

Quality Assurance Practices and Effectiveness of Public Universities in Cross River State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study aimed at examining quality assurance practices and effectiveness of public universities in Cross River State, Nigeria. To achieve the aim of this study, two research questions were raised and two hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. Survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study consist of one hundred and forty one (141) Heads of Departments from two public Universities in Cross River State. The sampling technique adopted for this study was simple random sampling technique which was used to select forty two (42) respondents from the study area. The instrument used for data collection was questionnaire titled Quality Assurance Practices and Effectiveness of Public Universities Questionnaire (QAPEPUQ), developed by the researchers and validated by experts in administration in higher education and Measurement and Evaluation. Data collected were subjected to statistical analysis using Pearson product moment correlation analysis. The result revealed that the effectiveness of universities is related with quality assurance practices. It was recommended that management of the universities should make adequate provision for establishment of instructional supervision of lecturers as well as staff training/development practices.

Keywords: Quality, Assurance, Practices, Effectiveness, Public, Universities.

Introduction

Quality assurance practice is one of the mechanisms employed by the management of a university to maintain standards and quality in the educational system. This quality assurance practice is paramount because the development of any nation depends on the

quality of her education; thus conscious effort should be made to ensure quality education at all levels. This explains why a uniform educational standard was adopted in the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) with various measures being taken by the federal government to ensure quality educational system. The establishment of specific bodies to control the educational system such as university education is based on impact oriented philosophy of continuous organizational improvement that stakeholders in the education industry strive to maintain in terms of standards and quality, maintenance of standards which seem to contribute to institutional effectiveness of the school system (Chuktu, 2018).

Cheng and Tain (1997) defined quality assurance in higher education as the set of elements that constitutes the input, process and output of the education system, which provides services that completely satisfy both internal and external strategic constituencies by meeting their explicit and implicit expectations.

Bassey and Akpan (2010) see institutional effectiveness as the systematic collection, analysis, organization, warehousing and dissemination of quantitative and qualitative information concerning the characteristics and performance of an institution. The goal of institutional effectiveness is to provide quality information such that informed decisions and effective planning can be accomplished by schools, staff and administrators. If all these is well practiced by the school principal who is seen as an agent of ensuring quality management practices in school, it is likely that secondary schools will be effective. In addition, Udo (2004) stated that, to make university education effective, the university management should recruit, retrain and advance a diverse intellectual mix of school staff and students, increase staff productivity, strengthen administrative accountability, utilize institutional strategic plans, valid and reliable data, and evaluation indicators to align investments of resources with institutional priorities and to expand, diversify and effectively steward funds which may likely enhance effectiveness of the university.

However, since the mission of any school is to provide adequate teaching and learning for the students, university administrators perform many professional and administrative functions in order to achieve the goals of the institutions. One of the critical administrative functions of a school administrator is instructional supervision. Instructional supervision is the overseeing and guiding of the teaching and learning process in an academic institution. Ifedili (2015) sees instructional supervision as those activities which are primarily and directly concerned with studying and improving the conditions which surround the learning and growth of students, and whatever is done to improve on the lecturer's ability to deliver effective teaching and learning. Eya and Chukwu (2012) viewed instructional supervision in schools merely as a process for lecturer's improvement purposes which include among other things ensuring that lecturers perform their assigned functions. The university management should

supervise the lecturer's instructional delivery in order to ensure that there is effective teaching and learning.

Instructional supervision occupies a unique place in the entire education system and it becomes expedient to give it prominent attention. In a contemporary Nigeria, instructional supervision is regarded as the process of enhancing the professional growth of the teachers, the curriculum and improving the techniques of teaching in the classroom through democratic interactions between the teacher and the supervisor (Okendu, 2012). Nakpodia (2011) asserts that instructional supervision in the modern era centres on the improvement of the teaching-learning situation to the benefit of both the teachers and learners, helps in the identification of areas of strength and weaknesses of teachers, follow-up activities that should be directed at the improvement of identified areas of teachers' weaknesses and gives recognition to the teachers and creates a cordial working atmosphere based on good human relations.

National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN, 2006) observed that supervision provides opportunities for lecturers to be groomed through critical study of instructional processes and classroom interactions to carry out their teaching tasks in line with professional codes of conduct. If schools are not supervised adequately, it will have effect on the students' output and the educational objectives may not be achieved. Consequently, various instructional supervisory techniques should be employed to ensure qualitative service delivery by the teachers. Since instructional supervision constitutes the leverage point for instructional improvement, teacher's competence and efficiency of the educational system, an unsupervised instruction could mar the standard of education.

More so, training and development are key terms in the education of human resources in any organisation; if being practised, it may likely enhance university effectiveness. Armstrong (2006) defined development as “the growth or realisation of a person's ability and potential through the provision of learning and educational experiences,” while training is “the planned and systematic modification of behaviour through learning events, programmes and instruction which enable individuals to achieve the levels of knowledge, skill and competence needed to carry out their work effectively.”

According to Armstrong (2006), staff training can be broadly categorised into two types, namely, on-the-job training and off-the-job training. On-the-job training also known as direct instruction, takes various forms including apprenticeship, job rotation, internship, observation, mentoring, coaching, and learning contract, orientation, and acquaintanceship, among others. This type of training is not only cost effective, but it provides opportunities for employees to acquire multi skills through rotation as well as quick learning, though its effectiveness is limited especially in terms of exposure to external resources and facilities. Off-the-job training on the other hand is offered outside the usual workplace; employees have the opportunities of interacting and exchanging

ideas with colleagues from other organisations as well as being exposed to external facilities and resources. It takes the form of lectures, conferences, case studies, visual training and simulated programme instructions, day release, short term and long term courses, among others. To attain maximum benefits from training, a systematic approach is required.

According to Korean (2008), adequate planning for training and development should start from needs identification. The needs of the organisation as well as individual staff that calls for training and development of the employees should be accorded high priority. This can result from assessment of situation on ground; facilities and equipment; changes in technology, curriculum, policies; competition; and general global demands to keep abreast of time. The needs most often dictate the programmes to be put in place to solve the problems. Incorporated in the plans should be the timing, techniques, facilities, location, and the trainers, all tailored to the identified needs. Having put all in place, adequate implementation should follow, with control measures put in place to monitor progress and attainment of objectives of the programmes. This should be followed by evaluation of the programmes to ascertain the required outcomes for training and if need be a retraining.

Regrettably, observations by stakeholders in the educational industry and the researchers' experience have shown that there is significant decline in the quality of university education. This may likely be as a result of not practising quality assurance by the management of university or not being dedicated and committed in ensuring that quality management practices are effectively carried out in the university. This seems to have resulted in ineffectiveness of university education. Some of the university management seem not to give opportunity to develop their staff or carry out effective instructional supervision of their lecturers which has resulted in poor quality teaching; this seems to have affected the quality of university graduates being produced as well as the general output of the university. It is against this background that the researchers examined quality assurance practices and effectiveness of public universities in Cross River State, Nigeria.

Statement of the problem

The quality and quantity of university effectiveness is the most important factors that determine the success or failure of any university system. Thus, observation and experience of the researchers have shown that there is significant decline in the quality of university education. This may likely be as a result of not practising quality assurance by the management of university or not being dedicated and committed in ensuring that quality management practices are effectively carried out in the university. This seems to have resulted in ineffectiveness of university education. Some of the university management seem not to give opportunity to develop their staff or carry out effective instructional supervision of their lecturers which has resulted in poor quality teaching;

this seems to have affected the quality of university graduates being produced as well as the general output of the university. Although, several attempts have been made such as establishment of quality assurance unit and staff development unit in the university, but the problem persists. It is against this background that the researchers examine quality assurance practices and effectiveness of universities in Cross River State, Nigeria.

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of this study is to examine quality assurance practices and effectiveness of universities in Cross River State, Nigeria. Specifically the study seeks to investigate how:

- i. Instructional supervisory practice relate with effectiveness of universities.
- ii. Staff training/development practice relate with effectiveness of universities.

Research questions

The following research questions were raised to direct the study:

- i. In what ways does instructional supervisory practice relate with effectiveness of universities?
- ii. In what ways does staff training/development practice relate with effectiveness of universities?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide this study:

- i. There is no significant relationship between instructional supervisory practice and effectiveness of public universities.
- ii. There is no significant relationship between staff training/development practice and effectiveness of public universities.

Methodology

Survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study consist of one hundred and forty one (141) Heads of Departments from the two public Universities in Cross River State. The sampling technique adopted for this study was simple random sampling technique which was used to select forty two (42) respondents from the study area. The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire titled Quality Assurance Practices and Effectiveness of Public Universities Questionnaire (QAPEPUQ). The instrument was subjected to face and content validity by experts in the administration of higher education and Measurement and Evaluation, Faculty of Education, University of Calabar. The instrument was divided into two sections, A and B. Section A sought for respondents' demographic data such as name of department, sex, rank and qualification. Section B consisted of ten (10) items constructed in a four (4) point modified Likert scale ranging from strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A) Disagree (D) and strongly Disagree (SD). Data collected were subjected to statistical analysis using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) of statistical package for social

science (SPSS) version 25 for data analysis and the results are presented in the respective tables.

Presentation of results

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between instructional supervisory practice and effectiveness of public universities.

Table 1: Correlation analysis of the relationship between instructional supervisory practices and effectiveness of public universities (n=42)

Variables	Mean	Std.Dev.	r cal.	P-value
Instructional supervisory practices	16.28	2.915		
			.995**	.000
Effectiveness of public universities	16.14	2.465		

Significant at .05 level; df = 40; critical r = .632

The result in table 1 revealed that the calculated r-value of .995 was significantly greater than the critical value of 0.632 when tested at .05 level of significance with 40 degree of freedom. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected while the alternative hypothesis was accepted. This implies that there is a significant relationship between instructional supervisory practices and effectiveness of public universities.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between staff training/development practice and effectiveness of public universities.

Table 2: Correlation analysis of the relationship between staff training/development practices and effectiveness of public universities (n=42)

Variables	Mean	Std.Dev.	r cal.	P-value
Staff training/development practices	15.33	2.563		
			.734**	.000
Effectiveness of public universities	16.14	2.465		

Significant at .05 level; df = 40; critical r = .632

The result in table 2 revealed that the calculated r-value of .734 was significantly greater than the critical value of 0.632 when tested at .05 level of significance with 40 degree of freedom. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected while the alternative hypothesis

was accepted. This implies that there is a significant relationship between staff training/development practice and effectiveness of public universities.

Discussion of the findings

The finding from hypothesis one indicated that there is a significant relationship between instructional supervisory practice and effectiveness of public universities. This result is in agreement with the finding of Ifedili (2015) who opined that instructional supervision are those activities which are primarily and directly concerned with studying and improving the conditions which surround the learning and growth of students, and whatever is done to improve on the lecturer's ability to deliver effective teaching and learning. Also, Eya and Chukwu (2012) viewed instructional supervision in schools merely as a process for lecturers' improvement purposes which include among other things ensuring that lecturers perform their assigned functions.

The result of hypothesis two revealed that there is significant relationship between staff training/development practice and effectiveness of public universities. This result is in agreement with the finding of Armstrong (2006) who defined development as the growth or realisation of a person's ability and potential through the provision of learning and educational experiences, while training is the planned and systematic modification of behaviour through learning events, programmes and instruction which enable individuals to achieve the levels of knowledge, skill and competence needed to carry out their work effectively. The finding is also in consonant with Korean (2008) who stated that adequate planning for training and development of staff have a significant relationship with effectiveness of the university. Thus adequate planning for training and development of staff should start from needs identification.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that there is a significant relationship between instructional supervisory practice and effectiveness of public universities. Finally, the study revealed also that there is a significant relationship between staff training/development practice and effectiveness of public universities.

Recommendations

Based on the finding and conclusion of the study, it was recommended that the university management should make provision for instructional supervision of lecturers in classroom. Also, the university management should encourage staff training/development in order to enhance institutional effectiveness.

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