



International Journal of Institutional Leadership, Policy and Management  
Volume 2, Issue 4, pp. 741-753. 2020

ISSN: 2735-9220

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## ADDRESSING CONSTRAINTS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF QUALITY ASSURANCE IN TERTIARY EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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### ABSTRACT

This paper addressed constrains in the implementation of quality assurance in tertiary education in Nigeria. Nigeria like other country of the world recognized education as the major instrument for effective development. In this paper institutional management as a means to quality assurance was examined. The paper as well highlight some of the major constrains of quality assurance and address remedy to such constrain. The paper concludes that for quality assurance to be achieved, there will be proper policy implementation in every area of tertiary education institution. It was further suggested that, the Nigeria government should place high premium on education by meeting up the recommended 26% of budget on educational spending as prescribed by UNESCO.

**Keywords:** Constrains, Quality Assurance, Institutional Management, Tertiary Education, Teaching Profession.

Reference to this paper should be made as follows:

Robinson, A. E., & Ibara, E. C. (2020). Addressing constraints on the implementation of quality assurance in tertiary education in Nigeria. *International Journal of Institutional Leadership, Policy and Management*, 2(4), 741-753.

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### INTRODUCTION

Tertiary education is post-secondary education and is the education given after secondary education in colleges of education, polytechnics, university and those institutions offering correspondence course. Tertiary education institution is seeing as unique institution which is differentiated from others in terms of research and its managers are designated as rector, provost and vice chancellor.

Tertiary education has been recognized as a fundamental instrument for the construction of knowledge economy and the development of human capitals all over the world (World Bank, 1999). Peretomode and Chukwuma (2007) opined that tertiary education is the facilitator, the bed rock, the power house and the driving force for the strong socio-economic, political, cultural, and industrial development of a nation, as tertiary education institution are key mechanisms increasingly recognized as wealth and human capital producing industries. Therefore, the quality of knowledge which is generated in institution of higher learning is critical to national development.

Country can only achieve sustainable development by improving through training in tertiary level of education. Manpower higher level training can only be achieved in tertiary education for national development and for all the above to be achieved there must be quality assurance in every sector of education, quality assurance has its origin in large-scale manufacturing industries. Allais (2009) notes that in the factories, that their concerns was to ensure that the items they are producing did not have defects and so, for that, there is need to bring in inspectors. The function of the inspectors was to check samples of completed products, taking their quality as representative of all other products. This was quality control. In education, there products are human beings; therefore, we cannot afford to have factory rejects or products with defects. That is why quality assurance is necessary in education, this is because defect in the education production line brings tremendous consequences to the socio-economic, politically and cultural wellbeing of the nations.

It is clear that the major purpose for quality assurance is to prevent mistakes and defects in manufactured products. Stebbing (1993) opined that quality assurance comprises both administrative and procedural activities implemented in a system in a way that all the requirements and goals for a product, service or activity to be fulfilled.

Therefore, for us to get education right in our nation and ensured that it is quality in every area, we must address the below sub-heading. The paper therefore focused on the following:

- Variable to quality assurance in tertiary education
- Institutional management as a means to quality assurance in tertiary education
- Major constrains facing tertiary education in Nigeria
- Remedy to constrains facing tertiary education
- Conclusion and suggest strategies for handling these constrains

## **CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION**

### **Quality Assurance in Tertiary Education**

Quality assurance in tertiary education include internal and external mechanisms put in place by administrator's or management of tertiary institution and accreditation agencies, this is to make sure that there is standard in all the functions of the institution. The external accreditation bodies are National Universities Commission (NUC) for Universities, National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) for Polytechnics and National Teachers Institute (NTI) for College of Education the above mentioned bodies have employed various variables to ensure the quality assurance of their programme and institutions, Adepoju and Akinola (2007); Oyebade, Oladipo and Adetore (2007); highlights the following, such as:

- Minimum academic standard
- Impact assessment
- Visitation
- Carrying capacity and admission quota
- Accreditation
- Publications and research assessment
- Structures, infrastructure and utility

Meanwhile Adepoju (2007) identified more or other quality assurance measures such as

- Accreditation of programmes or institution,
- Monitoring, assessment and evaluation of existing staff strength, students and facilities,
- Capacity building for teaching and non-teaching staff,
- Exchange programs for teaching personal and students,
- Institutional ranking in terms of undergraduate and post graduate courses and programmes,
- Prescription of benchmarks and periodic review and production of documents on minimum standard and,
- External moderation system.

### **Structures, Infrastructure and Utility**

Facilities whether it is physical or infrastructure are important in school management. The quality of education has tremendous bearing with the availability of physical facilities as well as the learning environment. The students poor performance has being traced to inadequate and poor management of school facilities.

Infrastructure (physical) has been identified as one of the facilities that must be properly utilized for successful teaching/learning outcome. The quality utilization of infrastructural facilities by the school head enhances quality of instruction delivery by the teacher and positive performance of students. It is very clear that proper utilization of school facilities will actually leads to the achievement of the desired school goals and also depends on the needs and rate of usage of school facilities. Obasi and Asodike (2014) are of the opinion that infrastructure facilities can be over-utilized, under-utilized when they are used above the normal capacity and are not serviced or repaired as at when due. For students to be intellectually, socially and morally normal there must be proper usage of school infrastructure to assist the student develop properly.

**Infrastructures are of different types and they are all needed for the development of the students. They are such as:**

- School building
- Games facilities
- Recreation facilities
- School equipment
- Mechanics

- Laboratories
- Classroom
- Workshops
- Library
- Furniture
- Vehicles
- Health/sick bay facilities
- Boarding facilities and many others
- For tertiary education to achieve quality assurance, the above mentioned facilities should be put in place (Abraham, 2013).

### **Visitation**

Tertiary institutions are expected to be managed by a professional administrator and management, but no matter the qualification acquired by the professional he or she still needs to be checked by a way of consistent visitation of the National University Commission (NUC) for (NUC) to achieve the required goal in education they must put on ground a formational visitation committee that should be visiting schools from time to time to make sure that the activities of the school are in line with national policy of education, secondly to make sure that their curriculum is in line with that of other universities.

Therefore, for the committee to achieve the (NUC) goal there must be a benchmark for all the tertiary institutions. The major purpose is to make sure that the quality assurance is achieved by this committee's consistent visit to university or other tertiary institutions.

### **Carrying Capacity and Administration Quota**

Based on the National University Commission Policy, the (NUC) has fixed the number of students that each University in Nigeria can admit every year. This has clearly reduced the admission rate into Nigeria University in the recent year. Also given the fact that the carrying capacity of Nigeria University system stands at 150,000 while the actual demand is above 1 million. It is obvious that the development of tertiary education is in jeopardy (Federal Ministry of Education, 2009). According to Edukugho, (2011) says during the 2011/2012 academic season, a total of 1,493,604 candidates sat for the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) conducted by the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB). The results showed that 842,851 candidates scored below 200 marks which indicate less than 45 percent passed the examination JAMB later fixed 180 marks as minimum for university students and 160 for colleges of education and polytechnic. One of the major purposes for carrying capacity is to make sure that the university, college of education and polytechnics do not over-admit or under-admit students and to ensure that quality assurance of the tertiary institutions are achieved at the end of the day.

Generally, all the national bodies such as (NUC) and many others are charged with the functions of harmonizing the academic activities of all the institutions it supervises to ensure that the minimum standards are attained (Whawo, 2003). Internal mechanisms, the administrator or management of tertiary education institutions as part of quality assessment, have put in place check mechanisms for screening of certificate candidates admitted into their various programmes to ensure

that their certificate are correct and are original copies of external examination bodies like West African Examination Council and National Examination Council (Achuonye & Ajoku, 2002).

Furthermore, the administrators and management of tertiary education institution to make sure that quality assurance is achieved in their institution, they have to put in place proper mechanism to see that their aim is achieved such as

- Proper research and development programmes,
- Virile staff development programmes,
- Acquire both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful member of the society,
- Inter-institutional co-operation,
- Students industrial work experience scheme (SIWES),
- Access to training funds such as those provided by the industry training fund (ITF),
- Proper examination monitoring committee,
- Internal school security system to maintained law and order,
- Proper disciplinary committee for teaching staff and non-teaching staff of the institution, and
- Lecturers, seminars, film strips and enlightenment campaigns in school and many others.

If all the above mentioned is introduced by management of tertiary education institution, I want to believe that quality assurance will be achieved.

### **Institutional Management as a Means to Quality Assurance in Tertiary Education**

For quality assurance to be achieved by management of tertiary educational institutional it has to be efficiency, effective and to attain the ultimate avowed objectives of the institution, human and material resource must be effectively organized, coordinated, and combined. Putting all this together, is the purpose of management and this function is usually carried out by managers through others (Patrick, 2011).

So many schools have identified commanding and leading as a function of management as well as established a set of management principles essential for the attainment of institutional goals. These are:

- **Division of work:** This is where the head divide the entire work into smaller units so as to produce more and better work from the same effort, and ensure specialization.
- **Authority and responsibility:** Wherever authority is exercised responsibility arises. Authority means giving order as well as getting them obey. Any person to whom authority is given must be made to be responsible for the achievement of the objective, and to safeguard against abuse of authority is the personal integrity of the leader.
- **Discipline:** This is necessary in any organization that wants to make progress because, it is essential for the efficient operation of the institution. Discipline is the outward mark of respect for agreements between the institution and its members. The provost, rector, or vice- chancellor must decide on the most appropriate form of

sanction in cases of offences against discipline.

- **Unity of direction:** All employees should move in one direction. In order to provide for unity of action, co-ordinate and focusing of effort, there should be one head and one plan for any group of activities with the same objective.
- **Subordination of individual interest to general interest:** The interest of the institution should come first, and dominate or override that of individual or group in the institution.
- **Centralization and decentralization:** The degree of centralization and decentralization should be examined to avoid over centralization or decentralization power. We must understand that the degree of centralization is a question of proportion and will vary indifferent institution.
- **Scalar chain:** This is a level of administration that move in chain which moves from the superiors from the ultimate authority to the lowest ranking officer. Respect for line authority must be reconciled with activities which requires urgent action and with the need to provide for some measure of initiative at all level of authority.
- **Equity:** For any institution to achieve its objectives there is need for equity and for equality of treatment is aspiration to be taken into account in dealing with employees throughout all level of the scalar chain.
- **Stability of tenure of personnel:** For tertiary institution to be prosperous and achieve it quality assurance that it desire, it must have stable managerial personnel, but change of personnel are inevitable and stability of tenure is a question of proportion. Employees should be sure of their career and their employment should be permanent except in case of gross misconduct. The above mentioned members of principles relate directly to, or are influenced by institutional structure in which the process of management takes places. The above mentioned principles are Fayol's principles of management and are essential in the management of tertiary education institution (Patrick, 2011).

Other processes of management includes:

- **Planning:** Determining the board line for carrying out operation, preparing methods by which they are carried out and setting standard of performance.
- **Control:** Checking actual performance against standards to ensure satisfactory progress and performance, and recording as a guide to possible further operation.
- **Co-ordination:** Balancing and maintaining the team by ensuring a suitable division of work and seeing that task are performed in harmony.
- **Motivation:** Inspiring morale, getting members of the train to work effectively to give loyalty to the group and to the task, to carry out their task properly and to play an effective part in the activities of the institution. For all the above to be achieved, there must be a supervision team and a proper leadership system put in place to ensure the teams are carrying out their activities effectively and properly. All the above mentioned process of management are as well required in the management of tertiary institution, to ensure quality assurance of its programmes at all level.

## Major Constrains Facing Tertiary Education Institution in Nigeria

There are several factors pose as constrain facing tertiary education institution in Nigeria; these factors are highlighted and discussed.

- **Inadequate funding:** Inadequate funding is the most critical constrain that has threatened the management and administrators of tertiary education institution in Nigeria. The problem of inadequate funding of education has been a killer to educational development in the country. Onokerrhoraye (1995) maintained that a major constrain to attaining academic excellence in Nigeria university is financial constraints which made many academic and non-academic to be working under difficult circumstances. It is as a result of this constraint that many tertiary institutions in Nigeria were unable to build standard lecture hall, student hostels, proper and well equip laboratories, workshop, and payment of staff salaries, research grants, allowances, and proper medical Bills (Ivara & Mbanfo cited in Asiyai, 2005). The ASUU/FGN re-negotiation committee (2009) realized as widely acknowledged that the key to the survival of Nigeria in the 21<sup>st</sup> century lies in the country ability to produce applied and theoretical knowledge in science, technology and humanities and hence the re-negotiation committee arrived at a consensus on the need for a rational and scientific procedure for determining the funding requirements to begin the revitalizing the Nigerian university system. Despites all efforts made, the Nigeria government have not showed enough commitment towards adequate funding of tertiary education institution till now. It is clear that lack of fund is one of the factors that is responsible for inability of the administrator or management of tertiary education institution to maintain building, equipment furniture, water supply, repairs and replacement of some school facilities. This is a constraint to school heads. In this case, administrator or managers are expected to manage what is available (Bulus, 2002).
- **Inadequate teaching staff & poor quality of teaching staff:** One of the major constrain to the attainment of quality tertiary education in Nigeria is the lack of academic staff Coombs (1970) cited in Bamiro (2012) opined that teachers are the hub of any educational system. Teacher determines the quality of education because they transmit educational policies into practice and action. It is clear that without adequate number of inspiring, well informed teachers, fully prepared to meet their responsibilities in our schools, we cannot have good education and without good education, we cannot hope for long to meet successfully the constrain of changing world. Ajayi (2007) seems to agree with the above when he noted that good teachers are needed for good education which in turn is indispensable for social change, social transformation and national development. The important and role of teachers cannot be overemphasized. Despite the importance of teachers in the attainment of good education, institutions of higher learning in Nigeria are short of lecturers to adequately handle teaching and learning activities. Because the available fund are not able to employ more lecturers. The few available once are seriously over worked. So many tertiary institutions in the country, because of shortage of lecturers their programmes are not accredited by the accreditation agencies. Attainment of good quality in tertiary education institution requires teaching staff of adequate quantity and quality. Bamiro (2012) say that the problem of de-intellectualization of the academic to low quality of staff of some institution of higher learning in Nigeria is the inadequate teaching staff and poor quality of lecturers.

- **Inadequate Resources:** To achieve quality higher education depends on the quality and quantity of human and material resource put in place in tertiary institution. The lack of infrastructures such as, workshop, student's hostels, science laboratories, libraries, electricity and many more will affect the quality of education. For quality assurance delivery, all the above mentioned facilities must meet the minimum standard specified by the National University Commission (NUC), the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) and National Council for College of Education (NCCE). For us to get or produce quality graduate, there must be quality teaching and learning, the class size must be small for effective student/teacher interaction. Unfortunately, most higher institution in Nigeria, there lecture halls are overcrowded with majority of the students standing at the corridors during lectures. Asiyai (2005) says that students of tertiary institution are learning in dilapidated building which are poorly ventilated, furnished, environmentally depressing and disability situation. So many lecturers share small offices. The National Universities Commission carried out a need assessment survey which has reported by Okebukola, (2005) and highlighted the following:
  - Only about 30% of Nigeria student's population has adequate access to classroom, workshop, lecture hall laboratories, and libraries.
  - Deficient, libraries in terms of currency and number of books, journals and electronic support facilities.
  - Inadequate academic calendar resulting from staff unions industrial action premised on low salary wages/welfare and students strikes often time related to inadequate facilities.
  - Lack of practical experience, often times resulting from deficient facilities.

All the above mentioned factors are all threat to quality assurance in tertiary education institution in Nigeria.

- **Constance Labour Disputes and Closures of University:** This is a big constrain to quality tertiary education in Nigeria is the Constance staff union disputes and subsequent closures of the institution. It is very clear that Constance closure of the tertiary institution affects staff productivity and the realization of educational aim and objectives.

Asiyai (2005) provided a catalogue of strikes by the Academic Staff Union of University (ASUU) and the Senior Staff Association of Nigeria University (SSANU) within fourteen years. She revealed that they were too many strikes, some of which lasted up to six months. Asiyai (2006) identified the variables inducing the frequent trade union dispute as poor condition of service of staff, non-implementation of ASUU/FGN or' SSANU/FGN agreement, lack of autonomy and academic freedom and poor funding. It was clear that the July 2 2013 strike was as a result of failure of the federal government to implement the agreement reached with the academic staff union of universities since 2009, despite all assurance and memorandum of understanding between the two parties, the disruption of academic programmes of tertiary institution learning affects students learning outcomes, since lecturers find it difficult to complete the course work. The constant disputes and strike galore by university staff and leave students with little or no time to complete both their theoretical



and practical work. In most case a semesters course work is sandwiched to few weeks during which lecturers are rushed to accommodate the time lost to strike.

This type of academic rush is a big threat to quality assurance in tertiary education in Nigeria. Adeboyeje (2003) opined that the higher the level of crisis, disruptions and hostility, the lower the level of productivity standard and quality of the product of the system.

- **Cultism and other vices:** The issue of cultism has become a major threat to parents, education, educational institution administrators, government agencies and the society at large. Cultism is one of the major constrain in tertiary institution in Nigeria, it increasing activities of secret cult groups, kidnappers, and many more. It is as a result of the above mentioned group activities that majority of students, lecturers, and their families live in perpetual fear. Some of the cult groups are involve in arm robbery, rape, assassination, and infrastructure destruction. It is as a result of their violence nature that make them cheat in the examination openly and threaten lecturers when caught. Meanwhile, academic and senior staffs of tertiary institution are being hunted by kidnappers and those kidnapped are forced to pay huge sum of money as ransom before they are released. The tension induced on members of tertiary education institution communities as a result of the activities of these secret cult groups and kidnappers tend to generate negative impacts on quality assurance in Nigeria educational system.

### **Remedy of Constrain Facing Tertiary Education**

The remedy to constrain, if carefully handed will help in achieving educational goals and it quality assurance in Nigeria tertiary education and they are as follows:

**Professional teacher:** The teacher is the most important change agent in the classroom, in fact, the society at large. The quality of the teacher is a predictor of quality of education every nation have. Teacher are also the most critical agent of change, responsible for growth, development and progress of society. The teachers prepare the next generation and the level of their commitment, devotion, and dedication determine the future of the nation. Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2004) note that no educational system may rise above the quality of its teachers. The quality of teachers in school is the most important in-school influence on student success. A professional teacher in this modern era has a lot of pressure and responsibilities. He is dedicated, have natural zeal and training. He is patient with the students who are not discipline, lazy or with those who irritate others students in classroom. A professional teacher is a good evaluator, who teaches his students to the best of his ability and do not spare any technique that will make his presentation meaningful and achievable to the least talented in the class. Odosumu (1998) asserts that a professional teachers should be morally upright, intellectually knowledgeable, mentally balanced and emotionally stable with love and care of those he teaches at the centre of his heart. In it all, the professional teacher about from the above, he or she must possess the following such as: leadership ability, good personality, good knowledge of the learner, good knowledge of the subject and many more.

**Adequate funding:** For government, organization and individual to get education right in this part of the world, education must be properly funded. Funding is the pillar of acquiring, development and maintenance of many other resources needed for the proper implementation of education programs and activities. This implies that it is practically impossible to run any

educational institution without finance (money). Therefore, it is clear that educational institution needs money for the employment, development and maintenance of staff, adequate and suitable school building, facilities equipment and suitable educational environment. That is why FRN (2004:61) stated that education is an expensive social service and requires adequate finance provision from all tiers of government for successful implementation of educational programme (Nwankwola, 2007). It is as a result of the above statement that Ebong (2004) opined that financial support of school in Nigeria is derived from many source among which are grants, school fees, external aids, funds from alumni local authorities and school activities, parents teachers association levy, development levy, caution fees and entertainment and many others.

The importance of fund in the implementation of tertiary education institution programmes cannot be over stressed for economic growth and development, the National Policy on Education provides that education is huge government expenditure and a right which the government will try its hardest to ensure that the people receive the best through adequate funding. Therefore, for us to get education right the government must meet up the UNESCO recommended standard of 26% budget to education (Wale, 2014).

**Proper policy implementation:** Many authors have argued that our policies are written by knowledgeable writers who have foresight and believe, strongly in what they write for the future but the problem comes when it comes to translating theory into practice by implementers. Educational policies are initiatives of government that determine the direction of the educational institution at the local, state and national level in Nigeria. In formulating policies, it is important for educational administrators and managers to take into consideration the means or available resource necessary for effective implementation. This implies that it is possible to anticipate or predict the outcomes of policies with some measure of assurance (Holmes, 1977 cited in Okoroma, 2016).

No society ever develops or progress except act rightly by matching words with action. Good plans may be produced but if they are not acted upon no impact will be made. Nations and societies have developed and become great because people have planned and acted rightly. The issue of policy implementation is all embracing. It is important, however to note that very functioning being is an implementer of one policy or the other. It may be a personal, community or government policy. Therefore, for any educational manager or administrator to get policy implementation right, he or she must avoid such as politicization of knowledge, over-estimation of available resource, under-estimation of the cost of implementing plans, over-reliance upon, and too much optimism about external assistance and dependence on hopelessly inaccurate statistics for projecting enrolment and cost and many more (Adesina, 1977 cited in Okoroma, 2016).

**Curriculum Design and Management:** Education in formalized schools does not drive itself. It is powered by an instrument called curriculum. The essential target of the curriculum is to accomplish prescribed educational goals which a given country such as Nigeria has conceitedly articulated in order to satisfy the needs, idea's and aspirations of the citizens and that of the society at large. Asodike and Nwokamma (2014) the structure of the Nigeria education system is made up of levels that facilitates and enhances teaching and learning in a manner that every matter is dealt with at the ages where the physical and mental capacity can cope with (Olatunde, 1969 cited in Asodike & Nwokamma, 2014). The educational structure also describes

the school system within which the curriculum framework is to be applied. It specifies, number of years of schooling, stage (or cycles) of schooling and their durations school week. There are four levels of education in Nigeria namely:

- Early childhood
- Basic education
- Senior secondary education and
- Tertiary education.

The structure of the above mentioned educational system goes with the age and mode of entry, mode of assessment, examination body and certificate to be obtained. For curriculum to be effective, it must touch on all aspects of a nation's life, to achieve their desired results via the instrumentality of the schools, the said curriculum must be effectively managed. Curriculum management that is worth the bother in terms of effective productivity in schools thereby contributing positively to educational development powered national development, is a deliberate function of a number of factors. For quality assurance in tertiary education institution, there must be quality curriculum design that will touch on every aspect of the nation's life. However, to achieve this means that there must be proper curriculum management.

## **CONCLUSION**

This paper, having looked at difference constrains that will make education not to achieve it objective goal, such as inadequate funding, poor policy implementation, inadequate teaching staff and poor quality of teaching staff, frequent labour disputes and many others as a major constrains that must be taking proper care off. With this, the remedy to it was addressed such as proper funding, professional teachers, adequate policy implementation and may other were considered as a major key that must be address to enable the educational institution achieve quality assurance in every area of education. However, to achieve all this means that the government should try as much as they can to put in place a professional leader that have experience in administration or management of tertiary institution. If this is done, the issue of schooling or sending over children outside the country will be a thing of the past.

## **SUGGESTIONS**

To address the constrain of quality assurance in tertiary education institution in Nigeria, the following suggestion were made:

- Nigeria government should place high premium on education by meeting up the recommended 26% budget on educational spending, prescribes by UNESCO, to enable tertiary education achieve it aims.
- Because of increase in population in tertiary education, more lecturers should be employed to match the student's population, and as well pay more emphasis on teaching effectiveness of lectures for better quality education.
- Tertiary institution should set up internal quality assurance and monitoring and evaluation of lecturers units to enhance good quality delivery.
- To improve quality assurance in tertiary education institution, lecturers and non-

lecturers should be motivated to make them more dedicated, devoted and committed and effective in their job.

- The government should pass a bill prohibiting all political office holders from sending their children/wards to school outside Nigeria or to private schools. This will make the political office holder pay proper attention to tertiary institution.

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