QUALITY ASSURANCE MECHANISMS FOR IMPROVED EDUCATIONAL STANDARD IN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION IN SOUTH-EAST NIGERIA.

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Abstract

The study examined Quality Assurance Mechanisms for Improved Educational Standard in colleges of Education. Based on the purpose of the study three research questions guided the study. The descriptive survey design was used for the study. The population of the study comprised all the 420 Educational Administrators while a sample size of 42 respondents was selected using proportionate sampling technique. A structured Questionnaire titled "Quality Assurance Mechanism Questionnaire scale (QAMQS) was used as instrument for data collection. The face and content validity were done by two experts in measurement and Evaluation and one expert in educational administration while the reliability of 0.82 were determined using Cronbach alpha coefficient. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. The study there recommends that, Educational institutions should encourage cross-functional collaboration between different departments and stakeholders involved in the process to facilitate a holistic approach to quality assurance.

Keywords: Quality assurance, Mechanisms, and Educational standard.

Introduction

There is no doubt that education is an excellent and dynamic instrument for effecting national development. It is a tool that is geared towards acquisition of values, knowledge and skills by the recipients to enable them contribute their quotas towards economic growth and national development. Mary & Okai (2024) described education as the bedrock of every society, backbone for development and tool for nation building. Therefore, for qualitative education to be achieved in a nation, the principal actors of learning who are the lecturers, learners and the environment must be cooperatively organized. The teacher must be adequate in quality and quantity, the students must be well trained and facilities must be provided as well. According to UNESCO (2012),quality education is characterized by (i) Learners who are healthy, well-nourished and ready to participate and learn, and supported in by their families and communities (ii) Environments that are healthy, safe, protective and gender-sensitive, and provide adequate resources and facilities; (iii) Content that is reflected in relevant curricula and materials for the acquisition of basic skills, especially in the areas of literacy, numeracy and skills for life etc (iv) Processes through which trained teachers use child centered teaching approaches in classrooms, schools and skillful assessment to facilitate learning and reduce disparities; (v) Outcomes that encompass knowledge and attitudes linked to national goals for education and positive participation in society. The educational system in Nigeria has made several signs of progress in the development of the tertiary education system using the instrumentality of government policies.

However, policies, innovations, and practices seem disconnected or disjointed. Nigeria has one of the most robust education policies, but a major challenge is the implementation of these policies. Federal agencies such as the NCCE, National Board for Technical Education, and TETFund are responsible for formulating, funding, monitoring and implementations of tertiary education teaching and research policies (NUC, 2004). These bodies develop the minimum academic standards and other academic awards. Also, they are responsible for ensuring that quality is maintained within the academic programmes.

Over the years, there have been a considerable and progressive decline in the records of academic achievement in Nigerian tertiary educational institutions and several factors has depicted this seeming irredeemable deterioration (Enaohwo, 2004). Among these factors are the indiscriminate strike resulting in delay in the graduation years of students, lack of supervision and monitoring, yearly production of unemployable graduates, certification of graduates without sufficient skills, graduation of students with little or no entrepreneurial skills plus poor grades, poor infrastructural facilities, inadequate or absence of instructional materials, poor learning environment, poor funding, etc. (Unamba, 2017). These deficiencies have led to a disconnect between the tertiary institutions and industries leading to graduates being underdeveloped in terms of emerging digital skills, employability skills, entrepreneurship education, vocational and industrial development. Research has even proven that many also lack employability skills that guarantee their employment in the labour market and the quality of training is not sync with the current labour demands in the society. This implies that the quality of education offered to students is not tailored to tackle the current need of the society. Nwogu (2014) opined that for the education industry to successfully undertake the functions of development, quality human capital is sacrosanct, through the acquisition of appropriate skills and knowledge, there is need for checks and balances and this can be achieved through regular and effective quality assurance in our schools.

Quality as a concept is multi-dimensional; hence it has been defined differently by stakeholders. Quality according to Okoro (2015) encapsulates the concept of meeting commonly agreed precepts or standards which may be defined by law, an institution, a coordinating body or a professional society. It is the degree with which a product, service, or phenomenon conforms to an established standard, and which makes it to be relatively superior to others (Oyewumi & Fatoki, 2015). The Federal ministry of Education (2014) emphasizes that education quality assurance in Nigeria is a paradigm shift from the former practice of school supervision and inspection to a monitoring and evaluating process that provides a new operative mode of evaluation. This is carried out according to set standards that bring about improvement in teaching and learning. The strategic aim of quality assurance is therefore to prescribe standards and ensure that inputs, processes and outputs of the system meet these standards.

Quality assurance according to Harvey in Usman & Madudili (2021) is a process of ensuring effective resource input control, refining the process and raising the standards of output in order to meet the set goals and satisfy public accountability. It is based on three main principles of control, accountability and improvement. Accountability usually requires meeting the preferences of stakeholders and control means that the institution does not merely control the expenditure of resources but also shows how high quality is achievable with the existing resources. Improvement enables the institution to get necessary input, refine the process and raise the standards of output in order to meet the goals set (Harvey in Usman & Madudili, 2021). Quality assurance is a process by which an institution can guarantee with confidence and certainty, that the standards and quality of its educational provision are being maintained and enhanced. Quality assurance is a condition that leads to the achievement of transparency and attainment of sustainable national development. According to Moses (2019), the indices of quality control include

quality, internal and external quality assurance, quality control, quality assessment, quality audit, standards, quality culture and quality enhancement.

In schools' quality assurance activity focuses on whether learners are achieving as much as they can and whether everything the school provided has the best possible impact on learning (Olayanju, 2016). The system provides the evidence needed to establish confidence among all concerned that quality-related activities are being performed effectively (FME, 2014). The need for quality assurance in Nigerian schools cannot be overemphasized in order to ensure quality of teaching and learning. In this regard, Adegbesan (2011) enumerated the relevance of quality assurance to the education system in Nigeria to include; serving as indispensable component of quality control strategy in education; ensuring and maintaining high standard of education at all levels; assisting in monitoring and supervision of education; determining the quality of the teacher input; determining the number of classrooms needed based on the average class size to ensure quality control of education; determining the level of adequacy of the facilities available for quality control and regulating the prudent and judicious utilization of the available financial resources towards achieving the desired result.

• Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013)outlined the following goals of quality assurance; a) Set, maintain and improve standard in all aspect of the school system; b) Ensure minimum standards and quality assurance of institutional activities in schools through regular inspection and continuous supervision; c) Disseminate on a regular basis, information on problems and difficulties of teachers and institutions and offer practical solutions; d) Encourage dissemination of information on innovative and progressive educational principles and practices in the schools system through publications, workshops, meetings, seminars, conferences, and so on while the roles of quality assurance in Colleges of Education as identified by TDP include the following;
•   Develop, apply and periodically review the quality benchmarks/parameters for various academic and administrative activities of the Institution,
•   Facilitate the creation of a learner-centered environment conducive to quality education and academic staff professional growth;
•   Provide feedback mechanism for students, parents, and other stakeholders on quality-related issues;
•   Disseminate information on various quality parameters of teacher education;
•   Organize inter and intra Institutional workshops, seminars on quality related themes;
•   Document the various programmes/activities leading to quality improvement;
•   Act as a modal unit of the institution for coordinating quality-related activities, including adoption and dissemination of best practices;
•   Work closely with academic Departments and the Institutions Management Information System (MIS) for the purpose of maintaining/enhancing the Institutional quality;
•   Promote and help sustain the culture of quality in the Institution;
•   Lead the internal self-assessment process and prepare and submit the report to the management of the College and the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) annually; and
•   Coordinate logistics during external accreditation/assessment.

In assessing mechanisms for quality assurance, Peretomode (2008) opined that quality assurance mechanism helps tertiary institutions to overcome challenges of ineffective input and processes, it improves the credibility of outputs and certificates awarded. Quality assurance mechanism is systematic process designed to ensure that products, services or processes meet specified requirement, standard and regulations. Monitoring as a Quality Assurance Mechanism refers to the process of collecting data at intervals about on-going projects programmed within the

school system. The aim is to constantly assess the level of performance with a view of finding out how far set objectives are being met. The purpose of a monitoring mechanism is to further the effective implementation of the rules. It will assist each institution in assessing its level of implementation. Monitoring is a systematic routine collection of data during project implementation for the purpose assessment. Monitoring is conducted after a programme has begun and continues throughout the programme implementation period. Monitoring is sometimes referred to as process, performance or formative evaluation. Thus, monitoring is an intermittent regular or irregular series of observations in time, carried out to show the extent of compliance with a formulated standard or degree of deviation from an expected norm. Nabris (2002) in his own view defined monitoring as an on-going activity to track the progress being made by an entity or a phenomenon against a planned task. Nabris (2002) stated that monitoring is aimed at the following: Improving efficiency and effectiveness, helping to keep work on track and allows management to know when things are going wrong (regular feedback), Enabling organizations to find out if resources available are sufficient and being well used accountably, finding out if capacity available is sufficient and appropriate; and providing useful base for evaluation. Monitoring is seeing if you are doing what you said you would do and done in a systematic approach to overseeing planning, learning and touching (Aina, 1995). This is part of evaluation that ensures that information is gathered so that judgments can be made and questions answered accordingly. School monitoring helps in providing a consolidated source of information showing the progress of the school. The monitoring of education is one of the major tools of education policy-making. Its purpose is the performance of an analysis: to examine in detail the current situation of education, to suggest alternatives for its improvement, to make informed decisions and to carry out the management ensuring the quality of education and science. The monitoring performed in a systematic and coordinated manner is especially important in helping to identify and solve the problems and in saving funds and time, since it replaces the supervision based on inspections.

Evaluation as a quality assurance mechanism for Improved Educational Standards Literarily, evaluation is a process measuring performance. In education, the term evaluation involves assessment, appraisal, valuation and estimation of the worth of education inputs, process and outcome for the purpose of making judgment and corrective criticism. It is used to refer to judgments on individual student progress and achievement of learning goals. It covers classroom-based assessments as well as large-scale, external assessments and examinations. The ultimate objective of evaluation is to enhance student outcomes through the improvement of practices at the different levels of the school system, including teaching methods, school leadership processes, ways to organize learning, and directions of education policy (Mckay & Kember, 2009). According to Middlehurst (2001), evaluation provide a basis for monitoring how effectively education is being delivered to students and for assessing the performance of systems, schools, school leaders, teachers and students, among others. Middlehurst and Woodhouse (1995) saw evaluation as identifying strengths and weaknesses of systems, schools, school leaders, teachers and students which inform areas for development. In addition, evaluation and assessment can have a diagnostic function such as with school readiness assessments or sampled based standardized assessments to measure the extent to which student learning objectives are being achieved across the education system. By measuring student outcomes and holding lecturers and schools responsible for results, accountability systems intend to create incentives for improved performance and identify "underperforming" schools and school agents.

Supervision as a Quality Assurance Mechanism According to Ajayi (1997), supervision is all efforts of designated school officials towards providing leadership to teachers and other educational workers in the improvement of instruction. It involves the stimulation of

professional growth and development of teachers, a selection and revision of educational objectives, materials of instruction and method of teaching, and the evaluation of instruction. Supervision is one of the strategies for effective management of teaching manpower for quality education. They stated that supervision of instruction is necessary for the provision of quality education in Nigeria and that supervision is carried out to ensure maintenance of standard, availability of material resources for teaching, a meaningful exchange of ideas between teachers and administrators regarding areas of problems in the pursuit of teaching and learning, coverage of syllabus. With effective supervision, the policies of the Ministry of Education regarding the administration of schools can be properly implemented. According to Ogun as cited in Eziuzo (2014), supervision is the act of overseeing the activities of teachers and other workers in the school system to ensure that they conform with the general accepted principles of education in order to achieve educational goals. Supervision is a device for improving teachers‟ knowledge, attitudes and skills which focus on the teaching and learning processes for the purpose of ensuring the achievement of educational and objectives (Eziuzo, 2014). Asuquo et al. (2018) posited that school administrators are in charge of ensuring that teachers effectively carry out their assigned tasks and students learning are effective. The authors further stated that school administrators‟ involvement in overseeing teachers and students‟ activities during teaching and learning contribute to school goal attainment and that the success of any school as regards goal attainment depends on school administrators' professional responsibilities and application of quality control technique of supervision of teaching and learning. Asuquo et al. (2018) conducted a study on quality control techniques and secondary school goal attainment in Calabar Metropolis of Cross River State, Nigeria. Instructional supervision and facilities management were used as quality control techniques. It was found that significant relationship existed between instructional supervision, facilities management and secondary school goal attainment. Supervision is an essential part of any educational setup with the sole aim of promoting and developing a conducive and favourable teaching and learning 146 environments as well as the stimulation, overseeing and appraisal of activities leading to the realization of instructional goals at a specified quality level. The word supervision derived its origin from a Latin word "Super-video, meaning "To Oversee". Supervision is an essential part of any organizational set-up. In education, it is that phase of school administration that sees to the improvement of instruction. Emeterom (2007) saw supervision as a process of bringing about improvement in instruction by working with people who are working with pupils and students. It is a service rendered to teachers which is directed towards controlling the quality of teaching. Supervision tries to control what is taught, who is taught and the impact of what is taught on the learner.

Supervisory mechanism is a combination or integration of a number of processes, procedures and conditions that are consciously designed with the sole aim of enhancing the work effectiveness of teachers. Another essential part of supervision is its role in the monitoring and execution of the curriculum at a zero-level defect. Through supervision, inexperienced teachers are assisted to grow and even the experienced ones need to be supervised in order to continue to maintain high standards.

Purpose of the study
The main purpose of the study is to investigate Quality Assurance Mechanisms for Improved Educational Standard in Colleges of Education in South-East Nigeria. Specifically, it seeks;

I.   To find out the extent is monitoring as quality assurance mechanism managed for improved educational standard in colleges o education.

II. To find out the extent is evaluation a quality assurance mechanism for improved educational standard in colleges of Education

III. To find out the extent is instructional supervision a quality assurance mechanism for improved educational standard in colleges of Education

Research Questions

1. To what extent is monitoring as quality assurance mechanism managed for improved educational standard in colleges of education.
2. To what extent is evaluation a quality assurance mechanism for improved educational standard in colleges of Education
3. To what extent is instructional supervision a quality assurance mechanism for improved educational standard in colleges of Education

Method

The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The population of the study consisted of all the 420 educational Administrators lecturers from the six (6) colleges of Education (Source: NCCE Abuja. Retrieved 5 June 2024. www.ncceonline.edu.ng/colleges.php). A sample size of forty-two (42) respondents representing 10% of the entire population was selected using stratified random sampling technique to ensure an equal chance of selection. The method involved dividing the population of 420 into strata. This approach employed ensured that each subgroup was proportionately represented in the sample, thus enhancing the generality of the study's finding to the larger population. Kpee (2015) considered such percentage appropriate to serve as an acceptable sample for a population ranging into thousands. The research instrument was a self-structured questionnaire titled Quality Assurance Mechanisms Questionnaire Scale (QAMQS). The Part „A‟ of the questionnaire was made up of the demographic data of the respondents while part „B‟ was made up of structured items centered on the variables of the study. The instrument was patterned based on the modified 4- points Likert response scale. This provided four levels of opinion which are: Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE), Very Low Extent (VLE), and weighted mean of 4, 3, 2,and1 There liability of the instrument was established using Cronbach alpha reliability This approach enabled the researcher to establish the internal consistency of the instrument to determine the reliability and index of the instrument which stood at (r=0.82).The questionnaires were administered to the respondents by the researcher and some trained research assistants. The respondents were given some time to respond to the questionnaire after which the researcher retrieved the completed copies of the questionnaire. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions.

Results

Research Question One: To what extent is monitoring as quality assurance mechanism managed for improved educational standard in colleges of education.

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation on the extent to which monitoring as quality assurance mechanism is managed for improved educational standard

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Remarks
1	Monitoring helps to check students" progress through their records and serves as a quality assurance mechanism for improved educational standards.	3.03	1.0	High Extent
2	Monitoring helps to check staff attendance to classes and serves as a quality assurance mechanism for improved educational standards.	3.01	1.1	High Extent
3	Through monitoring, non-compliance areas can be observed and serves as a quality assurance mechanism for improved educational standards.	3.00	1.1	High Extent
4	Through monitoring, obsolete machines/materials can be identified and replaced to improve efficiency and serves as a quality assurance mechanism for improved educational standards.	2.96	0.8	High Extent
5	Monitoring promotes strict adherence to set educational objectives and serves as a quality assurance mechanism for improved educational standards.	3.03	1.0	High Extent

Results in Table 1 above shows that the items scored above 2.50. this implies that to a high extent, monitoring served as a quality assurance mechanism for improved educational standard in colleges of education.

Research Question Two: To what extent is evaluation a quality assurance mechanism for improved educational standard in colleges of Education?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation on the extent to which evaluation as quality assurance mechanism is managed for improved educational standard.

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Remarks
6	Administration of standardized test to Students in other to measure academic achievement serves as a quality assurance mechanism for improved educational standards.	2.99	0.9	High Extent
7	Seminars and term paper presentations by students " serve as a quality assurance mechanism for improved educational standards.	3.00	1.1	High Extent
8	Administration of appraisal forms and questionnaires to students to elicit feedback serve as a quality assurance mechanism for improved educational standards.	3.01	1.1	High Extent
9	Subjecting students to practical and laboratory experiments serve as a quality assurance mechanism for improved educational standards.	3.01	1.1	High Extent
10	Organizing departmental seminars for lecturers to improve their services serve as a quality assurance mechanism for improved educational standards.	3.02	1.3	High Extent

Result in table two indicated that all the items scored above 2.50. this implies that to a high extent, evaluation served as a quality assurance mechanism for improved educational standard in colleges of education.

Research Question Three: To what extent is supervision serves as a quality assurance mechanism for improved educational standard in colleges of Education?

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation on the extent to which supervision as quality assurance echanism is managed for improved educational standard.

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Remarks
11	Supervision provides feedback to faculty members on their teaching performance and serves as quality assurance mechanism for improved educational standard.	3.0	1.1	High Extent
12	Through supervision, University policies and procedures can be assessed and serves as quality assurance mechanism for improved educational standards.	3.00	1.1	High Extent
13	Supervision provides the university the guidance on the use of appropriate technology and serves as quality assurance mechanism for improved educational standard	3.01	1.1	High Extent
14	Supervision ensures that academic programs are meeting accreditation standards and serves as quality assuranc e mechanism for improved educational standards.	3.01	1.1	High Extent
15	Through supervision, the quality of leaning environment and facilities can be evaluated and serves as a quality assurance mechanism for improved educational standards.	3.02	1.3	High Extent

Result in table 3 indicated that all the items scored above 2.50. This implies that to a high extent, supervision served as a quality assurance mechanism for improved educational standard in colleges of Education.

Discussion
The results in table 1 indicated a high extent of agreement across all items, suggesting a consensus among respondents that monitoring plays a crucial role in checking students' progress, staff attendance, identifying non-compliance areas, addressing obsolete machines/materials, and promoting strict adherence to set educational objectives. In summary, the findings highlight the perceived effectiveness of monitoring as a quality assurance mechanism for elevating educational standards in the assessed areas. This result is in

accord with the opinion of Nabris (2002) stated that monitoring is aimed at the following, improving efficiency and effectiveness, helping to keep work on track and allows management to know when things are going wrong (regular feedback), Enabling organizations to find out if resources available are sufficient and being well used accountably, finding out if capacity available is sufficient and appropriate; and providing useful base for evaluation.

The results in table 2 indicated a high extent of agreement among respondents. In summary, the findings highlight the perceived importance of diverse evaluation approaches as quality assurance mechanisms for elevating educational standards across different dimensions within the academic context. This result is in agreement with the finding of Middlehurst (2001),

evaluation provide a basis for monitoring how effectively education is being delivered to students and for assessing the performance of systems, schools, school leaders, teachers and students, among others.

The results in Table 3 revealed a high consensus among respondents; overall, the results emphasize the importance of supervision as a multifaceted quality assurance mechanism contributing to improved educational standards across various dimensions within the academic context. This result is in agreement with the finding of Asuquo et al. (2018) found that significant relationship existed between instructional supervision, facilities management and secondary school goal attainment.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the comprehensive analysis of the data, encompassing monitoring, evaluation, and supervision as quality assurance mechanisms for improved educational standards, has yielded valuable insights. The study concluded that positive impact of monitoring, evaluation and supervision as effective quality assurance mechanisms for enhancing educational standards in colleges of education.

Recommendations

1. Educational institutions should encourage cross-functional collaboration between different departments and stakeholders involved in the process of. This collaboration can facilitate a holistic approach to quality assurance, allowing for the integration of various perspectives and expertise. Departments responsible for monitoring student progress, evaluating academic programs, and supervising teaching performance should work collaboratively to share insights and best practices.

2. As highlighted in the analysis, there is a consensus among respondents on the importance of evaluation as a quality assurance mechanism. To leverage this perception for improved educational standards, institutions should invest in comprehensive training programs for faculty members on diverse evaluation techniques. These programs could encompass the effective administration of standardized tests, conducting seminars, utilizing appraisal forms and questionnaires, and implementing practical and laboratory experiments.

The Quality Assurance Unit that shoulders the responsibility of supervision should work collaboratively with lecturers to ensure the use of appropriate technology in lesson delivery and also ensure that faculties are meeting up with accreditation standards and best practices that will improve the standards of education in the education sector.

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