



LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS THROUGH QUALITY ASSURANCE IN MANAGEMENT OF TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This paper examined Leadership Effectiveness through Quality Assurance in Management of Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria. The paper reviewed relevant literature on quality assurance in the achievement of Tertiary Education objectives. The concepts of quality assurance, and leadership effectiveness were reviewed from the opinion of other scholars on the subject matter. A clear consensus was reached on the role of quality assurance in the various educational levels and the entire educational system; and as such, the various roles, importance and the actual practices of quality assurance in the higher education institutions were critically analyzed. The paper further buttressed that leadership's effectiveness in assuring quality in the achievement of tertiary educational aims and objectives ensure that the system produces competent students and staff who can favorably compete with their global counterparts. Conclusively, the paper attributed organizational success in tertiary institutions as dependent on the effectiveness of leadership in assuring quality in the organization and thus submitted that quality assurance in tertiary institutions is a reflection of the effectiveness of institutional leadership. Also that quality assurance is what ensures that set standards are complied with at all times through setting up most effective leadership approaches that would ensure institutional effectiveness. The paper suggested amongst others, that quality assurance is a collective process, and all stakeholders must be involved in quality assurance through effective and coordinated efforts of the tertiary institution leadership.

Keywords: Quality Assurance, Management, Leadership, Effectiveness.

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INTRODUCTION

The effectiveness of leadership in the management of tertiary institutions is reflected in the quality of attainment of set standards through quality assurance. Thus, leadership effectiveness could easily be adjudged from the achievement of set goals at stipulated standards, spurred by leadership through inspiration and motivation of organizational hierarchy. The quality of tertiary institutions is directly related to their leadership and they show forth the quality of the effectiveness of their leaders. The concept of leadership influence on the human factor of organizations to achieve set goals according to set standards is the crux of quality assurance. The leaders in the educational system are those that motivate others to a team of quality conscious employees who ensure that the entire process that leads to quality output is strictly complied with. The leader plays a critical role in the management of the quality assurance process.

Tertiary education is the level of education offered to those who has successfully completed secondary school level. At this level of education, the academic activities and the educational experience which the students are exposed to prepares them to become highly skilled professionals that would be able to man the national economy. Since tertiary educational system is one that includes a wider range of post-secondary educational institutions, it covers all the mono-technics, polytechnics, and universities, and also those institutions that offer correspondence courses, hence the need to establish the standard with which the tertiary education can be evaluated. The national quality assurance goal is to develop and improve effective internal and external mechanism to enhance learner's achievement that satisfy the needs of the stakeholders, accountable to the public and meet global challenges, hence quality assurance in higher education include all the institutional, and external government strategies, policies, measures, and systematically planned process which are directed or documented to ensure that best quality of educations that can stand out with international best practices is developed and maintained over time.

Quality Assurance as the attainment of set goals in tertiary institutions in Nigeria is a reflection of several factors within the institution. Quality assurance in education covers the entire process that leads to the actual educational service delivery. It has to do with the entire process that ensures compliance with set standards in the particular educational system. Quality assurance gives the tertiary education a common and harmonious characteristic and trend of operation all over the country, and more so, it establishes the level to which the tertiary education in the country must not go below.

Quality assurance is not just fixed to educational institutions including only by mere routine practice, but by a clear essence driven by the need for quality and to ensure that the entire organizational operations complies to the required standard of operations and also maintain these standard without reduction in the level of quality. Interestingly, quality control is not just to maintain the level of compliance to documented standards, but also to do that through self-check and continuous evaluation of the entire process over a period of time.

UNESCO (2006) identified five dimensions of quality in universities namely: learners, environment, content, processes, and outcome. These five dimensions of qualities of the universities can only be achieved through leadership effectiveness in quality assurance in the management of the institutions. Effective leadership ensures quality assurance in the five dimensions of qualities within the stipulated standard. Hence it is in the place of the school leader to man-up and manage these processes that transcends to the actualization of the educational aims and objective. The leadership in the tertiary institution have a burden of making

sure that quality is continuously attained in the content, process, and output of the school. This role and others are very crucial to the advancement of the tertiary education system.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Trait Theory of Leadership

Relating to the trait theory, it is believed that leadership is embodied with some behavior that is consistent with leaders and thus their eminent success factors. The effectiveness based on the theory is anchored in the fact that there are certain leadership characteristic that can be very composite and useful for the advancement of the institutions and are subject to and entirely dependent on which characteristic that are seen in the leader. Thus effectiveness in the coordination of quality assurance processes in the management of tertiary institutions is a function of effective leadership.

The Great Man Theory of Leadership

The Great Man theory is of the opinion that these behaviors can be genetically traced. It is also believed that some persons are exceptional leaders and are born with these leadership characteristics while some are taught to imbibe and learn this characteristic which are also consistent with the leaders, hence, in Aristotle's position, leaders are born and not made as opposed by the school of thought that nail their point on leadership as that which entirely depends on style. A leader therefore is a person who has the behavioral trait and place directing rules and has others believe that he has the charisma to direct them to achieve their aim (Odou, Anietie & Ehule, 2019).

Leadership

The concept of leadership is an integral aspect of management that has a contextual application. Leadership however has no consensus definition. Leadership can be considered in two approaches based on the fact that it can be perceived as a style or behavior. Leadership occupy management positions in an institution and are seen as role models to those they lead. Every leader has their unique personality that influences the way they deal with their members. Odou, Anietie and Ehule, (2019) defined leadership as an accepted force of influence that coordinates others and inspire them to willingly comply with the aspirations and goals of the group through adopting the right motivation. Leadership, according to Eneasefor (1989) in Robert-Okah (2005) is a process through which leaders influence their followers to act for certain goals that represent the values, wants, needs, aspirations and expectations of both leaders and followers. A leader therefore is someone that establishes a cordial relationship, which depends greatly on him, and is in charge of facilitating the achievement of the goals of an institution. Oluwuo (2004) in Robert-Okah (2005), defined leadership as the ability to persuade others to pursue divine goals. Therefore, the school leadership is mandated to comply with the various agencies and sometimes conduct or constitute a quality assurance committee or by reinforcing other departments in the institution who are charged with quality assurance task. Okorie (2003) in Nakpodia (2012) identified these as the three components of leadership, namely, responsibility, authority and power. Expatriating on the above, the concept of leadership could be seen as follows:

Leadership has Responsibility: Leadership is a responsibility to carry out moves that are targeted towards the achievement of group objectives. Hence the success of any tertiary institution quality assurance depends on the level of commitment to responsibility by the leadership to ensure that quality is attained at all levels. The willingness of leadership to the responsibility of the coordination of these five dimensions - quality of learners, quality environment, quality of course content, quality of processes, and quality of outcome according to set goals and standards through the processes of quality assurance is what determines leadership effectiveness. The outcome of processes are trailed to the leadership, thus, the personal response or delegation of duties by leadership during programmes and activities is a reflection of the effectiveness of the leadership of the institution.

Leadership has Authority: Leadership has authority to perform which comes with expertise, right and ability. The effectiveness of leadership is the use of authority to carry out designated duties and actions within required standards. The authority of leadership must include financial independence within the prerogative of expenditure. For effectiveness, leadership need to have authority in execution of financial obligations to achieve set goals and standards. The effectiveness of leadership of tertiary institutions would be enhanced by the execution of authority to perform, utilize funds, enforce law and other, including rules and regulations, and implement plans with the auspices of the agents of quality assurance within its organization to achieve set goals and standards.

Leadership has Power: Leadership has power. The ability to control, influence and command the elements of quality assurance with supremacy within their institutions is the reflection of effectiveness of the leadership. The effectiveness of leadership in assuring quality is the ability to ensure that designated duties and actions within required standards are carried out appropriately. The execution of power of leadership of tertiary institutions in ensuring that agents of quality assurance within its organization achieve set goals and standards is a demonstration of effectiveness.

Quality Assurance and Quality Enhancement

According to Agbulu (2019), quality assurance is the maintenance of a desired level of quality in a service or product; especially by means of attending to every state of the process of delivery or production. More so, quality assurance is a general term that encompasses quality enhancement and other processes that lead to improving quality, thus, it may be safe to state that both quality assurance and quality enhancement are interactive processes that work cohesively to uplift standards (Agbulu, 2019).

Alele-Williams (2004), defined quality assurance in any educational institution as that which indicates the pre-approval eminence and special features that makes the institution distinct from other forms of institution. More elaborately, Akinsolu (2012) saw quality assurance in education as a consistent provision and utilization of high standard resources to foster effectiveness in teaching and learning at every stage and aspect of educational system. Fasasi (2006) presented his argument that quality assurance is only applicable when its strategic procedures are not abruptly stopped before the end of the programme. Thus, quality assurance in Nigeria tertiary education institutions is a continuous improvement in the quality of teaching service delivery and other research-based activities which are achievable through path-ways

employing the desirable mechanism which are internally and externally relevant to the institution.

The various qualifications that are awarded by the various higher education institutions through a quality control process must ensure that employees are well equipped with the needed skills to perform their task effectively and efficiently in the universal labor environment.

Strategies for Ensuring Quality Assurance in Tertiary Education Institutions

The Federal Ministry of Education (2009) stated that quality standard in the education system are goals or targets to which learners, teachers, staff and school leaders aspire to attain. Quality assurance is meant to checkmate formative and summative work processes through supervision; preventive and corrective measures taken to ensure that the processes and contents of the educational services given in the higher education are not just of standard, but are of consistent standards. The term quality does not have a consensus definition, but quality assurance is based on a standard phenomenon that is a guide to an operation in a unique organizational context. When it is compared to other things, it can be subject to the position of the definition; which means that, it is what satisfies the user of the educational services that can make judgment of what constitutes quality assurance. More differently, quality assurance can be in form of institutional benchmarking in comparison to best practices in the educational system outside the Nigerian system. Expressly, quality assurance in the educational system is a harmonious concept that covers the entire activities that are designed to checkmate the process that leads to the design the input-output process (Bukola, 2012).

Quality assurance in all levels of the Nigeria education system involves the monitoring, the assessment, and the evaluation processes that lead to the production of education outputs, and communication of the educational changes and innovations to the various stakeholders using the right standard and medium. The outcome of quality assurance must however, be made known and the standard to which every staff must comply with; must also be made very clear to ensure that there are no complications as regards the implementation processes. Quality assurance also implies consistently meeting educational or product specifications or getting things right the first time and every time (Akinola, 2013). Quality assurance in Nigerian tertiary education is therefore a collective efforts of the educational institutions to be available and willing to make things right.

Quality Enhancement in Education

The skills needed for quality assurance in higher education include confidence, excellent technical skills, numerical skills, observation skills and good understanding and interpretation of data and statistics. To ensure a qualitative education towards school improvement, Babalola (2014) identified four steps to be taken:

Monitoring: This has to do with keeping a watchful eye on the input, process output and the environment of an education system to ensure that things keep going the right direction and according to the set standards.

Evaluation: This involves assessment, approval, valuation and estimation of the worth of education inputs, process and outcome for the purposes of making judgment and corrective criticism.

Supervision: This deals with overseeing those who are responsible for one thing or the other (teaching, learning, resource utilization, management and others) in the process of educating a student.

Inspection: This is more penetrating and piercing than supervision. It is job focused and scientific approach. It involves close examination, check, scrutiny and assessment of available facilities and assessment of available resources in an institution with a view to establishing how far a particular institution has met prescribed standards.

In the light of the above, the onus on leadership effectiveness is to blend the above activities into all the constituents of the five dimensions of quality in universities as identified by UNESCO (2015), which are quality of learners, environment, content, processes, and outcome.

The Role of Leadership in Quality Assurance in Tertiary Institutions

In tertiary institutions, leadership plays various roles in quality assurance to achieve set goals and standards. They include the followings;

Establishment of Internal Educational Policies: Jaiyeoba and Atanda, (2005) defined educational policy as the definite course of action proposed by the government in power or an executive authority and adopted as expedient in the issue and problems of education. In tertiary institutions, leadership through streamlined procedures, can put up new policies that would assure quality in the five identified quality dimensions of tertiary education system as quality learners, quality environment, quality contents, quality processes, and quality outcomes, and ensure that the students and staff comply with existing quality control measures. More so, the university must also put in efforts to make new policies in line with changing trends of things in the university system so as to ensure that the standard that is expected within the university does not fall below the minimum benchmark attainable. The school policies may be right instituted by either the Visitor of the university or the various ministries of agencies that has to do with supervision of the system to ensure that there is quality control. Where possible, the leadership is expected to liaise with the various agencies and the school Senate to ensure that the policies are not just targeted on a set of people as punitive measure, but as a means to check and control the various intervening variables that may affect the entire educational service delivery within the system. The competencies demonstrated in these processes of policy establishment are indicators of leadership effectiveness in the tertiary institutions.

Encouragement of Teamwork: Tertiary leadership upholds the responsibility to act as the catalyst for hard work and teamwork. The school system survives better with teamwork and interdependence to achieve set goals. While this is true, it can also be safely stated that the university leader can ensure quality assurance by facilitating interschool collaborations, inter faculty collaborations, inter departmental collaborations and conferences that would ensure exchange of knowledge for improved institutional effectiveness. There should be boosting task control initiatives. Procter and Mueller (2000) stated that for teamwork to be effective in educational institutions, there must be collective task control, collective role clarity, clarity of duties and responsibilities, and social identity of the members of staff.

Motivation of Workers: Motivation is a variable that has strong impact on any organizational setting. This is because the leadership of the organization must be willing to ensure that

employees put in their effort to ensure that there is a desirable output. Leadership must ensure that the workers are motivated to take quality assurance as a critical aspect of their service delivery. University employees who are able or willing to always comply with set goals and quality standards can be singled out for special commendations, rewards and other motivational persuasions.

Delegation of Authority: The University and other tertiary institutions are big and cover a collection of faculties and institutes that are into the business of delivering various aspects of teaching service delivery, along with research and community development. The university leadership cannot personally monitor, evaluate, supervise and inspect the various activities going on in the university at the same time. Also, since the university is an institution that is made up with people that are highly specialized, the issue of a single leader checking the levels of compliance with quality would be an unrealistic task. Hence leadership must delegate authority through the various deans' and departmental heads and other leaders to ensure that quality is not just assured but consistently complied with over time. Akinsolu (2012) suggested that universities through the directorate of academic planning can also embark on self-evaluation to ascertain the level to which the education service delivery and other non-teaching activities are in accordance to quality.

Instilling Sanction and Punishment for Defaulters: One of the ways humans are made to comply with rules and regulations is by stating the punitive implication of default of a standing rule. Invariably, an employee or the student of the institution who knows the punitive implication of not complying with standard would find and explore all the other options that would ensure that his service are quality checked and enhanced. Leadership must instill sanctions and punishment for defaulters as well as commend compliance and adherence to set rules and standards.

Monitoring and Supervision: In the tertiary institutions' educational system, those who are rendering services are supposed professionals hence the need for close supervision is sometimes neglected. There is still need for monitoring by the various sector leadership in the school to ensure that the various departmental requirements in terms of admission eligibility standards for learners, staff recruitment qualifications and criteria, qualitative and conducive learning environment, validity of contents of curriculum and learning activities, processes of input and outputs in educational service delivery, and outcomes of teaching and learning interactions and other forms of quality control techniques are highly adhered to. Hence Gbenu (2012) posited that when there are quality control mechanisms, leadership in the school is able to find ways to ensure that the departments comply with set goals and standards of internal and external visitation by the NUC or other agencies that are entitled to regulate the activities of the universities. The leadership is however expected to guide, motivate and also assign employees with less experience with those who have more experience. This would help to improve the confidence and capacity of the employees in delivering their tasks. Leadership should ensure that inspection of issues relating to course outline, project supervision, course accreditation and others should not be a means to bring down others' effort, rather a way of appraisal and possible encouragement.

The Role of Quality Assurance in the Leadership of Tertiary Education Institution

In tertiary institutions, quality assurance plays various roles to help leadership to achieve set goals and standards. Quality assurance has a systematic position in the effort to maintain an educational system that is able to compete favorably with the international best practices and meet the needs of national economy. Quality assurance has a management assessment procedure that guides tenaciously the objectives of the educational institution. Hence it weighs performance against the objectives and consistently ensures that there is quality output with continuous enhancement of the entire work operation of the entire organizational process.

As posited by Agbulu (2019), the difference between the organizations that succeed and those that have failed consistently can be traced to the issues of quality assurance. Hence the issue of quality assurance is not just a quest, but also a continuous process that is sort for to maintain a desirable standard that can be reliably tested over time, and same results can be ascertained. The various educational institutions and the universities especially need to develop a standard procedure that must be followed by its leadership members and other employees to ensure quality in their overall educational service delivery.

In this regard, Sallis (2008) in Agbulu (2019) pointed out four drivers and motivating factors or roles that can be considered as the key quality roles which he termed the “quality imperatives, namely: the moral imperative, professional imperative, competitive imperative, and accountability imperative. Tertiary institutional leadership must be endowed with the following qualities within to be able to assure quality within the educational system. These qualities include:

Moral Imperatives: This is anchored on the moral requirement in education. Through quality assurance, the universities leadership will be required to ensure that the type of educational services and experiences which the students are exposed to be of required quality. More so, the imperative is on the moral justification of providing the best education within the reach of the institution, so as to meet up the moral obligation of the leadership of the institution to provide education that complies with the set standards.

Professional Imperatives: Professional imperative is based on the need and commitment to the needs of the students, and the obligation to meet their needs professionally. Martins (2013) asserted that this can be done by engaging the best quality assurance techniques that would be able to ensure that the educational service delivery is done based on the professional conduct and requirement for service delivery. This is done by leadership in ensuring professionalism by the school personnel and other members of the institution to act accordingly with the notion that the school is a professional ground. The conduct of the leadership of the institution must comply with set standards and also ensure that there is strict compliance to the rules of job delivery as given by the supervisory agencies.

Competitive Imperatives: Malik, Danish and Usman (2010) identified that through quality assurance, the educational institutions, especially the tertiary education institution would be able to compare its educational delivery with its counterparts in the other part of the world, and be able to re-evaluate certain anomalies and also re-strategize for the improvement of the process that leads to the output. This competitive imperatives would be reflected through the process of

continuous modification, re-innovation and re-strategizing by leadership to make the institution different and outstanding from her competitors all the time.

Accountability Imperatives: Educational institutions need to show that they are able to deliver the objectives with which it was established to achieve. Through quality assurance, the tertiary institutions' leadership will be able and made to be accountable and demonstrate high standards of accountability. This quality imperative is very important in the leadership of tertiary institutions as the universities are expected to be able to state and pursue transparently the objectives of tertiary education and achieve high standards in set goals.

CONCLUSION

Quality assurance is a serious concern to all educational leadership and other stakeholders. Tertiary institutions are given the mandate constitutionally to produce higher skilled manpower that can fit-in the need of the national economy. The university and other tertiary institutions leadership has a critical role to play to ensure that the objectives of tertiary education are not only achieved but also achieved within the set standards that guide the institutions. However, quality assurance is the responsibility of leadership and the various agencies that are legally mandated by government to deal with the quality control measures. They need to liaise with the various tertiary education institutions agencies to be better strategized to ensure quality in the entire processes that lead to quality output in the educational system.

Conclusively, leadership must comply with quality assurance standards and ensure that set standards at all-time are achieved through setting up the most effective approaches that would ensure institutional effectiveness and quality output which in itself is the reflection of leadership effectiveness.

Suggestions

- Quality assurance is a collective process, so all the stakeholders of education must be involved through the effective coordinative effort of the tertiary institution leadership.
- Tertiary institutional leadership should establish internal and external quality control units that should independently and collaboratively work together to improve on the quality of tertiary education service delivery.
- Tertiary institutional leadership should ensure enabling teaching and learning environment within their institutions to support quality tertiary education so as to prepare graduates that would be able to meet up competitively with their global counterparts.
- As a hallmark of effectiveness, tertiary institutional leadership should place high premium on making financial decisions to quality education projects and activities to be able to meet the funding needs of quality tertiary education with the meagre funds provided.
- Tertiary institutional leadership should consider the four imperatives as attributes of leadership effectiveness during delegation and assignment of duties in quality assurance.

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