of their studies to their after been alumnus. The results below show out of 119 students participated 83% agree to the statement hence this shows a positive perspective of the future. However there are votes for "No" and no response this may have two meanings being some students have insecurity or doubt either about themselves or their surrounding environment. Zeroing into the "No" votes according to faculties HIM leads then both ACC and CS and results indicate no against vote from BM faculty.

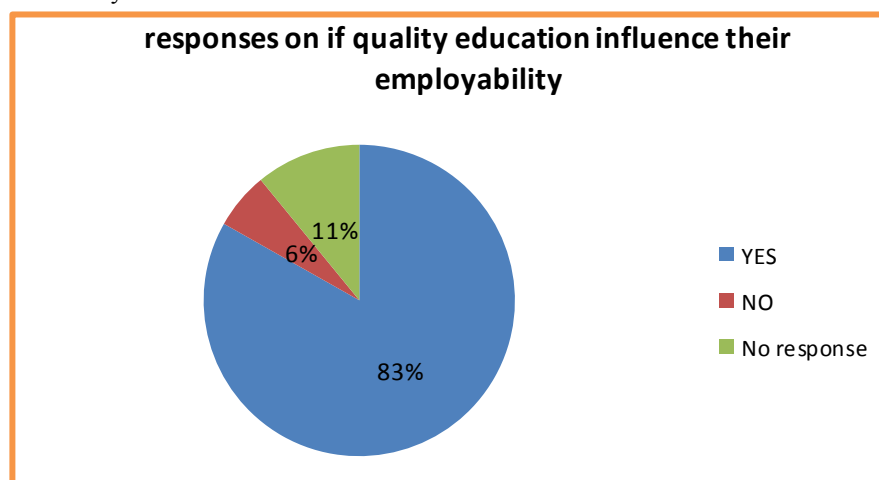


Fig: 4 RESPONSES IF QUALITY EDUCATION INFLUENCES THEIR EMPLOYABILITY

Lately the results on rating the quality education offered indicated that most students rated it as "GOOD". This may resemble that they either not satisfied with what they do have or what they do not have wishing if those facilities were there the quality of education would be better. To expose what exactly their appreciations and complaints are below are answers to the questions asked so as to reveal that.

Answers given for the question "The strengths of your institution in providing quality education".

- ❖ Use of blackboard
- ❖ Library has e-library, Ebscohost, online journals and e-books
- ❖ Quality lecturers
- ❖ Learning materials provided
- ❖ Technology usage
- ❖ Deans awards
- ❖ Wi-Fi
- ❖ Conducive environment for studying

Answer given for question "what do you feel regarding the short comings of your institution in facilitating quality education".

- ❖ Slow internet
- ❖ Deans awards there are only certificates
- ❖ No printers for students to print out their documents in practice rooms
- ❖ Lessons duration is too long 2 ½ Hrs. while concentration time is 1 ½ Hrs.
- ❖ No general meetings with students

Answers given for question "give any suggestions to address the above" which are short comings?

- ❖ Reduce class timings
- ❖ Improve internet
- ❖ Deans awards should be celebrated like ceremony and given prizes
- ❖ Semester breaks to be given.
- ❖ Printers in practice rooms for students to print out their documents

Answers to question "Please give reason for Yes/No" based on the question read as "Do you think the quality of education one gets influence their employability."

- ❖ Quality helps you to get competent skills needed for corporate world
- ❖ More likely to get a job
- ❖ Quality determines adaptability in the market

Answers to the question “Any suggestion to the institution to produce graduates as well-rounded and employable.”

- ❖ Duration of attachments to be increased
- ❖ Do practical’s (hands - on)
- ❖ Motivational talks from outsiders (speakers)
- ❖ Career guidance
- ❖ Workshops
- ❖ Books with more quality information

Strengths, short coming and suggestion have been discussed in broadly and in general above. However the results below indicate on which areas contributing to quality education and the level it is appreciated or have short sight on. Each individual respondent have their own choice to rate each area based on their own interest and perspective hence makes it easy to analyse the standard or level of satisfaction of students in regard to the quality facilitated.

Questions asked	Strong agree	agree	neutral	disagree	Strong disagree	No response
Before applying to the institution you had background information about it how it runs?	15	37	31	17	17	-
Do lecturers start with the basics when they start the module?	56	51	9	1	0	-
Does the program or the course have demand in the market?	28	52	32	2	2	-
Are you satisfied with the teaching methodology used by your lecturers?	27	54	12	7	3	-
The books provided are relevant to the courses description?	29	29	29	17	11	-
Is the Semester period is enough to grasp all knowledge provided?	22	50	24	16	5	-
Is Course duration is enough to have all knowledge required?	38	50	22	5	7	-
Is the Duration given to seek attachments in enough?	12	26	49	15	9	-
Is the attachment period is enough for students to get more experience on the workplace?	10	34	28	22	11	-
Does the institution have information when a student is on attachment?	18	42	42	3	3	8
Is the technology used the institution facilitates the learning process?	34	50	21	6	2	4
Do lecturers have relevant qualifications on the modules they teach?	42	47	19	3	3	3
Co-curricular provided by institution enough for improvement in studies?	15	42	32	18	8	2
Does the deans awards does it motivates you to perform well in your studies?	52	33	21	5	5	1
Does quality of education depend on the students’ ability to perform well a school?	36	47	18	9	0	7
Does quality of education depends on the qualification on the tutor performance in the class?	26	43	30	7	4	7
Does the quality depend on the qualification of the lecturer/tutor?	27	41	25	9	6	9
Does the quality depend on the secondary school from where the student graduated?	10	20	30	25	24	8
Is quality in education a must	58	29	17	2	3	8
Do the learning resources add to quality education?	48	41	12	0	3	13
Is the learning materials you get are of quality oriented?	22	46	29	6	8	6
Do you think the institution is providing you with the necessary skills to be an employable graduate?	29	48	20	9	5	6

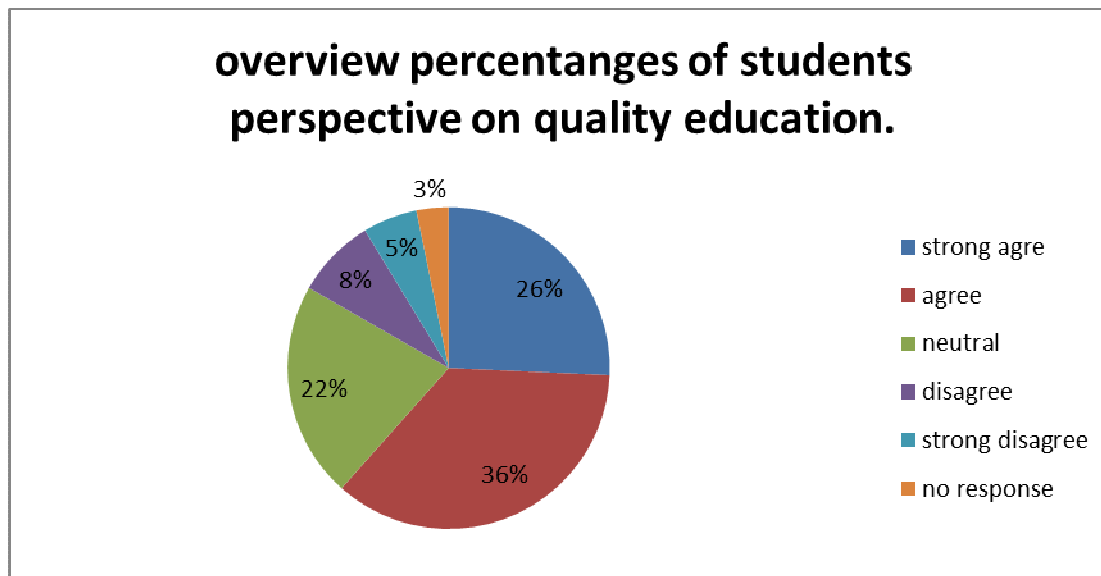


FIG: 5 OVERVIEW OF STUDENTS PERSPECTIVE ON QUALITY EDUCATION

Limitations of the study

- Some of the sections in the questionnaire were unanswered
- The time to conduct the study was not enough; classes and students projects were an inconvenience to conduct the survey.
- Getting information from other institutions was not easy (they did not readily give information).
- This study is only applicable to Francistown campus, the data was not collected from other branches.

Conclusions:

The study shows that the students are aware of the importance of quality in education as quality has an impact on their employment. The study has unveiled that the quality of education that Botho university facilitates is good, meaning the students appreciate the effort of the entity in providing quality. This however means that Botho needs to do some improvements so as to strive for excellence. Students have shown their gratitude to the university for the material it provides to facilitate their studies such being the books and learning guides, also the technology the university has in place has made their stay even more pleasant. Lecturer's also lay a brick in building the reputation of Botho University as a quality facilitator; in short the study has also come to discover the role of lecturer's in providing quality that the qualification of lectures affects their performance. From this study it became evident that the students consider their lecturers to be an added advantage in performing well in their studies. With the campus already inline Botho university promises to be the best university Botswana has ever had in Francistown.

Recommendations

- There should be awareness and trainings on using the technology used in Botho, some students are not aware of using itracker and other programs
- Activities occurring in the campus should be communicated well in time, the SRC (student representative council) should form committees that raise awareness and encourage participation in regard to academic activities such as the linkz programs and so on and so forth.
- Excellence should be adopted as a motive and valued by everyone(students& staff) in Botho this would make the vision attainable
- Deans award which is held every semester should be a ceremony where all students attend and prizes being awarded to the award winners, this might inspire other students.

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