



QUALITY ASSURANCE AND SKILL ACQUISITION FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

Auwal Said Mahmoud

*Department of Business Education
School of Vocational Education and Technical
Sa'adatu Rimi College of Education,
Kumbotso*

Misbahu Yunusa

*Department of Business Education
School of Vocational Education and Technical
Sa'adatu Rimi College of Education,
Kumbotso*

Abstract

This paper examined quality assurance which is the bedrock for the development of every country such as Nigeria and the rest of the world. This paper discussed the concept of Quality Assurance, National Development, Skill Acquisition, The Purpose of Quality Assurance, A Feature of Quality Assurance System, Strategies for Improvement of National Development, The Functions of Quality Assurance and Skill Acquisition on National Development, and The ways of improving National Development in each department, procedure for conducting a good quality assurance for the benefit of the nation. The paper concluded that quality of personnel, output, and atmosphere for teaching and learning as well as the skill acquired from the entrepreneurship would be available and utilised, if these put in a workable manner, would improve the quality assurance of the programme for national development in these colleges of education and the Nigeria in particular. The paper recommended that: (1) Qualified personnel should be available in each department so as to improve the standard of the programme. (2) Qualitative facilities for working should be provided to the department for the improvement of the nation.

Keywords: Quality Assurance, National Development, Skill Acquisition in Nigeria

Introduction

Nigeria is a country in the West African Continent which has been divided into thirty-six (36) states including the federal territory capital Abuja and seven hundred and seventy-four (774) local governments which was headed by the president, governors and chairmen for the purposes to improve national development. National development refers to the enhancement of a country such as Nigeria in different sectors namely: economic health, education, industries, banking system communication and technology for the betterment of citizens and for the improvement of the Nigerian standard and the West Africa in particular and the world at large.

Concept of Quality Assurance

Quality assurance refers to the techniques of making things standard in order to improving its qualities that enhances national development, in the other hand quality assurance is the process of improving the structure of a programme to the higher level of accuracy. Quality assurance is a planned and systematic means for assuring management that the defined standards, practices, procedures, and methods of the process are applied` (MITRE, 2007) Oliver (2013) defined quality assurance as the means through which an institution or nation ensures and confirms that the conditions are in place for students to achieve the standard set by it or by another awarding body. Nicholson (2013) looked at quality assurance as about the policies, attitudes, actions, and procedures necessary to ensure that quality is maintained. Quality assurance exercise should be characterized with some attributes; these attributes are what will the assessors use to know whether it has met its required



standard or not. Quality assurance is any systematic process of checking to see whether a product or services being developed is meeting specified requirements (Alexander, 2014).

Purpose of Quality Assurance

The purpose of quality assurance to any development of the country is what leads to the improvement in the achievement of the stated goals. Thus are the purposes of quality assurance.

- (a) Deliver on its basic functions (research, innovation, and community service).
- (b) Ensure effective service delivery (which demands that facilities and accompaniments must be quality-defining and quality-driven).
- (c) Enhance its rating, locally and globally (Institutional/Programme accreditation and Institutions ranking are based on similar measurable indices that are quality-defined).
- (d) Provide solutions to national and global needs.
- (e) Meet the expectations of its students and their parents/guardians.
- (f) Achieve the set goals of its proprietors, shareholders and managers of the company (Alexander, 2014).

In line with the above assertion, quality assurance procedures can serve two major purposes: improvement and accountability.

There is an uneasy balance between both purposes, which frequently raises the question of incompatibility (Vroeijenstijn, 2005).

1. **Accountability – Summative Approach.** “A central aspect of ‘accountability’ in any form is that of ‘rendering an account’ of what one is doing in relation to goals that have been set or legitimate expectations that others may have of one’s products, services or processes, in terms that can be understood by those who have a need or right to understand ‘the account’. For this reason, accountability is usually, if not always, linked to public information and to judgments about the fitness, the soundness, or level of satisfaction achieved (Middlehurst & Woodhouse, 2005)”. Quality procedures for accountability purposes are based on criteria set down by external authorities and institutions. They aim at strengthening external insight and control, with the possibility of undertaking external corrective action, if necessary. Quality assurance for accountability purposes implies the use of a summative approach. Where this approach predominates, reports include explicit statements of outcomes and are published (Billing, 2004). The purpose of the publication is to inform the public of the performance of higher education institutions (Middlehurst & Woodhouse, 2005). This approach is common in countries, such as the UK, where there is a considerable institutional autonomy (Billing, 2004).
2. **Improvement–Formative Approach.** Definitions of what is regarded as ‘improvement’ have changed and perspectives regarding the purpose and the focus of improvement can vary according to different stakeholders. Notions of improvement (as well as of accountability) are related to different judgments



of value and balances of power for different groups (Middlehurst and Woodhouse, 2005).

Some Features of Effective Quality Assurance Systems

Some the following are considered as the features of effective quality assurance systems:

- a. **Clarity of purposes.** Expectations regarding the aims and the outcomes of quality assurance may differ between different stakeholders; hence in order to create coherent systems, the aim of EQA must be clear. It is argued that EQA systems should not be overcharged with summative and formative functions; it is hard for EQA to serve two masters (namely accountability and improvement). Quality will be enhanced more easily through improvement approaches than through control. Hence it is important not to burden the quality assurance system excessively with accountability and information delivery (Vroeiijensstijn, 2005). It is suggested that “improvement and accountability must be conceptually and practically distinct, with separate resourcing, while allowing for close contact between them”. Separate purposes can be served by several different mechanisms, but for mutual support, information should be shared (Middlehurst and Woodhouse, 2005). Ewell (2002) found that one of the characteristics of ‘best practices’ is with the mission and core values of the higher education institution. It is argued that it is “remarkable how ‘best practice’ organisations are driven by only a few well-articulated core values or mission elements, with evaluation processes attached visibly to these key areas in preference to being ‘comprehensive’”.
- b. **Legitimacy.** Brennan (2007) points out that legitimacy is a key factor determining the impact of quality assurance. “Quality judgments which lack legitimacy in the eyes of those on the receiving end of them are not likely to be acted upon if action can be avoided.” In this respect, the nature of the involvement of the academic community as a whole is particularly important, while the balance of ownership of QAA between state and HEI seems to affect little the legitimacy of quality assurance activities. “Yet, the success with which the authority of subject communities is exploited by the QAA may be a key factor affecting its overall legitimacy and impact.” Harvey (2002) points out also that a key issue is the legitimacy of EQA systems and how far it is supported by academics.

Quality procedures for improvement purposes aim at promoting future performance rather than making judgments on past performance. The criteria and procedures used are intended to strengthen the conditions, motivations, scope, and level of information of HEIs towards quality improvement. “Procedures lead to ends that are specifically in the interest of the higher development of the nation and towards the specification of quality according to goals and criteria that are internal or may be made internal by the institutions” (Thune, 2006).

Quality assurance for improvement purposes implies a formative approach: the focus is not on control but on improving quality. Where this approach is predominant, the reports are written for an academic audience and the emphasis is on



recommendations. This approach is typical in those countries where the higher education and economic sector are subject to strong state regulation, as in continental Europe (Billing, 2004). In national development and strategies, strategies refer to the tactic or artifice designed to gain the upper hand especially one involving underhanded dealing or deceptions, **which are** the processes planned to change from being concentrated at one point to being distributed across a number of points.

The goals of our quality assurance strategy are:

1. Deliver the highest quality of national development possible with the available time and resources.
2. It helps to achieve higher quality of nation's economics and technological.
3. Ensure a lower total cost of ownership. The strategy rests on three widely accepted premises in software development:
4. It is usually exponentially cheaper to deal with defects when they're caught early than it is to fix them later
5. The higher the level of test assurance (coverage, frequency, and effectiveness), the easier it is to catch defects early
6. It is usually exponentially cheaper to automate a test than it is to manually execute it hundreds of times during the life of a software product strategy that aims at quality assurance for national development (Billing, 2004).

There are ways of improving the quality of national development strategically in Nigeria are many; some of the, thus:

1. Quality of personnel
 2. Quality of intake
 3. Quality of facilities
 4. Quality of output
 5. Quality of atmosphere for teaching in the nation
-
1. Quality of personnel: this is an area where they need to be improved to the standard so as the Polytechnic, Colleges and the University of education should state strategic plans for the lecturers to meet before being promoted to the next level of ranks. This means that when lecturers receive higher degrees from the universities whether local or international their experiences would be improved and the quality of students would also be improved to the standard.
 2. Quality of intake: this is another area which needs to be improved why is it that polytechnics, colleges and universities of education should plan to organize the committee that can lead the standard procedure to be observed especially in the process of enrolment of new students for national development, such as interviews and aptitude tests that should be applied by the qualified personnel, so as to enrol the qualitative students, which will be proud after graduations, this would improve the standard of national development in polytechnic colleges universities of education in totality.
 3. Quality of facilities: this is another stage which requires the Polytechnics, Colleges Universities of education to plan for how to provide the standard machinery such as modern computers, electrical typewriter, manual typewriter new as well as internet facilities to the both students and lecturers in time,



these will improve the quality of national development, due to the fact that the students would have the required skills needed for every student to have, be it male or female, which they will receive in accordance with the bodies of accreditation.

4. Quality of output: students produced must meet the standard as planned by National Commission for Colleges Education as well as National Universities Commission that lead the colleges of education and universities, to provide well retained personnel or services, due to the fact that they received the required skills, attitudes, knowledge and good characters, that improve teaching and learning situation.
5. Quality of atmosphere for teaching: the lesson to be more easily understood by the students, the colleges of education planned to have; the lecture rooms and theatres provided must be well-ventilated places with enough windows and writing pad for them. Too much number of students must not be allocated with small lecture room. This will improve the quality of national development in the colleges of education and Nigeria state in totality.

Concept of Skill Acquisition

Skill acquisition refers to the process whereby the person undergoes some programme in order to obtain the skill which will enable him or her to be self-reliance for the benefit of the nation such as Nigeria. The example of the programme should be considered in this paper is entrepreneurship education that at the university in Nigeria a student must undergo a course on entrepreneurship at 300 level this is the same with a national certificate in education it has one course called a general study in education (GSE 224). This course entrepreneurship is among the course for developing the nation.

Entrepreneurship development is considered a vital link to an overall economic growth of a nation through its positive impact on economic development especially at the grassroots (Barringer & Ireland, 2012; Wehrich et al. 2008). Entrepreneurship help to create wealth and reduce unemployment, produce creativity and innovation, and increase the total production of a country (Shane, 2003). Arguably, the technological advancement or transformation in any country mostly can be made possible through innovative sciences, ideas and utilizing uncommon opportunities; and entrepreneurship is the best way to achieve this. People become gainfully employed through vocational training and skill acquisition (Ebong & Asodike, 2011; Ikegwu, 2014; Nwanaka & Amaehule, 2011).

Globally, entrepreneurship skill acquisition programmes introduced into educational institutions were meant to provide the level of education or knowledge needed to exploit entrepreneurial opportunity which could help the economic development of such countries (Emaikwu, 2011; Shane, 2003), and studies have shown that skill acquisition is the most critical factor in the utilization of entrepreneurship opportunity for self-employment (Ekpe & Mat, 2012). In line with this, the Malaysian government has put in place several entrepreneurship development programs, including the introduction of entrepreneurship courses and the



establishment of entrepreneurship departments in various universities in the country in order to train aspiring entrepreneurs.

The aim of such programmes was to impart skills, attitudes, aspirations and competencies mostly in the youths, and provides microcredit, to enable them to practice entrepreneurship or create self-employment as well as help generate employment for others (Abdullah, Osman & Rahim., 2009; Samian & Buntat, 2012). Each year, many students graduate from Malaysian public universities. For example, from the Universiti Malaysia Kelantan 2013 Convocation, a total of 538 Bachelor Degree students graduated in 2013 (Konvolesyen Ke 2013). This number is a result of high school enrolment and attendance in the country. With such level of graduates, their contribution to the national economy is quite high in term skill, knowledge and competencies; and to their families in terms of financial support. In this way, they are highly empowered to contribute positively to national economic, political and social policies as well as participate in community decisions affecting them.

However, despite the numerous government entrepreneurship development programmes and the importance of entrepreneurial skill acquisition to self-employment practice, it is observed, and previous studies have also reported, that most of the entrepreneurship graduates from Malaysian universities do not go into entrepreneurship practice five years after graduation by identifying and exploiting entrepreneurial opportunities (Abdullah et al.; 2009; Samian & Buntat, 2012). The question is: what could be the hindering factors? Could it be due to self-motivation and/or social influence? Previous studies were available on the relationship between skill acquisition and entrepreneurial opportunity or self-employment (Abdullah , et al.; 2009; Ikegwu, 2014; Wanaka & Amaehule, 2011 Ojo, 2009 Onuoha Onuoha, Inyiama, Eze, & Achi. 2013; Samian & Buntat, 2012) but there was scarcity of research that empirically measured entrepreneurial skill acquisition and self-employment practice, with psychosocial factors (self-motivation and social influence) as moderators especially in developing country like Malaysia. Entrepreneurial skill acquisition could not lead to self-employment practice without considering entrepreneur's characteristics or attitudes such as self-motivation, and social influence of friends.

Functions of Quality Assurance and Skill Acquisition

Based on the discussion on this paper, quality assurance and the skill acquisition are the component for development of the nation such Nigeria, due to the fact that, if all the facilities using in its offices are qualitative be it private or public will develop the system to the standard high on the other hand, when product produced by the skilled personnel will enhance the level of standard of living and the Nigeria at large.

Conclusion

Based on the discussion of the paper the researchers concluded that quality of personnel, output, and atmosphere for teaching and learning as well as the skill acquired from the entrepreneurship if these put in a workable manner, will improve the quality assurance of the programme of national development in these colleges of education and universities in Nigeria at particular.



Recommendations

With the reference to the conclusion, the paper recommended the followings

1. Qualified personnel should be available in each national development department so as to improve the standard of the programme
2. Qualitative facilities should be provided to the national development of the nation in order to improve the quality of national development.
3. Qualified and competent persons as internal accreditation committee for improvement of the national development.
4. Appropriate content area of national development currently available in the world should be used to teach the national development students.

References

- Abdullah SH, Osman MH & Rahim MSH (2009). The key concept of academic technology entrepreneurship in the current practice. *Asia Pacific Journal of Innovation and Entrepreneurship, Korea Business Incubation Association*, 2(1), 77-96.
- Alexander, J (2014). Testing and QA Fundamentals Programming of Quality Assurance Safe harbour. *Journal of I Health care Quality Assurance Vol. 27 Issue 8, Pp 684-696*
- Barringer B & Ireland D (2012). *Entrepreneurship- Successful launching of the new venture*, 4th edition, USA, Pearson Education.
- Billing, D. (2004). International comparisons and trends in the external quality assurance of higher Education: Commuality or diversity? *Higher Education*, 47 Pp 169-183
- Brennan, J. (2007) Authority, Legitimacy and Change: the rise of quality assessment in higher education, *Higher Education Management*, (1) Pp 157-172
- Ekpe I & Mat N (2012). The moderating effect of social environment on the relationship between entrepreneurial orientations and entrepreneurial intentions of female students at Nigerian universities. *International Journal of Management and Business Research*, 1(4): 1-16.
- Emaikwu S.O. (2011). Integrating entrepreneurship skill acquisition in the university curriculum for national development. *Journal of Research in Education and Society*, 2(3), 40-48.
- Ewell, P. T. (2002). A Delicate Balance: the role of evaluation in management, *Quality in higher education*, 8, (2) 272-287
- Harvey, L. (2002). The End of Quality? *Quality in Higher Education*, 8,(1) 123-132
- Ikegwu EM, Ajiboye YO, Aromolaran AD, Ayodeji AA & Okorafor U (2014). Human empowerment through skill acquisition: Issues, impacts and consequences- A non-parametric view. *Journal of Poverty, Investment and Development- An open access International Journal*, 5 (1), 94-101.
- Jones GG & Wadhvani RD (2006). Schumpeter's plea: Rediscovering history and relevance in the study of entrepreneurship. USA: Harvard Business School.
- Kelantan Convocation (2013). List of Graduands Konvokesyen Ke 3, 2013: 18, 73-86. Vob R &
- Middlehurst, R. and Woodhouse, D. (2005). Coherent Systems for External Quality Assurance, *Quality in Higher Education*, 1, (3) PP 37-49
- MITRE, (2007). System Engineering (SE) Conference Model Institute, 37 Quality Assurance and Management, pp 45-6
- Nicholson, K. (2013). Quality Assurance in Higher Education Teaching and Learning development 6, Pp. 22



- Nwanaka CR & Amaehule S (2011). Skill acquisition: Imperative for business studies educators among secondary schools in Rivers State. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 2(7), 37-43.
- Ojo O (2009). Impact of microfinance on entrepreneurial development: The case of Nigeria. Faculty of Administration and Business, University of Bucharest, Romania.
- Oliver, M. (2013). Quality Assurance and Quality Enhancement in e-learning. Higher education,
- Onuoha FN, Inyama HC, Eze FC & Achi II (2013) E-skill information acquisition software: A key to poverty alleviation for self-reliance. *West African Journal of Industrial and Academic Research*, 6(1), 65-77.
- Otamiri, S. (2008). National development and Self-employment: A Case for Entrepreneurship Education *National development Journal*. 2 pp 7-8
- Samian SS & Buntat Y (2012). Self-employment: Perceptions among deaf students in Malaysian higher education through workplace experience. 3rd International Conference on Business and Economic Research (3rd ICBER 2012) Proceedings, held on 12-13 March 2012 at Golden Flower Hotel, Bandung, Indonesia pp.1545-1556.
- Shane S (2003). A general theory of entrepreneurship: The individual-opportunity nexus. UK: Edward Elgar.
- Shastri RK & Sinha A (2010). The socio-cultural and economic effect on the development of women entrepreneurs (with special reference to India). *Asian Journal of Business Management*, 2(2), 30-34.
- Stohmeyer R (2007). Gender gap and segregation in self-employment: On the role of the field of study and apprenticeship training. Germany: German Council for Social and Economic Data (RatSWD).
- Thune, C. (2006). The Alliance of Accountability and Improvement: the Danish experience, *Quality in Higher Education*,. (1) Pp 123-134
- Vroeijenstijn, A.I. (2005). Improvement and accountability: navigating between Scylla and Charybdis, *Higher Education Policy Series* 30