



QUALITY ASSURANCE STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING SKILL ACQUISITION IN BUSINESS EDUCATION PROGRAMME IN UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTH-EAST FOR SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study examined quality assurance strategies for promoting skill acquisition in business education programme in universities in South East Nigeria for sustainable national development. Three research questions and three hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population of the study comprised 73 business education lecturers in public universities in the South East Nigeria. There was no sampling since the population was manageable. The instrument for data collection was a 24 - item questionnaire. The instrument was validated by three experts. The instrument yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.85 using Cronbach Alpha procedure. A total of 68 out of the 73 copies of the questionnaire distributed were retrieved and used for data analysis. Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions and t-test was used in testing the hypotheses. The findings of this study revealed that the respondents irrespective of gender and institutions ownership agreed that all the itemized quality assurance strategies established by the study were relevant and capable of promoting skill acquisition in business education programme in universities in South East Nigeria for sustainable national development. It was, therefore, recommended that the strategies established by this study should be implemented for promoting quality teaching and learning in business education for skills acquisition that will enable students contribute effectively to the development of the society for sustainable national development upon graduation.

Keywords: Strategies, Quality, Skill, Sustainable, Development

Introduction

Quality assurance is a proactive measure of ensuring quality in any organisation. In education, quality assurance aims at preventing problems and ensures that the products of the system conform to the expected standards. It is a continuous process by which an institution can guarantee that standard and quality of its educational provisions are maintained and improved upon. According to Harman in Okereke (2014), quality assurance is the systematic management and assessment procedure employed by tertiary institutions in order to monitor performance against objectives and to ensure achievement of quality outputs and quality improvement. Harman further emphasized that quality assurance emerged as a principal business method in the Western world throughout the 1950s and in the early 1960s but now used in education and other public service sectors. Quality assurance is designed to



prove and improve the standard of an institution's method as well as educational processes and products.

Igborgbor (2012) maintained that quality assurance connotes all the measures taken to ensure that the educational system is better able to meet the needs of each society. In the view of Kontio (2012), quality assurance means all the procedures, processes and systems that support and develop education and other activities of higher education. To Kontio, quality assurance and auditing are one way to support education to improve its quality of delivery. Similarly, Oladipo, Adeosun and Oni in Onyesom and Ashibogwu (2013) saw quality assurance as the relevance and appropriateness of the education programme to the needs of the community for which it is provided. They further asserted that it is the arrangement made or the mechanism put in place to maintain the degree of excellence of an educational product or service. Quality assurance involves series of operational techniques and activities, which include all actions taken for standards to be met. Onyesom and Ashibogwu saw quality assurance as the entire process of ensuring maximum effectiveness and efficiency of educational programmes and services in relation to their context, mission and stated objectives.

Strategy is the technique or mechanism put in place to maintain the degree of excellence of a product or service. In education, strategy is the plan of action designed to achieve the set goals of education (Osahon, 2013). Considering the objectives of business education programme which is majorly practical skill acquisition to enable the individual to be productive and have bright opportunities, it is therefore mandatory that deliberate effort should be made to ensure quality of the programme through quality curriculum, proper planning and efficient administration and adequate financing. The necessity for quality assurance in Nigerian education for effective teaching and learning cannot be exaggerated. Business education consists of teaching students the fundamentals, concepts, theories and processes of concern. To Okoli (2010), business education is an important component of the overall education, which stresses on skills and capabilities attainment for utilization in offices and business-related occupations. Similarly, Ogunmayi in Okoro (2015) saw business education as the type of education that assists individuals to acquire skills, which can be applied to solve problems in business and office occupations. Ogunmayi further asserted that business education has a definite role in preparing and equipping students with skills that increase their chances of finding jobs across territorial boundaries after schooling. The author also observed that business education equips the students with knowledge and skills needed to create self-employment for national development.

The development of adequate skills and competencies is an important characteristic of business education in any level of tertiary education system in Nigeria. Business education is that aspect of education that exposes the learner to the acquisition of demonstrable skills that could be transformed into economic benefits. Udo (2015) saw business education as the type of education that is concerned with the acquisition of skills and knowledge for employment and sustainable livelihood. Udo added that business education is a comprehensive activity-based educational programme that is concerned with the acquisition of practical skills, understanding, attitudes, work habits and competencies that are requisite to success in a chosen



business occupation. Business education is a planned programme of learning experiences that begin with the exploration of career options, supports basic academic and life skills as well as enables achievement of high academic standards, leadership, preparation for business world and continuing education. One of the most significant aspects of business education is its inclination towards the world of work and the emphasis of the curriculum on the acquisition of employable skills.

Acquisition of the requisite skills for employment is a means of increasing productive power of any nation. The acquisition of skills is important because it tends to promote personal and national development. Maximum skills acquisition by business education students will help to enrich the Nigerian economy as well as make possible sustainable national development. Acquiring practical skills to the level of possession according to Udo (2015), will enable the recipients of business education to impact positively to boost sustainable national development in Nigeria. However, there is need for quality business education to deliver maximum practical skills to produce skilled work force for sustainable national development. Thus, quality assurance in relation to business education in this study refers to all measures that are necessary to ensure that business education accomplishes the goals expected of it by the Nigerian society for sustainable national development.

The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) (2004) made the case that sustainable national development is not a fixed concept. Rather, it is a culturally directed search for dynamic balance in the relationship between social, economic and natural systems, a balance that seeks to promote equity between the present and the future and equity between countries, races, social classes and genders. UNESCO expatiated further that appropriate sustainable national development must be developed for the rich and poor nations. Thus, business education is a major factor in ensuring that there is sustainable national development in a developing country like Nigeria. However, Olufunwa, Waziri and Olorunmolu (2013) had noted that for business education to achieve its goals there must be appropriate strategies to promote quality assurance in business education that will ensure the production of quality graduates for sustainable national development. Such appropriate strategies that promote quality assurance in business education for skills acquisition for sustainable national development, according to Chibuike (2013), include adequate funding, effective monitoring and evaluation, review of the programme to accommodate maximum practical skills, recruitment of qualified personnel, appropriate use of quality instructional materials and effective assessment and development of staff as well as standardization of requirements for admission of students. Others are quality curriculum, quality text books, students discipline, quality teaching facilities, good administrative policy, organizational policy, regular accreditation, impact assessment, research and development, and among others.

Statement of the Problem

The national educational objectives, according to the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2013) include the acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competencies both mental and physical considered invaluable for all Nigerians to live and contribute to sustainable national development. The FRN stated further that the



nation's educational activity should be centred on the students in order for them to acquire maximum skills acquisition for self-development and fulfilment in the labour market. Regrettably, due to poor quality assurance in our educational system, business education inclusive, the level of practical skills acquired by students is nothing to compare with the demands of the labour market and technological advancement.

Thus, most graduates of business education in Nigeria are without gainful employment. The inability to attain quality assurance in business education has been identified as the major factor to the ineffective and inefficient delivery system of the programme. The products of the programme are ill equipped and short of the necessary needed skills for self-realization and national development. As a result, the society has been denied the much-desired benefit of the programme as the products cannot contribute adequately and meaningfully to national development. It is against this background that this study has been carried out to explore quality assurance strategies for promoting skill acquisition in business education programme in universities in South East Nigeria that will affect sustainable national development.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to explore quality assurance strategies for promoting skill acquisition in business education programme in universities in South East Nigeria that will affect sustainable national development. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Determine the quality curriculum strategy for promoting skill acquisition in business education programme in universities in South East Nigeria for sustainable national development.
2. Determine the quality personnel strategy for promoting skill acquisition in business education programme in universities in South East Nigeria for sustainable national development.
3. Determine the quality funding strategy for promoting skill acquisition in business education programme in universities in South East Nigeria for sustainable national development.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study.

1. What are the quality curriculum strategies for promoting skill acquisition in business education programme in universities in South East Nigeria for sustainable national development?
2. What are the quality personnel strategies for promoting skill acquisition in business education programme in universities in South East Nigeria for sustainable national development?
3. What are the quality funding strategies for promoting skill acquisition in business education programme in universities in South East Nigeria for sustainable national development?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.



1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female business education lecturers on the quality curriculum strategies for promoting skill acquisition in business education programme in universities in South East Nigeria for sustainable national development.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female business education lecturers on the quality personnel strategies for promoting skill acquisition in business education programme in universities in South East Nigeria for sustainable national development.
3. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business education lecturers from State universities and those of Federal universities on the quality funding strategies for promoting skill acquisition in business education programme in universities in South East Nigeria for sustainable national development.

Method

The study adopted descriptive survey design. According to Nworgu (2015), a survey research design is one in which a group of people or items is studied by collecting and analyzing data from only a few people or items considered to be representative of the entire group. This design, therefore, was considered appropriate for the study as it collected data on the opinions of business education lecturers in South East Nigeria. The study was carried out in public universities in South East Nigeria. The population for the study comprised seventy-three business education lecturers in the eight universities offering business education in south east Nigeria. The entire population was used for the study because of its manageable size, hence, there was no need for sampling. The data for the study were collected using a structured questionnaire. The instrument was constructed using a four point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA) 4 points, Agree (A) 3 points, Disagree (D) 2 points and Strongly Disagree (SD) 1 point. Three experts in business education validated the questionnaire. The questionnaire has a reliability index of 0.85, which was established through a pilot test on 16 business education lecturers in Delta State University, Abraka and University of Benin, Benin City. The internal consistency was determined using Cronbach Alpha procedure. Copies of the questionnaire were administered and collected by the researchers with the help of four research assistants after proper briefing on the purpose of the study. Seventy-three copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the respondents. However, 68 copies representing (93%) of the questionnaire were retrieved and found usable. Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation for the research questions, while the t-test was used to test the hypotheses. The decision rule for the research questions was based on the real limit of numbers as follows:

Response Options	Point	Real Limit of Numbers
Strongly Agree (SA)	4	3.50 - 4.00
Agree (A)	3	2.50 – 3.49
Disagree (D)	2	1.50 - 2.49
Strongly Disagree (SD)	1	1.00 - 1.49



The null hypothesis was accepted when the t-calculated value is less than the t-table value. On the other hand, the null hypothesis was not accepted when t-calculated value is greater than the t-table value.

Results:

Research Question 1:

What are the quality curriculum strategies for promoting skill acquisition in business education programme in universities in South East Nigeria for sustainable national development?

Table 1: Mean Responses and Standard Deviation of Business Education Lecturers on Quality Curriculum Strategies for Promoting Skill Acquisition in Business Education Programme in Universities in South East Nigeria for Sustainable National Development

S/N	Items on Quality Curriculum Strategies	Mean	SD	Remarks
1	Appropriate business education curriculum design	3.83	0.63	Strongly Agreed
2	Appropriate implementation of business education curriculum content	3.09	0.68	Agreed
3	Review of existing business education curriculum to accommodate maximum practical skills	2.90	0.40	Agreed
4	Business education curriculum should be result-oriented and more responsible to labour market needs	3.12	0.67	Agreed
5	Business education curriculum should encourage practical activities and provision of high quality work-based learning enterprise	2.97	0.73	Agreed
6	Ensure that key competencies are integrated into business education curriculum and develop appropriate means of assessment	3.85	0.63	Strongly Agreed
7	Business education curriculum should give learners access to appropriate up-to-date technical equipment, teaching materials and infrastructure	3.42	0.81	Agreed
8	Business education curriculum should adhere to accreditation requirement	3.59	0.73	Strongly Agreed

Keys: S/N = Serial Number, SD = Standard Deviation

Table 1 reveals that business education lecturers agree to all the items. This implies that, the quality curriculum strategies listed can promote skill acquisition in business education programme in universities in South East Nigeria for sustainable national development.

Research Question 2

What are the quality personnel strategies for promoting skill acquisition in business education programme in universities in South East Nigeria for sustainable national development?



Table 2: Mean Responses and Standard Deviation of Business Education Lecturers on the Quality Personnel Strategies for Promoting Skill Acquisition in Business Education Programme in Universities in South East Nigeria for Sustainable National Development

S/N	Items on Quality Personnel Strategies	Mean	SD	Remarks
1	Recruitment of qualified teaching personnel in business education	3.74	0.56	Strongly Agreed
2	Teaching personnel in business education must have requisite skills to skilled business courses	3.12	0.64	Agreed
3	Teaching personnel in business education should have a competency-based education	3.32	0.89	Agreed
4	Teaching personnel in business education must have good knowledge of business education courses	3.08	0.51	Agreed
5	Training and retraining of teaching personnel in business education	3.45	0.62	Agreed
6	Teaching personnel in business education must have appropriate knowledge of students guidance and mentoring	2.86	0.58	Agreed
7	Teaching personnel in business education must adhere to staff quality control	3.54	0.76	Strongly Agreed
8	Teaching personnel in business education must be effectively motivated	3.66	0.67	Strongly Agreed

Keys: S/N = Serial Number, SD = Standard Deviation

Table 2 reveals that all eight items are agreed to by business education lecturers. This implies that, the quality personnel strategies listed can promote skill acquisition in business education programme in universities in South East Nigeria for sustainable national development.

Research Question 3

What are the quality funding strategies for promoting skill acquisition in business education programme in universities in South East Nigeria for sustainable national development?

Table 3: Mean Responses and Standard Deviation of Business Education Lecturers on the Quality Funding Strategies for Promoting Skill Acquisition in Business Education Programme in Universities in South East Nigeria for Sustainable National Development

S/N	Items on Quality Funding Strategies	Mean	SD	Remarks
1	Business education should ensure that all tiers of government from local to federal should have a hand in the funding of business education programme	3.09	0.68	Agreed
2	Private sectors should be encouraged to have active participation in the funding business education programme through grants, donations and annuities.	3.20	0.64	Agreed
3	Business education should established consultancy services to generate fund	3.05	0.48	Agreed
4	Business education should make appeal to alumni,	3.06	0.56	Agreed



	associations, clubs and religious body for fund.			
5	Business education should also appeal to well-known Nigerians and philanthropist for intervention fund	2.99	0.54	Agreed
6	Business education should seek for intervention fund from TETFUND	3.86	0.45	Strongly Agreed
7	Separation of business education programme from other general education to have its own budgetary allocation	2.89	0.59	Agreed
8	Periodic launching of business education research products to generate fund	3.17	0.68	Agreed

Keys: S/N = Serial Number, SD = Standard Deviation

Table 3 shows the mean responses range from 2.89 and above which is regarded as agreed on the decision benchmark of the study. This implies that business education lecturers agreed on the itemized quality funding strategies for promoting skill acquisition in business education programme in universities in South East Nigeria for sustainable national development.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female business education lecturers on the quality curriculum strategies for promoting skill acquisition in business education programme in universities in South East Nigeria for sustainable national development.

Table 4: t-test Analysis of Male and Female Business Education Lecturers on the Quality Curriculum Strategies for Promoting Skill Acquisition in Business Education Programme in Universities in South East Nigeria for Sustainable National Development

Respondents	N	X	SD	DF	P	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Male	40	2.97	0.66	66	0.05	0.18	1.98	Not Significant
Female	28	2.96	0.67					

Keys: N = No of Respondents, X = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation, DF = Degree of Freedom,

P = Level of Significance, t-cal = t-calculated, t-crit = t-critical (table)

From Table 3, the t-calculated value of 0.18 is less than the t-critical table value of 1.98 at 0.05 level of significance and degree of freedom of 66. Thus, the hypothesis is therefore accepted.

Hypothesis 2:

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female business education lecturers on the quality personnel strategies for promoting skill acquisition in business education programme in universities in South East Nigeria for sustainable national development.



Table 5: Summary of t-test Analysis of Male and Female Business Education Lecturers on the Quality Personnel Strategies for Promoting Skill Acquisition in Business Education Programme in Universities in South East Nigeria for Sustainable National Development

Respondents	N	X	SD	DF	P	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Male	40	3.12	0.65	66	0.05	0.41	1.98	Not Significant
Female	28	3.10	0.67					

Keys: N = No of Respondents, X = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation, DF = Degree of Freedom,

P = Level of Significance, t-cal = t-calculated, t-crit = t-critical (table)

From Table 5, the t-calculated value of 0.41 is less than the t-critical table value of 1.98 at 0.05 level of significance and degree of freedom of 66. The hypothesis is therefore accepted.

Hypothesis 3

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business education lecturers from State universities and those of Federal universities on the quality funding strategies for promoting skill acquisition in business education programme in universities in South East Nigeria for sustainable national development.

Table 6: Summary of t-test Analysis of Business Education Lecturers from State Universities and those from Federal Universities on the Quality Funding Strategies for Promoting Skill Acquisition in Business Education Programme in Universities in South East Nigeria for Sustainable National Development

Respondents	N	X	SD	DF	P	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
State Universities	35	3.16	0.57	66	0.05	0.21	1.98	Not Significant
Federal Universities	33	3.13	0.54					

Keys: N = No of Respondents, X = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation, DF = Degree of Freedom,

P = Level of Significance, t-cal = t-calculated, t-crit = t-critical (table)

From Table 5, the t-calculated value of 0.21 is less than the t-critical table value of 1.98 at 0.05 level of significance and degree of freedom of 66. The hypothesis is therefore accepted.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study revealed that both male and female business education lecturers from public universities agreed that all the itemized quality assurance strategies established by this study such as curriculum strategies, personnel strategies and funding strategies are relevant and capable of promoting skill acquisition in business education programme in universities in South East Nigeria for sustainable national development. The findings of this study are in line with the study of Chibuike (2013) and Okoro (2015) which found similar strategies for promoting quality assurance in business education programme.



The test of the null hypotheses revealed that there were no significant difference in the mean responses of both male and female business education lecturers from State universities as well as those from Federal universities on the quality assurance strategies such as curriculum strategies, personnel strategies and funding strategies for promoting skill acquisition in business education programme in universities in South East Nigeria for sustainable national development. Thus, the null hypotheses tested were upheld. This implies that gender and institution ownership had no significant effect on the responses of business education lecturers to the established quality assurance strategies in this study. This finding corroborates Onyesom and Ashibogwu (2013) who found that the opinions of male and female business educators of universities and colleges of education did not differ significantly on the strategies for quality assurance in business education programme.

Conclusion

Business education is education for and about business, which prepares learners to acquire relevant skills and knowledge for employment, career aspiration and general knowledge either for production and/or for consumption to enable the learners function effectively in the world of work and to contribute to national development. Thus, quality assurance strategies for promoting the quality of teaching and learning in business education programme for the acquisition of the relevant skills and knowledge in business education programme in universities in South East Nigeria should be properly stated and implemented in order to achieve the laudable objectives of establishing business education programme for sustainable national development in Nigeria.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made for the study.

1. Quality assurance strategies established by this study should be implemented for promoting quality teaching and learning in business education programme for skills acquisition that will enable students contribute effectively to the development of the society for sustainable national development in Nigeria upon graduation.
2. The government need to increase funding to support the programme, institution authorities need to deliver flexible and demand-driven training and business education lecturers need to contribute to the development of national skill standards to impart on the learners to enable contribute to nation's building for sustainable national development.
3. Business education curriculum should be widened to accommodate more maximum practical skills and knowledge than theories to enable the learners contribute to nation's building.
4. In order to achieve sustainable national development through business education programme there must be collective, serious and concerted efforts and strong commitment on the part of government, institution authorities and the business education lecturers.



5. Major stakeholders in partnership with agencies, communities, industries, NGOs and wealthy individuals in the society should support the funding of business education programme for smooth running of the programme for graduates to acquire skills that will enable them contribute effectively to the development of the society.

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