Challenges to The Implementations of Internal Quality Assurance Mechanisms in   Bayelsa Medical University

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ABSTRACT: *Since Nigeria's universities are responsible for cultivating the country's workforce, the decline in their quality has a knock-on effect on the country's social, economic, and technological advancements. In response to this issue, several organisations have been established to provide quality assurance in educational institutions. Many obstacles have been placed in the path of these organisations. The purpose of this article is to investigate the obstacles standing in the way of a successful quality assurance programme in Nigeria's publicly funded institutions of higher learning. In order to back up their claims, the authors used secondary sources in their research. Sorted and utilised in the paper were sources from both print and internet media. Inadequate funding, scarcity of academic staff, poor execution of quality control policies, insufficient infrastructural amenities, brain-drain, strike actions, corruption, weak oversight, and poor staff development are all issues that have been identified in this paper as impediments to quality assurance in Nigerian higher institutions. It has been proposed that the following measures be taken to ensure quality in Nigeria's higher institutions: sufficient funding, adequate employment of academic staff, provision basic infrastructures, fight against all forms of bribery, implement all agreements reached with the various union groups, encourage academic staff, direct monitoring, and effective staff growth.*

KEYWORD: quality assurance, BMU, Nigerian universities, corruption

INTRODUCTION

Quality assurance in Nigeria's educational institutions is hindered by factors such as actions, corruption, weak supervision, and inadequate staff development. Poor financial support It was necessary to invest heavily in both human and financial resources to implement rigorous quality control measures in the educational institutions. Higher education quality assurance requires significant financial and human resources. It is terrible that quality control measures have been compromised due to insufficient funding for universities.

According to Ogunode (2021), there is not enough money set out to properly manage universities. As a result of this issue, many heads of educational institutions are unable to secure

the requisite financial and human resources to implement quality assurance measures across the board. Government support of higher education in the country has been inadequate for decades, as noted by Ahaotu and Ogunode (2021).

Education is supported by contributions from numerous entities, including federal, state, and local governments, as well as businesses, non-profits, and individual taxpayers. The percentage of the institution's income that comes from fees is quite low. For the past decade, there has not been significant allocation of funds. Inadequate government support for higher education in the country has rendered it ineffective. There has been a major enrolment 45 expansion in higher education, but the system has not had the resources to keep up with the demand for a good quality education. A decade's worth of budget data for the Ministry of Education reveals that education has consistently received less than the UNESCO-recommended 26% of the total annual budget.

Ogunode and Ahaotu (2020) noted that other organisations under the ministry that were established for specific duties including planning, inspection, and monitoring are also negatively impacted by the inadequate budgetary provision for the entire educational system. Many of the problems plaguing the Nigerian school system may be traced back to a lack of finance. Poor funding is linked to a lack of qualified educators in all Nigerian institutions, a lack of necessary infrastructure that cannot be separated from the issue of inadequate funding, and a lack of effective quality assurance and quality control that can be traced back to the inability of institutions to be proactive and active in carrying out their responsibilities and duties. The annual budget for education is insufficient to build the necessary school infrastructure and hire enough qualified teachers to ensure that every school in Nigeria meets the minimum student-teacher ratio required by the government. Another major barrier to quality assurance in most Nigerian universities is a severe lack of academic staff.

According to NEEDS (2014), a major issue facing Nigeria's universities is a lack of qualified professors. According to Ahaotu and Ogunode (2021), a common problem in the higher education sector is a lack of qualified faculty members to fill teaching positions. Most universities in Nigeria suffer from a lack of qualified lecturers, which has a negative impact on student outcomes. The qualifications of the faculty members are another problem. Below are the National Universities Commission's requirements for faculty members to meet in order to be hired in universities. For a teaching position at a polytechnic, a Bachelor's degree in the subject area is required. The National Council for Colleges of Education (NCCE) stipulates that those seeking admission to faculty positions in colleges of education hold a post-credential bachelor's in addition to a bachelor's degree. For this reason, it is essential that they hold valid teaching credentials. In Nigeria, a Master's Degree is the entry-level requirement for a teaching position at a university.

Mgbekem (2004) added that those who are appointed without a Ph.D. are still expected to work hard and advance in their careers by earning Master's and Ph.D. degrees in their respective fields. The NUC has emphasised that a PhD degree is required for university lectureship. Some researchers, like Ogunode, Ajape, and Jegede (2020) and NEEDS (2014), have argued that

many Nigerian university professors are not qualified to teach at the university level. According to the NEEDS (2014), less than half of college-level teachers are considered competent in evaluation, pedagogy, and use of information and communication technologies (ICT). More than half of university faculty lacked the requisite instructional, counselling, and information and communication technology (ICT) competencies for providing quality service to their students. There is a severe lack of qualified Ph.D.-holding professors teaching at universities and colleges. Only approximately 43% of university professors hold doctoral degrees, as reported by NEEDS (2014). The remaining 57% don't have a PhD or above. Only sixty percent of the teaching faculty at only seven institutions hold a doctoral degree. The standard of higher education in the country could suffer because of this.

Another key issue preventing quality assurance attainment in the various institutions across the country is the poor execution of quality assurance policies in the majority of higher institutions in the country. Poor policy implementation is to blame for Nigeria's mediocre higher education system, even though the country's numerous regulatory authorities have developed laws and standards to assure quality assurance in the country's higher institutions. For example, the high teacher-student ratio in universities is the result of a policy of teacher-student per programme in the various higher institutions that was intended to ensure quality of teaching and learning but has not been implemented. The National Universities Commission Benchmark Minimum Academic Standards (BMAS) of 2007 required a teacher-to-student ratio of 1:20 in science, 1:15 in Engineering and technology, 1:10 in medicine, veterinary medicine, and pharmacy, 1:15 in agricultural and environmental sciences, and 1:30 in the humanities, management science, social sciences, law, and the arts, as stated by Alechenu (2012).

NEEDS, (2014) reported on the situation in Nigerian universities, noting that the ratio of faculty to students at NOUN was 1:363, at LSU it was 1:144, and at UAAB it was 1:122. Although though these teaching staff/student ratios are provided by the standard based on carrying capacity, Ogunode (2020) found that several universities admitted students in excess of the carrying capacity, resulting in a higher teacher/student ratio. As a result, this lowers the standard of higher education in Nigeria.

Another major obstacle to Nigeria's quality assurance strategy is the country's inadequate infrastructure. Infrastructure in schools is a form of social capital, according to Ogunode and Nathan (2021). Classrooms, exam rooms, auditoriums, staff offices, seminar/conference/board rooms, laboratories, workshops, studios, farms, gymnasiums, central libraries, specialized/professional libraries, faculty libraries, department libraries, etc.; Institute/center specialised facilities such as ICT infrastructure, special laboratories, conference facilities, etc.; Boards such as interactive, magnetic, screen, and projection systems; and so on. According to Ogunode and Nathan (2021), infrastructural facilities help schools perform administrative tasks more efficiently; improve the timeliness and consistency of service delivery; shorten the time it takes for teachers to deliver lessons; create a more pleasant and productive learning environment for instructors and students alike; facilitate students' comfort and success in the classroom; and more (ICT).

According to Ishaya and Ogunode (2021), institutional infrastructure is one of the most important factors for a university to achieve its goals. Teaching, research, and providing community services all benefit from well-maintained infrastructure. One of the most significant material resources that the university system wastes is infrastructure facilities. The quality and quantity of university infrastructure is a key factor in determining the quality of education students receive. The rapid decline of universities has been noted by NOUN (2007) and is cause for concern. There is a severe lack of all that is needed to make educational content. There is a severe lack of suitable classrooms, labs, student dorms, library shelves, books, and journals, and administrative offices. Higher education institutions are hampered in their ability to perform even the most fundamental academic tasks due to a lack of, or a lack of maintenance on, the necessary teaching and learning equipment. Students' low grades at numerous Nigerian public colleges have been related to a lack of necessary infrastructure (Ishaya & Ogunode, 2021).

When discussing the obstacles to achieve higher education goals, Ishaya and Ogunode (2021) referenced Udida, Bassey, Udofia, and Egbona (2009), who argued that a lack of suitable infrastructures 48 in our higher education institutions has been a major problem. Classrooms, resource rooms, staff rooms, laboratory facilities, computers, and other such necessities are essential to the success of any educational institution. According to research by Salisu (2001), which was quoted by Ishaya and Ogunode (2021), students' academic performance is significantly different between institutions with appropriate amenities and those with deficient facilities. Due in part to deteriorating facilities and a lack of resources to repair and maintain them, educational quality has dropped in recent years. According to Ebehikhalu and Dawam (2016), this problem is exacerbated by the lack of funding and infrastructure that plagues American colleges. The quality of research and teaching in Nigeria's universities has been deteriorating for these reasons.

Ogunode (2020) claims that corruption in Nigeria's universities and colleges thwarts quality assurance efforts. Examination malpractice, admission racketeering, hostel profiteering, extortion of the students, abuse of office, sorting, forgery of certificates and statements of results, sexual harassment and immorality, embezzlement of funds, godfatherism, corruption in recruitment and promotion of staff, and placing the government's or management's machinery at the disposal of a particular student are all examples of corruption that Okobi (1997) cites as occurring in Nigerian higher institutions. There is a decline in quality due to corruption in the educational system. If the environment is permeated with corruption, it will be impossible to provide students with an education of any real value.

Path Forward It has been proposed that the following measures be taken to ensure quality in Nigeria's higher institutions: sufficient funding, adequate employment of academic staff, provision of adequate infrastructure facilities, fight against all forms of corruption, carry out all agreements reached with the various union groups, motivate academic staff, effective supervision, and effective staff development.

Increasing higher education spending is a priority for the government. Governments at all levels, federal and state, need to make concerted efforts to increase funding for education as soon as possible in order to fulfil UNESCO's recommended budgetary allocation of 26 percent of yearly budget. It is imperative that the federal and state governments undertake extensive recruitment of academic personnel in all higher institutions across the country to fill the resulting voids in the teacher-student ratio.

All of the country's universities, and not only the elite ones, need the best possible infrastructure from the federal and state governments. To guarantee quality, there must be sufficient infrastructure. Confront and eliminate all instances of corruption by coordinating between school administration and anti-corruption authorities, the government at all levels can more effectively combat academic corruption across the country's higher institutions.

In higher education, the government should follow through on all agreements established with various union groups. This will aid in lowering the frequency with which strikes disrupt the academic schedules of universities and colleges around the country. Every academic personnel at all higher institutions in the country should be motivated by the government. The government should prioritise the health and happiness of all employees at educational institutions. The government should invest in and ensure that all the authorities tasked with supervising higher education in the country are carrying out their duties effectively. This will aid in enhancing oversight of educational institutions. Educational leaders at all levels should take precautions to ensure that their schools have enough internal oversight of their instructional programmes. Lastly, all academic staff who are not yet certified as professional teachers should be required to participate in an in-service programme designed by the government and the administrators of higher educational institutions to help them acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively teach and manage their classrooms.

CONCLUSION

You cannot put a price on a good education, especially not at the university level. The number of qualified workers a country has access to is directly proportional to the standard of its educational system. The standard of Nigerian universities is deteriorating. There are several quality assurance programmes out there, each with its own set of goals and objectives, but none of them have yet succeeded in fulfilling their potential. The purpose of this article was to investigate the barriers that impede the quality assurance programme from effectively fulfilling its objectives. There are a number of issues preventing quality assurance in Nigerian higher institutions, including a lack of resources, a shortage of academic staff, a lack of infrastructure, a high attrition rate, frequent strikes, corruption, weak supervision, and insufficient opportunities for professional growth and advancement among faculty. The following have been proposed as ways to improve the standards of Nigeria's publicly funded universities and colleges: Sufficient funding, hiring of adequate academic personnel, supply of adequate infrastructural facilities, combating of all corruption practises, implementation of all

agreements agreed with the various union groups, motivation of academic staff, competent supervision, and effective staff development.

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