

Quality Control Services and Sustainable Development in Nigerian Universities

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between quality control services and sustainable development in public universities in Cross River State, Nigeria. The study adopted a correlational survey research design. Three null hypotheses were stated to guide the study. The population of the study is 1,292 academic staff in all 21 faculties/institutes of the two universities. A sample of 200 respondents was randomly selected from ten faculties of the two universities, namely: University of Calabar and Cross River University of Technology. A questionnaire titled: Quality Control Services and Sustainable Development Questionnaire (QCSSDQ) was used to collect data. The questionnaire was validated by two experts in Measurement and Evaluation, and Department of Educational Management. Cronbach Alpha Reliability Technique was used to determine the reliability estimate, which ranged from 0.70 - 0.98. Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis was used to analyse the data. The result of the analysis revealed that quality control of resources, information communication technology, staff development programmes services significantly relate to sustainable development in the universities when tested at 0.05 level of significance. It was thus recommended that enabling environment with adequate resources, should be provided and supervised for sustainable development.

Keywords: quality, control, services, sustainable, development

Introduction

Supervision services have a long history in most countries overtime as many changes have occurred in every sector including education. In most countries, supervision services, throughout their long history, have become complex and intricate systems of operations, using different terminologies and playing different roles. Quality control services could be synonymous with the term 'supervision services' which should be understood as covering all those services whose main functions are (1) to inspect, control, evaluate; and/or (2) advise, assist and support school heads and teachers. The

concept of supervision that supports this study is one that describes a process that is common to all professions and occupations. No organization can function effectively without supervision. Supervision is an interaction between at least two persons for the improvement of activity (Agih, 2015).

Quality education is a by-product of quality assurance and should be viewed along that direction. Quality in education has to do with setting standards for the various processes and activities that lead to the production of graduates by the training institutions (Ciwar, 2005). Listed among other processes and activities for the production of graduates is the school environment from a holistic perspective, (Agih & Joseph, 2008). Quality is a relative concept which has two points of measuring up and ensuring conformity to predetermined specification. According to Sallis (2005), quality assurance may be viewed from very many angles; he averred that:

Quality assurance is different from quality control. It is a before and during the event process concerned to prevent faults occurring in the first place. Quality assurance is about designing quality into the process to attempt to ensure that the product is produced to a predetermined specification. Total quality management (TQM) incorporates quality assurance, and extends and develops it. TQM is about creating a quality culture where the aim of every member of staff is to delight their customers, and where the structure of their organization allows them to do so.

It is evident that the quality of school resources would aid the production of quality graduates and to meet up with such predetermined goal and that school facilities should possess operational status. Hence Sallis (2005) further buttressed that quality assurance is a means of producing defect-free and fault-free products and it is about consistently meeting product specification or getting things right first time, every time. How production of graduates at the university levels should take place and to what standards depend largely on the operational status of school facilities. According to Peretomode and Chukwuma (2007), higher education is the facilitator, the bedrock, the power house and the driving force for a strong socio-economic, political, cultural, healthier and industrial development of a nation as higher education institutions are key mechanisms increasingly recognized as wealth and human capital producing industries.

According to Sallis (2005), quality control and inspection in the past 20 years have increasingly been seen as uneconomic and wasteful, as they do not assure that the workforce care about quality. Many companies are replacing or augmenting them with methods of quality assurance and quality improvement that seek to build quality into the production process by returning to workers their responsibility for quality; whereby

they can be involved and be part of the entire process of quality through total quality management.

Service quality characteristics are more difficult to define than those for physical products. This is because they include many important subjective elements. The causes of poor quality and quality failure are materially different for services and products. Products often fail because of faults in raw materials and components. Their design may be faulty or they may not be manufactured to specification. Poor quality services, on the other hand, are usually directly attributable to an organization's behaviours or attitudes. They often result from lack of leadership, care or courtesy. Indifference and lack of training are the principal reasons for a breakdown of service. Supporting this view of Sallis is the SERVQUAL model by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1990) with five dimensions of assurance, empathy, reliability, responsiveness and tangibility which can be generalized to any type of service quality.

Fafunwa (2010) posited that there is a big gap in quality, resulting from large number of students in crowded classrooms, using inadequate and obsolete equipment and with disillusioned teachers. Quality in higher education is dependent on the quality and quantity of human and material resources put in place in institutions of higher learning. The lack of infrastructures such as science laboratories, workshops, students' hostels, libraries and electricity will affect the quality of education. For good quality delivery, these facilities must meet the minimum standard specified by the National Universities Commission (NUC) (Asiyai, 2013). The undesirable conditions of institutions of higher learning in Nigeria have been worrisome to many scholars (Asiyai, 2005; Odetunde, 2004).

Okebukola (2005) highlighted that:

1. Only about 30% of Nigerian students' population has adequate access to classrooms, workshop, lecture halls, laboratories and libraries.
 2. Deficient libraries in terms of currency and number of books, journals, and electronic support facilities.
 3. Inadequate academic calendar resulting from staff unions' industrial action premised on low salary, wages/welfare and students' strikes often time related to inadequate facilities.
 4. Lack of practical experience, often times resulting from deficient facilities.
- These factors above are all threats to quality attainment in higher education in Nigeria.

According to Uchendu, Ekanem and Jonah (2013), resources are the vital organs of effective and efficient functional education. Hence, ensuring the importance of educational resources goes beyond their mere provision. They can only be optimal and

efficient when they are adequately utilized and maintained. Studies have shown that the principal obstacle to the maintenance of resources in the school system is finance.

Another challenge to quality attainment in higher education in Nigeria is lack of information communication technology facilities in institutions of higher learning. As part of her education reform effort, Nigerian government adopted information communication technologies in all levels of education since information communication technology integration in educational practices is meant to improve teaching and learning, enhance higher education research, enhance collaboration among peers and improve quality of education. Unfortunately, in many institutions of higher learning in the country, there is acute short of computers, multi-media projectors, electronic white boards, and automation of lecture halls and lecturers' offices. Even majority of the institutions are not linked with functional internet connectivity (Asiyai, 2013).

White (2007) asserted that all employable teachers at all levels of education should undertake mandatory training and retraining on ICTs' programmes to provide them with practical and functional knowledge of the computer, internet and associated areas of ICTs with the hope of integrating them in instructional methods and above all in e-assessments. Information and communication technology in education has been continuously linked to higher efficiency, higher productivity and higher educational outcomes, including quality of cognitive, creative, and innovative thinking (Olatoye, 2011).

The supervision of ICT facilities' quality control services and quality assurance is very important in schools in the present day technological world. According to Anekwe and Izuchi (2012), ICTs' best practices if adopted in School Based Assessment (SBA) would achieve quality assurance. This can only be achieved through proper supervision and management of ICTs facilities. Their findings indicated that all the respondents unanimously agreed that all the listed items were the mechanisms for using ICTs in SBA for quality assurance. The respondents were of the consensus opinion that there should be lecturers' development in various aspects of e-assessments.

In order to successfully implement any innovation, first of all, the staff needs to be developed by raising awareness and training. This can be done through in-service seminars and school-based sessions (UNESCO, 2001). There are various ways in developing staff in the educational setting. Some of these ways may include the following: having a good professional training, in-service training, on-the-job training, having a good induction programme at the start, continuous supervision and support services, continuous assessment and appraisal of staff, good conditions of service,

conducive work environment/operational climate, fair and consistent system of reward, award of study fellowship, sanction or equal treatment for all, and recognition for excellent service (Igbineweka, 2015).

In addition, Asiyai and Oghuvbu (2009) reported that lack of staff development programmes accounted for the decline in quality of tertiary education in Nigeria. Similarly, Adeogun (2006) noted that an employee who is not trained and exposed to continuous retraining in the modern methods and new discoveries in his or her field will soon become irrelevant to the organization. Due to lack of opportunity for retraining and mentoring of junior lecturers by professors, the junior lecturers are not exposed to new ideas, facts, theories and research findings in higher education. Various scholars have reported the deficiency of teacher education programme in Nigeria (Falayayo, 2004; Ajayi, 2007). This calls for retraining of teachers if quality services in higher education are to be attained in the country for sustainable development.

Undeniable evidence exists to show that Nigerian tertiary education has failed to sufficiently carry out quality resource services, information and communication technology services and staff development services in educational system. This situation has not only posed a great challenge to quality services but may hinder sustainable development in the universities. Therefore, where these quality services are not rendered, it poses inefficiency and ineffectiveness to the institution. Hence the researchers considered the above problem to specifically find out whether quality resource, ICTs and staff development services relate to sustainable development in Nigeria universities?

Research questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. How do quality resource services relate to sustainable development in the universities?
2. To what extent do quality ICTs services relate to sustainable development in the universities?
3. To what extent does quality staff development relate to sustainable development in the universities?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were stated to guide this study:

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between quality resource services and sustainable development in the universities

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between quality ICTs services and sustainable development in the universities.

Ho3: There is no significant relationship between quality staff development services and sustainable development in the universities.

Methodology

This study adopted a correlational survey research design to determine the situation of quality control of resources, information communication technology, staff development programmes services at the time of investigation and how significantly the variables relate to sustainable development in the universities in Cross River State. The population of the study is 1,292 academic staff in all the 21 faculties/institutes of the two universities. A sample of 200 respondents was randomly selected from ten faculties in the two universities, namely: University of Calabar (UNICAL) and Cross River University of Technology (CRUTECH). Stratified and simple random sampling techniques were used in selecting respondents. A breakdown of the sample shows that there were 10 professors, 70 senior lecturers and 120 lecturers in other ranks. One hundred (100) lecturers were selected from UNICAL, and 100 from CRUTECH. A researcher designed questionnaire titled: Quality Control Services and Sustainable Development Questionnaire (QCSSDQ) on a four point modified Likert scale was used to collect data. The questionnaire had two sections (A and B). Section ‘A’ was on personal information of respondents; while section ‘B’ had 24 items for responses. The questionnaire was validated by two experts in Measurement and Evaluation, and Department of Educational Management. Cronbach Alpha Reliability technique was applied to determine the reliability coefficient after carrying out a trial testing using 50 academic staff drawn from a population outside the area of study, but with similar characteristics. Cronbach Alpha Reliability Technique was used to determine the reliability estimate which ranged from 0.70 - 0.98. Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis was used to analyze the data. Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistics was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Presentation of results

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between quality resource services and sustainable development in the universities.

Table 1: Pearson product moment correlation analysis on the relationship between quality resource services and sustainable development in the universities

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r	P
Quality resource services		16.03	2.09		
	200			0.62*	0.05
Sustainable development		15.74	2.85		

Significance at 0.05, df=198; critical r-value=0.138.

The analysis from table 1 revealed that, the calculated r-value of 0.62 is greater than the critical r-value of 0.138 when tested at 0.05 level of significance and 198 degree of freedom. The result of this table revealed that there is a significant positive correlation between quality resource services and sustainable development in the universities ($r(200) = 0.62, p < 0.05$). This does not support hypothesis one. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative form is retained.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between quality ICT services and sustainable development in the universities.

Table 2: Pearson product moment correlation analysis on the relationship between quality ICT services and sustainable development in the universities

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r	P
Quality ICT services	200	16.78	2.11	0.54*	0.05
Sustainable development		15.74	2.85		

Significance at 0.05, df=198; critical r-value=0.138.

The analysis from table 2 revealed that the calculated r-value of 0.54 is greater than the critical r-value of 0.138 when tested at 0.05 level of significance and 198 degree of freedom. The result of this table revealed that there is a significant positive correlation between quality ICT services and sustainable development in the universities ($r(200) = 0.54, p < 0.05$). This does not support hypothesis two. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative form is retained.

Ho3: There is no significant relationship between quality staff development programme services and sustainable development in the universities.

Table 3: Pearson product moment correlation analysis on the relationship between quality staff development programme services and sustainable development in the universities

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r	P
Quality staff development services	200	17.09	2.18	0.51*	0.05
Sustainable development		15.74	2.85		

Significance at 0.05, df=198; critical r-value=0.138.

The analysis from table 3 revealed that, the calculated r-value of 0.51 is greater than the critical r-value of 0.138 when tested at 0.05 level of significance and 198 degree of freedom. The result of this table revealed that there is a significant positive

correlation between quality staff development programme services and sustainable development in the universities ($r(200) = 0.51, p < 0.05$). This does not support hypothesis three. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative form is retained.

Discussion of the findings

The result from hypothesis one revealed that quality control of resource services has a significant relationship with sustainable development in universities. This result is supported by the assertion of Asiyai (2013) that quality higher education is dependent on the quality and quantity of human and material resources put in place in institutions of higher learning. To achieve good quality delivery, these facilities must meet the minimum standard specified by the National Universities Commission (NUC) through proper quality control. It also agrees with Uchendu et al (2013) who reported that there is a significant positive correlation between quality resource services and sustainable development in the universities.

The result of hypothesis two indicated that quality control of ICT's services has a significant relationship with sustainable development in universities. The result supports Olatoye's (2011) assertions that ICT's services has been continuously linked to higher efficiency, productivity and higher education outcomes; including quality of cognitive, creative and innovative thinking.

The result of hypothesis three revealed that quality control of staff development programme services has a significant relationship with sustainable development in universities. This result is in consonance with the findings of Igbineweka (2015) that there are various ways in developing staff in the educational setting. Such as good professional training, on-the-job training, continuous supervision, better conditions of service and recognition for excellent service, and so forth.

Conclusion

The study adopted correlational survey research design to investigate a population of 1,292 academic staff in all the 21 faculties/institutes of the University of Calabar (UNICAL) and Cross River University of Technology (CRUTECH). A sample size of 200 academic staff was used for the study. Questionnaire was used for data collection. Pearson's product moment correlation statistics was used in analyzing the null hypotheses, each hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance and 198 degree of freedom. The result of the analysis revealed that quality control of resources, information communication technology, staff development programmes services significantly relate to sustainable development in the Universities. The study affirmed that quality control of resource services in higher education is dependent on the quality and quantity of human and material resources put in place in institutions of higher

learning for sustainable development in the universities. The study also revealed that quality control of information and communication technology services is continuously linked to higher efficiency. While quality control of staff development programme services confirmed that developing staffs in the educational setting require good professional training, on-the-job training, continuous supervision, better conditions of service towards sustainable development in the universities

Recommendations

Based on the findings, it is recommended for supervision and staffs' development that:

1. The Federal and State governments in charge of respective universities should adequately fund educational programmes in line with the UNESCO recommendations of 26% of annual budget, and monitor its utilization through quality control mechanism towards sustaining development in the universities.
2. Vice chancellors and heads of department should exercise leadership attributes in quality control services in resource supervision, utilization and management; as well as organizing regular seminar and conferencing on information technology utilization for its staff in order to enhance their administrative effectiveness and performance for specified standards.
3. University managers should urgently put in place a proper quality control services in the areas of resources, ICT and staff development programmes in order to improve on the quality of resource services, information and communication technology services and provide funds for academic staff development programmes in universities.

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