

Quality Assurance in Sub-Saharan Africa Tertiary Institution: Towards Attainment of Sustainable Development Goal (SDGs)

Menwo Ukechi Osigwe, (Ph. D)^{1*}, Idoli Nwachukwu Ben, (Ph. D)², Afam Uzorka, (Ph. D)¹

¹Kampala International University, Kampala, Uganda

²National Teachers' Institute, Community Secondary School, Nkpolu-Orowhorukwo, Mile

³Woji, Port Harcourt, Rivers, Nigeria

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*Corresponding author: Menwo Ukechi Osigwe

Abstract

Review Article

The educational sector is the largest enterprise whose function remains indispensable. It is the centre for research, human resource development and highly dependable to proffer solutions to global needs therefore, quality assurance in this industry cannot be compromised. In order to ensure a peak performance by these institutions of higher learning there is need for modalities that will enhance quality output. In this paper, some of the strategies for enhancing quality tertiary education were discussed.

Keywords: Sub-Saharan, modalities, modalities.

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INTRODUCTION

Sub-Saharan Africa is endowed with robust human and natural resources which depends on education for its development, exploration and exploitation. Hence, education is the most vital tool for the development of Sub-Saharan Africa. There is a need for an uneven attention to be given to the educational sector because it is the bedrock for national transformation and economic growth. Poor quality education constitutes a barrier to political, social and economic transformation.

Tertiary institution or higher education has been described as the system that provides post-secondary school courses and also engages in research [1]. Nigeria sees tertiary education as the "education given after secondary education in universities, colleges of education, polytechnics and monotechnics including those institutions offering correspondence courses" [2].

The primary aim of the tertiary institution is to awaken or quicken the human potentials. These potentials according to Ojo [3] are developed through:

- Enculturation and progressively equipping the individual, the socio-cultural skills that should enable one to fit neatly into one's immediate society.
- Acculturation, progressive exposure to outside influence from which one can intelligently

borrow to expand the horizon provided by one's immediate society.

- Intellectual skill acquisition, for the pursuit of self-development through the acquisition of knowledge in a variety of forms and by a variety of means.
- Affective traits development, progressively improving on the imbibe attitudes, values, and other behavioral traits that facilitate one's relationships with fellow human beings as well as one's capacity for continuous self-employment.
- Manipulative and psychomotor skills development, progressively awakening the physical powers of the individual, and progressively working towards a perfect coordination of activities of the body with those of the mind.
- Inculcation of lifelong learning skills (also called learning-to-learn skills), a constellation of activities, habits, mind-set, etc that predispose one to develop the spirit of inquiry and a perpetual thirst for knowledge.

These important points mention are inter-related and have no terminal point. Therefore, they must all work together for the all-round development of the individual and who contributes to the larger society.

Babalola & Adedeji [4] noted that the wealth and poverty of nations depends on the quality of higher education. Those who are poorly educated live life of desperation consequently submit to the deceit of politics of patronage.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, there are commissions and boards mandated to ensure quality education in tertiary institutions. In Uganda we have the University Commission (UC), in Nigeria we have the National Universities Commission (NUC).

According to Uchendu, Akuegwu & Nwi-ne [5] quality is seen as the degree of excellence while quality assurance is seen as a system for assuring that quality of output meets the required standard all the times. It therefore implies that a product has to conform to a specification or requirement. Quality assurance is a retroactive action used to determine the quality of a product or a system after processing and during which wastages would have occurred and what is left is to reject or battle with rectification in a like manner. Similarly, Uchendu *et al.*, [5] stated that quality assurance is the action taken in the schools system (tertiary institution) to determine that the standard of education is maintained in terms of the inputs, processes and output.

Quality assurance in tertiary institutions can be carried through various means; internal (within the system) and external control measure, checks and balances by regulatory agencies. Quality in education is determined by the performance of students in public examination and the quality of performance of the graduate in their jobs. When the standard of education is compromised, a lot of issues like tertiary institution turning out graduates, who can barely defend their certificates, indiscriminate award of contract at tertiary schools, employment of mediocre among others come to play.

Some of the strategies for enhancing quality tertiary education are discussed below:

Modification of Curriculum in Tertiary Institutions

The curriculum is expected to respond positively to modern trends of event through emphasis on innovative knowledge and skills which are variously referred to as 'daily living skills, survival skills and life coping skills' [6]. The world is not static in nature but dynamic and change is a constant phenomenon in the world, therefore, the education industry which is the most dependable for interpretation and adaptation of the constant changes in the world turn out a lot of graduates every year who are expected to identify and solve problems, establish good working relationships with others and organize and manage themselves responsibly, collect and evaluate information, communication in different ways, use science and technology effectively and the capacity to develop a

consistent world-view [7]. Courses are modified and new courses are introduced to enable student acquire lifelong coping skills through science processes which include observation, experiment, generalization and prediction. The modification of the curriculum enhances the holistic development of cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains for quality productivity and meaningful integration into the society for sustainable living. The introduction of courses like general studies (GST), entrepreneur education, and vocational education among others are indices of curriculum modifications in tertiary institutions.

Accreditation of Tertiary Institution and Their Programmes

Tertiary institutions in Sub-Saharan Africa have been growing in an unparalleled rate. The growth has been in terms of increase in student's population and then number of tertiary institutions themselves. These citadels of learning which are means of social mobility, self-development and skill acquisition are expected to play major roles in the fulfilment of Africa philosophy of education through training and research to ensure quality of their institution. It is therefore imperative for faculty members, facilities, and the examination and grading system to be subjected to scrutiny by a team of professors in that discipline, selected from different tertiary institutions by the different commission or board like NUC, NU, who are charged with responsibility of monitoring the activities of the various tertiary institutions. The accreditation exercise is usually carried out every two-five years. During the exercise, the programmes that are irrelevant are eliminated while programmes that are relevant and of good quality are given full accreditation status.

Strategic Planning of Programmes

Another strategy for quality assurance in Sub-Saharan Africa tertiary institution according to Etuk [8] is strategic planning of programmes. Etuk stated that strategic planning requires that heads of departments, deans of school/faculties state the objectives of their academic programmes, its contribution to economic development with regard to their graduates in terms of their capabilities when they are out of school. They should also use Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis to access their programmes. Strategic planning in tertiary institutions will attract funds from government and other agencies if the programmes are relevant and given accreditation. Funds have been a very crucial and fundamental concern to the government and managers of tertiary institutions. Strategic planning of programmes can induce generation of revenue from both internal and external sources, since government alone cannot fund their tertiary institutions sufficiently, it is imperative for these institutions to adapt strategic plans to earn her sustenance.

Availability of Human Resources

A very fundamental issue in assuming quality in the educational sector is the quality of human resources available. It is worthy of note that the unprecedented influx of academic personnel into tertiary institutions through *god fatherism* poise both strength and threat to these ivory towers. It is strength when the human resources available have potential, talents and abilities which are used in combination with other resources to produce quality output. On the contrast, it is a threat when these potential, talent and abilities in combination with other resource produce mediocre, or constitute a brooding habitat for touts, prostitutes, armed robbers among other vices on which students are highly vulnerable, as the teachers' performance according to Madumere-Obike [9] determine quality of students. Chukuma [10] revealed that there is general dissatisfaction from employers of graduates with regard to their professional skills, key abilities such as critical thinking, problem solving and time management skills. A survey of the Nigeria teachers in Nigeria tertiary institution shows the level of dissatisfaction among the teachers Tanji [11]. Employment into universities should be on merit and their wages should commensurate with their output if quality is to be assured, in tertiary institutions.

Adoption of Information & Communication Technology

Another laudable area of need in ensuring quality in tertiary institution is the adoption of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Information is an indispensable part of the contemporary world, not only has it brought about rapid technological, economic transformation, and globalization, the tertiary school system depend on it to cope with the worldwide information need. Within the school system, ICT adoption promotes teaching and learning for instance, in recent times, the multimedia internet-based technologies have provided opportunities for teaching and learning at a distance. ICT also facilitates the management information system (MIS) into the administrative processes; on-line libraries provide access to current books, journals and other information resources through global networking. A study by Ige [12] on computerization of MIS and administrative effectiveness in Nigeria Universities holds that MIS has helped to facilitate decision-making for effective administration, classroom and individual student's management, resource management and generation of data. It also helps to generate additional information concerning problems, opportunities and challenges inclusive also, is its contribution to the development of on-line screening and registration of students. ICT can be used to ease the load of supervision, evaluation and appraisal of students and teachers. The management task, removal of wastages and quality cannot be achieved without application of ICT in all areas of school application.

Effective Supervision

Effective supervision of activities within the tertiary institutions should be enforced in order to attain quality assurance in tertiary institutions. Supervision involves the use of expert knowledge and experience to oversee, evaluate and coordinate the process of improving teaching and learning activities in school.

Based on these supervisions, recommendations are made such as provision of adequate facilities and human resources. Supervision creates awareness of sound education philosophies. Igwe in Egbo [13] describe supervision as a process that the polices, principles, rules, regulations and methods prescribed for the purpose of implementing and achieving the objective of education are carried out. Teachers are influenced, stimulated, coordinated, commanded to carry out their assigned task in order to maintain standard. For quality education to be realized at the tertiary levels of education supervision is highly crucial as it boost the morale of teachers.

CONCLUSION

Sustainable Development Goal can only be attained if an uneven attention is given to education to ensure its quality seeing that it is the bedrock of any transformation and sustainability. In order to ensure a peak performance by these institutions of higher learning there is need for modalities that will enhance quality output. The educational sector is the largest enterprise whose function remains indispensable. It is the centre for research, human resource development and highly dependable to proffer solutions to global needs therefore, quality assurance in this industry cannot be compromised.

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