SCHOOL MANAGEMENT AND QUALITY ASSURANCE IN NIGERIA EDUCATION

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Abstract
The paper deals on quality assurance in Nigeria education system, with specific focus on school managers, teachers and students in the school system. The paper acknowledged that the main policy objective in education in Nigeria is to raise the quality of education at all levels in order to make the recipients of the system more useful to themselves and the society as well. Quality assurance in Nigeria education system is a goal to which learners, teachers, staff and school administration aspires to attain. The paper reviews general strategies for quality assurance in Nigeria education system. Among the strategies pointed out include curriculum review, monitoring and instructional supervision, establishment and compliance to benchmark minimum academic standard etc. The paper also reviewed the roles of school managers in ensuring quality in the education system. Among the notable roles of education managers geared towards quality assurance include efficient and effective utilization of education resources as well as ensuring that benchmark minimum academic standard are maintained. Teachers motivation as well as teachers and students roles were all reviewed as part of the specific strategies for quality assurance. Among the crucial roles of teachers and students viewed as imperative to the quality assurance agenda include: commitment to their primary responsibility as well as quality delivery.

Keywords: Quality, education, school, teachers, students

Introduction
Education is a vital instrument of change in any society; it is an instrument for nation building. The development of a country’s natural resources is dependent on the quality of its human resources and the quality of human resources in turn depends on education (Alumode 2005). Education helps in the positive development of human potentials, the human talents, the human intellect, the human attitude and the human skills. Abhimanyu (2007) stressed that education contribute to the individual personal development, increases his/her productivity and income at work, and facilitates participation in economic and social life. The federal republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2004) stressed that the main policy objectives in education in Nigeria therefore, is to raise the quality of education at all level in order to make the products of the system more useful to the society and to maintain education as one of the prime engines for development

Adams (2011) noted that the taste in education is carried and evidenced in its quality. Unless quality and functionality is assured in the system, education will loose out to nothing else. The author likened the Nigeria education system today to tasteless scenario and experience. Unfortunately, education in Nigeria in its present form is devoiced from standard, quality and functionality (Balogun 2012). In fact, much as most scholars are interested, everyone wants to obtain a certificate to join the band wagon in politics and possibly “meet up early”. Today, politics is the most lucrative practice that makes sense” and captures the interest of all and sundry. The demise of quality and functionality especially in the Nigerian education system has further been slaughtered on the corridor of the struggle to obtain or secure a certificate as a meal ticket and further build prospect in politics.

Against these scenario kadir (2012) observed that quality and standard need to be restored in the Nigerian education system. In this direction, Kadir (2012) further stressed that quality education have provided the “magic wand” that transformed Russians in 1913 from an unbelievably, fantastically backward country, poverty stricken into the world’s most technologically and economically developed countries. Again, Mungle (2013) on the same
issues, opined that quality and standard in education have transformed Japan into the third most industrialized nations in the world. In line with these observations, I am personally inclined to thinking that quality in Nigerian education system should focus on optimal development of skills, knowledge, values, attitudes, morals and capabilities of the recipients with emphasis on those relevant to the individual and Nigerian society. Thus, ensuring that these positive behaviour dispositions are maximally utilized for the benefit of the individual and that of Nigeria society as well.

Quality assurance in education

The term quality has no generally accepted definition but suffice it to say that quality refers to the standard of a phenomenon when it is compared to other things like it. Quality can be said to lie in the eyes of the beholder. It is that which best satisfies and exceeds customers needs and wants (Artz, 1992). This is because the customers who make the judgment on quality, do these by reference to the best comparable performance (item). Quality assurance in the education system therefore, is an umbrella concept for a lot of activities that are designed to improve the systems input, process and output of education (Okebukola, 2012). Quality assurance in the education system therefore, involves the process of monitoring, assessing and evaluating all aspects of the education activities and communicating the outcome to all concerned with a view of improving the products of the education system.

Furthermore, Ajayi and Akindutute (2007) noted that quality assurance is about consistently meeting product specifications or getting things right the first time, and every time. Quality assurance in Nigeria education system therefore, implies the ability of the various arms (especially tertiary institutions) to meet the expectations of the users of manpower in relation to the quality of skills required by their outputs.

The Federal Ministry of Education (2009) remarked that quality standard in the education system are goals or targets to which learners, teachers, staff and school administration aspires to attain. Quality assurance in the education system therefore, is a multi-dimensional concept involving the various functions and activities of the education system. Such functions and activities include teaching, research, staffing, students, buildings, facilities and equipment, service to the community and academic environment. In this regard understanding quality assurance is the ability of education system to meet certain criteria relating to academic matters especially in tertiary institution. Thus, there must exist acceptable general standard to guide academic matters. Such general standard to guide academic matters include: quality of students ratio, staff mix by rank, staff development, physical facilities, funding and adequate library facilities (Adebayo, Ogenike and Adesoji, 2009).

To complement this idea, Ofojebe and Ezeugo (2010) opined that quality assurance in education entails the quality of teaching personnel, quality of available instructional/teaching materials, equipment and facilities school environment and pupils, including quality of education delivery. It embraces functions and activities that will ensure quality of the academic (teaching curriculum) etc and structures that will allow an objective review of the quality of instructional delivery. It is the determination of standards, appropriate methods and quality requirements by an expert body, accompanied by a process of inspection or evaluation that examines the extent to which practice meets these standards (Idirs, 2012).

This underscores the fact that quality is the ability or degree with which a product, service or phenomenon conforms, to an established standard, and which makes it to be relatively superior to others. With respect to education therefore, it is the degree or ability with which tertiary institutions in Nigeria confirms to the established standard and the appropriateness of the inputs available for the delivery of the system. Quality assurance in tertiary institutions in Nigeria therefore, means the relevance and appropriateness of the programme to the needs of the recipients and that of the nation in general. Thus, adequacy of various input resources will certainly exercise tremendous
influence on quality assurance in Nigeria tertiary education system. Education stakeholders including students especially at tertiary level should play their expected role and realize that it is part of their own responsibility to pursue the quality assurance agenda. Thus, quality assurance is a key component of knowledge economy as well as successful internationalization. It is also a mechanism for building institutional reputation in the competitive local and global arena and a necessary foundation for consumer protection (NUC, 2004).

(i) General strategies for quality assurance
The need for quality assurance in our education system cannot be over emphasized. In order to make the system more responsive, more meaningful and more functional to the recipients and the society in general, there is a need therefore, to begin to redress the practices in the system especially now that the recipients are no longer finding it easy to cope with the economic circumstances of life. This function behoves on the government and other stakeholders in the system to achieve in order to ensure quality teaching and learning. However, the following may be seen as the reasons for the desired attention to improving the quality of education in Nigeria.

a. Quality assurance serves as an indispensable component of quality control strategy in education.

b. It will ensure and maintain high standard of education at all levels.

c. It will assist in monitoring and supervision of education activities especially that of teaching and learning.

d. It will equally help to determine the quality of teachers input.

e. It will assist to determine the resources as well as facilities needed for smooth operations especially from time to time in our school systems.

f. It helps to determine the adequacy of the learning environment for the comfort of both the teacher and the students.

g. It would also ensure how the financial resources available could be prudently and judiciously utilized (Adegbesan 2012). Furthermore, in the pursuit of quality assurance in the education system the following strategies may be viewed as pertinent:

(ii) Review of school curriculum: Education curriculum as well as general standard of education should be reviewed to reflect the needs and aspirations of the recipients as well as the society. The curriculum therefore should match the minimum academic standard.

(iii) Monitoring: This refers to the process of collecting data at intervals about ongoing projects, school teaching and learning activities as well as programmes within the school system. The aim is to constantly assess the level of performance with a view of finding out how far a set of objectives are being met.

(iv) Instructional supervision: This should be focused on effort at bringing about improvement in the quality of instruction. It should involve all staff especially those in the academic domain. Instructional supervision should be a way of advising, encouraging and stimulating staff.

(v) Facility inspection: This usually involves an assessment of available facilities and resources in an institution. This could be cultivated and internally coordinated from time to time. The essence of which is to establish how far the school or the various departments meet prescribed standard. It should be more of self assessment rather than externally induced exercise.

(vi) Staff quality control: Staff quality is an essential pre-requisite in the issue of quality assurance. There is need therefore to continue to encourage staff training and development strategies. The qualification and experience of teachers matters a lot in their subject delivery. On this note, they should continually be assisted to continue to undergo refresher courses, workshops, seminars and conferences especially in their areas of specialization.
(vi) **Establishment of minimum academic standard:** There is need to ensure that minimum academic standards are established for each level or cadre of the education system i.e. the primary, secondary and tertiary levels. This is very important as the minimum standard will serve as the benchmark for operation. All institutional operations (private or public) will be in conformity with the minimum academic standard. The administration and implementation exercises of the MAS will be the responsibility of the respective arms of the education system. Thus, at all levels, it will be ensured that the benchmark minimum academic standard is maintained and adhered to.

(vii) **Students support and mentoring services:** There should exist in each institution effective students’ affairs and counselling scheme. This division should be responsible for student’s personal support and guidance. This should involve students advisers on procedures governing general academic issues such as transfer, appeals, change of courses etc. Students advisers should be trained and be responsible for students’ mentoring scheme.

(viii) **Effective records management system:** Each school should maintain effective records management system capable of providing information and data for management decisions at all times. Management information system for each school should be properly configured and customized to serve the information needs of the institutions. Both students and management information for public consumption should be disseminated timely, and as appropriate as possible. Effective financial records are also vital for prudence and accountability in expenditure.

(ix) **Equitable disbursement of fund:** Quality assurance demands adequate funding. If government is poised to provide adequate fund, the school management should ensure that such fund are disbursed and utilized by various units and arms in the school for the achievement of the collective goals and objectives of quality assurance in the school system.

Provision of quality school equipment and supplies: All school equipment, supplies and physical structure especially for instructional laboratory and demonstration purposes should be of high quality and to the comfort of both the teachers, pupils and students. Where need be, all contracts of supplies should as much as possible be awarded to reputable and expert educational supplies contractors. Contracts for educational supplies and facilities in the pursuit of quality assurance should never be used to patronize political loyalists.

Encouragement of private sector participation: Private sector participation or industrial linkage is an essential element in ensuring quality assurance in education, as a matter of government policy; this should be made to be feasible. Private sector participation or industrial linkage would help to expand the input sources of education resources. It will equally make education to become more relevant to the recipients as well as the society in general. The private sectors or the industries should be made to be part of the school curriculum restructure as well.

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

The Federal Ministry of Education (FME 2010) cited in Aworanti (2012) listed the following strategies towards quality assurance in education:
a. Establishment of a national commission for quality assurance. This should be a regulating body for quality control.
b. Review and disseminate new quality assured steps in handbook and quality assurance instrument that provide standardized and uniform reporting mechanisms.
c. Professionalism and continuous professional development in education by training, accrediting and certifying practitioners.
d. Strategic plan to strengthen the relationship and synergy between federal, state inspectors and local government education authorities and supervisors.
e. Enhance the effectiveness of examination bodies.
f. Introduce, strengthen and expand e-learning.
g. Provide guidance and counseling services to improve students’ life and experiences.
h. Conducting and monitoring of learning achievement/national assessment.
i. Tertiary institutions fully upgraded to centre of excellence through ETF intervention projects by way of monitoring implementation of the projects.
j. Review and enrich curriculum across all levels of education, this is by way of establishing expert committee to review and up grade colleges of education, polytechnics and university programmes in line with the demand of the economy.
k. Establish Entrepreneurship Development Education (EDE) in tertiary institutions.
l. Capacity building for teacher librarians to improve service delivery in school libraries.
m. Launch ICT in education policy in the teaching of computer education in schools.

Educational managers and quality assurance

The role of educational managers centres mainly on administration. Administration in the education industry should be concerned about how they manage the educational resources allocated to them for use as well as the control of their schools and students. The teacher’s managerial functions by the same token should go beyond those of the classroom teaching. He should be responsible not only to himself and his pupils but also to other staff members and their pupils. Again, the teacher is faced with the responsibility of determining the priorities of management and the management style to be used for achieving qualitative educational results. Arikewuyo (2004) had listed the following tasks which must be done by education managers in order to have qualitative education. These include:

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

However, educational managers are classified by their functions, that is, by the roles they play in their position as managers. To fulfill our purpose of quality assurance in Nigeria education system, there is need to identify educational management as a body of systemized knowledge, based on general principles which are certified in terms of schools practices. Ogunsaju (2006) argues that, a school manager may manage with good or bad judgment, with great or little experience, with exemplary or undesirable character traits. Educational management functions for quality assurance in our education systems should be handled by experts who experienced in all aspects of educational practices.
Teachers and students responsibilities in ensuring quality

The teacher and the students are often at the centre of all discourse within the spectrum of quality assurance in education. Thus, the teacher functions to build up, instruct, train and guide the young ones for healthy growth and stable adult life. Often, the teacher provides activities materials and guidance that facilitate learning. No teaching can therefore, take place without the learners. Students and/or pupils are often defined and seen as the recipients of every teaching process. The interactive process between the teachers and the students therefore, form part of the fulcrum of this discourse. Nonetheless, they have much role to play in the crusade for quality assurance in the education system.

Teachers’ motivation and quality assurance

The National Policy on Education (2004) expressed that no nation can rise above the quality of its teachers. If the quality of existing stock of teacher in Nigeria is inadequate, inefficient and ineffective and teaching in low esteemed; raising the level of societal enlightenment and the educational standard may be in jeopardy. Fagbamiye (1987) observed that teachers’ lack of dedication to duty has led to a fall in the standard of education. This belief goes to reinforce the idea that teachers do not deserve better treatment. However, if the quality of personnel is the capital of the organization, this should be true in the educational system. Teachers are the key actors in curriculum implementation and if they do not have the right competencies and motivation to fulfill their role, it will create pitfall in the system.

According to Peretomode (1991) motivation is the process of influencing or stimulating a person to take action that will accomplish desired goals. However, teachers’ motivation is a way of empowering teachers in their occupation to put in more effort in their work. It further involves the perceptions, variables, methods, strategies and activities used by the management for the purpose of providing a climate that is conducive to the satisfaction of the various needs of the employees, so that they may become satisfied, dedicated and effective in performing their task. In education, teachers should be motivated in order to boost their productivity, effectiveness, efficiency and dedication in performing their task. This will enhance quality assurance, quality education and quality instructional delivery in the education system. It will also enhance the achievement of educational objectives (Obi, 1997). Thus, the motivation of teachers in the educational system is of crucial importance and significance to the quality of educational innovation and delivery outcome (Pilot, 2007).

Fredriksson (2004) re-emphasized the importance of motivating teachers on their jobs using a study conducted by the Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) in 2002, whose research report findings pointed out that teachers’ motivation was fragile and declining mostly in the developing countries including Nigeria. The study also observed that poor absolute value of the teachers’ salaries was a significant factor influencing their motivation. Low salaries and bad working conditions always breed corruption. The research report findings also noted that “there is a strong link between teachers’ motivation and quality performance and quality education, all involved in guaranteeing quality assurance in the Nigerian education system. Therefore, teachers’ performance in contributing towards learning is strongly influenced by teacher motivation. Motivation which should include good working conditions, promotion, staff training and development, good salary and remuneration, participatory decision making, job security, recognition of performances and the teaching profession, financial rewards, scholarships awards and provision of other facilities are strong tools for improving the status of teachers”.

Teachers’ motivation has great significance or value to the Nigerian education system especially in guaranteeing and aiding quality assurance. When teachers are highly motivated and adequate attention given to them, it will help to elicit teacher’s commitment and dedication to their job of teaching. This will
certainly help to add value and quality to the educational system by raising its standards to the expected level, thus, ensuring quality teaching-learning outcomes and output. Teachers’ motivation influences such other variables like quality output, quality performance, enhancing quality educational outcomes and instructional delivery. Again, teachers’ job satisfaction and productivity are of great significance to guaranteeing quality assurance in the education system. However, when teachers influence the educational system positively, they intend to perform their task effectively and efficiently and all educational goals will be achieved with positive outcomes and the outputs from the school system will be competent-vibrant, educated personnel’s that will contribute immensely towards societal development and nation building, as such quality assurance is guaranteed.

Conclusion
A cursory look at the education system shows that the demise of quality especially in the system has been slaughtered on the corridor of the struggle to obtain or secure a certificate as a meal ticket. Quality need to be restored in the Nigeria education system. Thus, quality assurance in the education system is a goal or target which learners, teachers and school management aspires to attain. These distinct bodies should therefore attend to their responsibilities in the system if quality assurance is conceived and pursued as a collective agenda in the system.

Recommendations
Education is the prime engine for any positive development or changes in the society and the worth of education is evidenced in the quality. It is only through qualitative education that any meaningful development could be achieved. Quality in the education system should therefore focus on optimal development of skills, knowledge, values, attitudes, morals and capabilities of the recipients with emphasis on those relevant to the individual and the Nigeria society.

References


