

Quality Assurance in Nigeria Certificate in Education Programme: Implication for Primary School Teachers in North Central Geo- Political Zone of Nigeria

¹Joseph Taiwo Fowoyo, ²Jacqline B. Ukaegbu, ³Abdullahi Umar Sabo, ⁴Idris Madugu, ⁵Awoyale Olusegun, ⁶Leah M. Tsado, ⁷Abubakar S. Magaji, ⁸Ibrahim G. Kontagora, ⁹Elizbeth C. Hounveneou, ¹⁰Adewara Oluwasegun, ¹¹Sani A. Doma, ¹²Meimunat Shaaba, ¹³Rabi A. Yusuf, ¹⁴Mohammed Danjuma & ¹⁵Yahaya Murtala

*Department of Primary Education, School of Early Childhood Care and Primary Education
Federal College of Education, P. M. B 39 Kontagora. Niger State*

Abstract

This study examines Quality Assurance in Nigeria Certificate in Nigeria programme: Implication for Primary School Teachers in North Central Zone of Nigeria. The study was carried out in five states of the North Central Geo-political zone of Nigeria. Descriptive survey designed was adopted for the study. Four null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The sample of two hundred and fifty (250) academic and non-academic staff was drawn from the population through random sampling technique from five Colleges of Education in the North Central zone. The instrument Quality Assurance Practice Questionnaire (QAPQ) was used for data collection after been validated by three research experts and pilot test was conducted to ascertain its reliability. The reliability was obtained using Cronbach Alpha with index of 0.87. Inferential statistics of t-test was used to test the research hypotheses. The results revealed that the mean rating of Quality Assurance practice in Colleges of Education in North Central zone is significantly high with sample mean of 15.42 which is greater than the population of 13.06 at 0.05 alpha level of significance. It was recommended that Nigeria government through NCCE should ensure strict adherence to all the quality assurance strategies by all Colleges of Education in Nigeria.

Keywords: *Quality assurance, Colleges of education, Primary school, Teachers.*

Corresponding Author: Joseph Taiwo Fowoyo

Background to the Study

Education has been described as the bedrock of every society and tool for nation building. For quality education to be achieved in a nation the principal actors of learning who are the teachers, learners and the environment must be comparatively organized. In other words, the teachers must be adequate in quality and quantity. Quality and functional education should be pursued as well as there should be adequate provision of teaching facilities, and a neat, well light and well ventilated classrooms and administrative structures. The upsurge and rapid establishment of private schools and institution in Nigeria is as a result of lack of confidence in the Nigeria's educational system and this has adverse effect in the development of the nation's educational growth, hence, the need for quality assurance in Nigeria raise the quality of teaching and learning. The concern for quality has been at the care of the motivating forces for reforms in education, which depends on the qualification, training and attitude of the teacher to teaching.

(Akala, 2004) opined that, a programme that produces excellence and high achievement is taught by qualified and committed teachers. Fatunwa (1979) also wrote that out of the educational problems faced by Africa countries, none was persistent as the one relating to the training of enough competent teachers.

In view of the above, the quality of a teacher cannot be compromised. Quality assurance produces necessary preparation for NCE teachers which in return produce competent pupils. The process also lays standard foundation for the NCE programme in our various colleges.

Ayayi and Adegbesan (2007), see quality as the total of the features of a process to produce or service on its performance, based on customers or client's perception of that performance. It is not just a feature of a finished product or services but involves a focus on internal processes and output and includes the reduction of wasted and the improvement of productivity. In planning quality can be viewed from different perspectives, the first is from the internal criteria of the system such as profile expiration and the external criteria which are the fitness and relevance of such education to its environment. Maximizing the effectiveness and efficiency of educational system and services in relation to their contexts, need a proper positioning of the quality assurance unit. Ehindero (2004) says quality assurance focused on the;

- i. Learners entry behaviours, characteristics and attributes including some demographic factors that can inhibit or facilitate their learning;
- ii. The teacher entry qualification, values, professional preparedness, subject background and philosophical orientation;
- iii. The teaching/learning processes including the structure of the curriculum and learning environment;
- iv. The outcomes, which are defined for different levels in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes including appropriate and relevant instruments to assess these objectives.

Preparation of teachers through Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) programme was adopted as a bench marked for the production of quality teachers to teach at the primary school level. According to NCCE 2002, the mandate of NCCE includes, laying down

standards for all programmes of teacher education accreditation of certificates and academic awards and approval of guidelines for accreditation. The commission's goal of quality assurance is pursued vigorously. However, one of the aims of producing NCE teachers is to boost the academic knowledge of primary school teachers and a few who may be teaching in junior secondary schools. The delicate nature of the group they teach (i. e. very young) needs solid background upon which their higher education can be built. Any neglect of quality in the training of primary school teachers and seemingly non-realization of the impact of effective teaching and learning at the primary school level would have a devastating effect on our educational system in the North central geo-political zone in Nigeria as a whole.

Statement of the Problem

It is no longer news that the quality of education in Nigeria has been found to be generally poor, especially at primary school level. This among others can be attributed to the poor academic background of our primary school teachers. Therefore, this project hopes to find out the effect of quality assurance on the NCE programme in the colleges of education in the north central zone of Nigeria

Scope of the Study

The focus of this work is basically on quality assurance in NCE programme and its implications for the primary schools. Also, it considers quality assurance measures in Colleges of Education in the North Central Geo-political Zone of Nigeri and the use of approved students' admission policy as an aspect of quality assurance.

Purpose of the Study

The re-introduction of Universal Basic Education in Nigeria twenty three years after Universal Primary Education (UPE) was launched, is a pointer to the fact that government desires quality and effective education at primary and junior secondary schools levels for the nation to realize her national objectives. However, this can only be done by raising the quality of the certificate of the concerned teachers. Hence the purpose of the study is to see how quality assurance can improve the certificate of the primary school teachers in the north central geo-political zone of Nigeria.

The study is specifically designed to;

1. Improve the quality of certificate of the NCE teachers.
2. Maintain the standards of NCE in the zone
3. Project the image and visibility of Nigeria certificate for primary school teachers.

Research Hypothesis

- Ho₁.** The mean rating of quality assurance measures in Colleges of Education in North Central Zone is not significant high
- Ho₂** The use of approved students' admission policy as an aspect of quality is not significantly high in colleges of Education
- Ho₃.** The minimum standard compliance as an aspect of quality assurance is not significantly high in Colleges of Education.

Ho₄. Supervision of teaching – learning process as an aspect of quality assurance is not significantly high in colleges of Education

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study will be seen in its acting as an inspiration for Colleges of Education to be committed to quality attainment in teaching service delivery. The potential beneficiaries of this research are government, scholars, educational managers, students and parents. The study is particularly important to scholars since it examines the quality of teaching – learning process variables of teacher training colleges as the key to quality improvement toward improving the skills and competences of the NCE teachers.

Kwara, Niger, Benue, plateau, Kogi and Nasarawa.

Conceptual Models of Quality Assurance

The concept of quality assurance refers to the practice of managing the way goods are produced or services are provided to ensure high standard. According to Fadipe (1999), Quality is the ability or degree with which a product service or phenomenon conforms, to an established standard, and which makes it to be relatively superior to other. Quality assurance is about consistently meeting product specification or getting things right the first time and overtime. The concept originated in the manufacturing industries designed to ensure customers satisfaction, commitment to excellence, quality of service, performance, standardization across board and continues improvement. (Agih and Christian- Epe, 2004). In education, it is important that necessary measures are employed to reduce wastages of school resources (labour and materials) in order to ensure the internal efficiency of the educational system. Academic quality assurance practice in Nigeria is a paradigm shift from monitoring and evaluation process to quality assurance which was concerned with the effective and efficient implementation of education across board (Basic education, secondary and tertiary education) in Nigeria in terms of inputs, processes and out puts/ outcomes. (U. B. E. C2012). Quality assurance is more encompassing and includes setting of minimum standards and ensuring that the standards are maintained to the highest possible level. It should also covers whole school evaluation, systematic evaluation, feedback and quality management and utilizes monitoring and evaluation as one of the tools in meeting its set goals. Examining the hierarchy of quality concepts that enhance continuing improvement. Tawari (2002) in Kaegon (2008) states that total quality management (TQM) Combines quality control (continuous improvement). Tawani (2002) holds that quality assurance comes before and during the event process. When teachers form part of the total quality production process, quality assurance becomes participative or collaborative. Ijaiya (2001) however, state that three important lessons from total quality stand out as relevant to quality assurance in education. These are, 1. emphasis on prevention of wastage. 2. Involvement of students, teachers, educational administration, administrative staff, inspectors and parents in the quality process and securing the right attitude and commitment of all stake holders. Quality assurance then becomes the concern of all and sundry. Every one involved understands that the process of quality assurance, improvement and innovation inevitable unfold in a cyclical fashion.

The Concept of Academic Quality Assurance (AQA)

Academic Quality Assurance is very essential to achieve quality of academic (teaching-learning process and the curriculum) and structural (building and physical facilities) provision of courses to realize objective attainment of set standards. Whitely (2001) emphasized that quality assurance in education has become an all-embracing concept that includes all policies, processes and actions through which the quality of education is provided, developed and maintained. Similarly, Okojie (2009) observed that quality assurance mechanisms at the tertiary education level is both internal and external, in his view, the internal quality assurance involves the processes of evaluation, maintenance and promotion within the system. Some of the components of internal quality were identified to include, establishment of admission requirements, staffing, course design and development, internal assessment for approval of new programmes, periodic training workshops to sensitize facilitators and lecturers who are the mainstay of the programme and external examination system. The external quality assurance mechanism according to Durosaro and Akinsola (2007) include all the stake holders in education, professional association/ bodies when they prescribe some minimum standards of operation at their different levels. These include the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE), National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), National University Commission (NUC) Federal Ministry of Education etc. it is these associations and employers of labour that determine and confirm the quality of the products. They also play major roles through its mandate by Act 16 of 1985 on ensuring minimum Academic standard for all academic programmes taught in Nigerian Institutions of learning.

Research Methodology

The design for the study was a descriptive survey. Information gathered from the field were analyzed using inferential statistics The research work is a case study and this gives the researchers in-depth knowledge of how quality assurance can contribute to the quality of the certificate programmes in our various colleges of education.

Area of the Study

The area of study will be Nigeria. It will cover North central zone, one of the six (6) geo-political zones of the country.

Population of the Study

The population of the study consists of the selected staff from five selected colleges of education in the north central geo-political zone of Nigeria

Instrument for Data Collection

The measuring instrument for the study is questionnaire. The instrument for collection of data from respondents is designed by researchers. This is subdivided into three parts. Part A measures demographic information such as Name of school, sex, working experience and student teachers ratio while part B contains 23 items that have their primary focus on quality assurance in Nigeria Certificate in Education. This is rated on 4 point ranging from strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly disagree (SD). The empirical weight 1, 2, 3, and 4 are allocated to SD, D, A, and SA respectively for analysis propose. The respondents

indicated the degree to which they agree by rating the items along the level of strongly agree to strongly disagree.

Reliability and Validation of the Instrument

A good instrument cannot be devoid of reliability and validity. In view of this, Content and face validity were established by giving four drafted copies of quality assurance practice questionnaire (QAPQ) to four specialist in the field of measurement and evaluation at Federal College of Education, Kontagora, Niger State. These speacialist were requested to critically examine and rate the instrument items with respect to suitability, clarity of language and the relevance of the draft questionnaire instrument to research questions and purposes. Their corrections, inputs, observations and comments were taken into consideration to improve on the face and content validity of the instruments. The result obtained from the pilot study was used to determine the reliability of the instrument.

Method of Data Analysis

The research used inferential statistical tool for the analysis which involved the use of t-test at 0.05 alpha level of significance

Presentation and analysis of results The results of the data collected are presented hypothesis-by-hypothesis as shown below.

Hypothesis One

The mean rating of quality assurance measures in colleges of education in north central zone is not significantly high. The only variable in this hypothesis is rating of quality assurance. To test this hypothesis, one sample t-test was employed as presented in Table 1

Table 1: Population t-test analysis of mean rating of quality assurance measures in colleges of education in north central zone (N=201)

Variable	X	SD	μ	p-value
Mean rating of quality assurance	201	15.42	13.06	.000

*p<.05

It can be discerned that from Table 1 that the sample means was found to be 15.42 which is greater than the population mean of 13.06. The p-value of .000 is less than the chosen alpha of .05. Thus the null hypothesis is rejected. This implied that quality assurance measures as put in place in the colleges of Education in the north central states are rated significantly high. The reason of these finding borders on the fact that people recognized the need for quality assurance in Colleges of Education as a preventive measure to solve the problem of wastage and costs in teacher education through which the quality of education provided is developed and maintained.

Hypothesis Two

Implementation of Students' admission policy as an aspect of quality assurance is not significantly high. The only variable in this hypothesis is students' admission policy. To test this hypothesis, one sample t-test was employed as presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Population t-test analysis of students' admission policy measures in colleges of education in north central zone (N=201)

Variable	X	SD	μ	p-value
Students admission policy	201	17.38	13.06	.003

*p < .05

It can be discerned that from Table 2 that the sample means was found to be 17.38 which is greater than the population mean of 13.06. The p-value of .003 is less than the chosen alpha of .05. Thus the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that all the laid down students admission policy or requirement such as minimum of five credits including English and mathematics at either WAEC, NECO or NABTEB with minimum JAMB score of 150 points in relevant subjects are strictly been adhered to by the colleges of Education when admitting students into NCE programme. The reason for this finding borders on the fact that the quality of students admit for the programme will determine the quality of teachers to be produced which in turn affect the pupils to be taught by those teachers.

Hypothesis Three

Minimum standard compliance as an aspect of quality assurance in primary school is not significantly high. The only variable in this hypothesis is Minimum standard compliance as an aspect of quality assurance in primary school is not significantly high. To test this hypothesis, one sample t-test was employed as presented in Table 3

Table 3: Population t-test analysis of minimum standard compliance as an aspect of quality assurance in colleges of education in north central zone (N=201)

Variable	\bar{X}	SD	μ	p-value
Minimum standard compliance	201	18.15	15.06	.000

*p < .05

It can be discerned that from Table 3 that the sample means was found to be 18.15 which is greater than the population mean of 15.06. The p-value of .000 is less than the chosen alpha of .05. Thus the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that the production of NCE teachers by the Colleges of Education in the North central states are in compliance with the minimum

standard compliance with minimum standard as stipulated by NCCE reduce wastage of school resources (men and materials) and brings about internal efficiency. This is in line with Ojo (2006) who asserted that academic quality assurance brings about totality in the fitness of educational programmes in achieving set goals and objectives for attaining better comparative standards

Hypothesis Four

Teaching learning process as an aspect of quality assurance in primary school is not significantly high. The only variable in this hypothesis is teaching learning process. To test this hypothesis, one sample t-test was employed as presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Population t-test Analysis of Teaching Learning process as an Aspect of Quality Assurance in Colleges of Education in North Central Zone (N=201)

Variable	\bar{X}	SD	μ	p-value
Teaching learning process	201	16.09	13.02	.000

*p<.05

It can be discerned that from Table 4 that the sample means was found to be 16.09 which is greater than the population mean of 13.02. The p-value of .000 is less than the chosen alpha of .05. Thus the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that teaching learning process as an aspect of quality assurance in the Colleges of Education is been much needed supervision in terms of regular lecture attendance, conduction of continuous assessment and examination. The reason for this finding borders on the fact that quality assurance as a systematic mechanism expectations of people through quality teaching and learning. This agreed with the assertion of maple (2011) who said quality assurance is expected to conforms to people's predetermined specification.

Conclusion

It must be noted that all educational objectives are stated by the philosophy of a particular country in question. Therefore, objectives of teacher education are based on the philosophy of education in Nigeria. It is also observed that development is far from a nation that did not encourage quality assurance in their educational system, because products of such educational system cannot contribute to the development of the society and as such raises doubt about the credibility of its existence. That is why Nigeria institutions of higher learning are striving to realize total academic quality assurance in their programmes. Colleges of Education whose mandate is to train the manpower needed for our primary and junior secondary schools should not be left out. There is the need for stakeholders to adopt strategies that will help to bring about academic quality assurance in our colleges of Education particularly in the training of teachers. NCCE and other necessary stakeholders should make concerted effort in ensuring quality curriculum in teaching preparation to meet the needs of the society in the 21st century.

Recommendations

The teacher factor has been identified to be a very crucial element in all educational programmes all over the world. This is because the quality of teaching is very fundamental to effective learning. It therefore follows that the training or entry point of teachers before they are employed will go a long way in recording success in their job. In the Colleges of Education, the process of attaining academic quality assurance can be enhanced through the following ways:

1. Quality assurance units in Colleges of Education should be allowed to carry out their duties effectively without interference by the management of the colleges.
2. There should be public accountability and transparency in the management of the school system. This will enable government to monitor the institutions to instill financial and moral discipline in college administrator to judiciously utilize resources to attain academic excellence.
3. Students' admission into the programmes of the colleges should be based on merit as the quality of entrants to a large extent determines their outcome. Colleges should adhere strictly to minimum entry qualification through the unified UTME examinations. They should maintain the same standard of admission for both regular and sandwich programmes and de-emphasize students' admission through sales of internal forms to maintain uniformity across all the Colleges of Education in the country.
4. Government should provide adequate funding and financial resources for the administration Colleges of Education. Since the task of nation building lies heavily on education and teachers in particular, teacher education programmes must be adequately financed. Funds are needed to secure necessary training facilities, build lecture rooms, laboratories, libraries, and so on. The federal and state governments should comply with the 25% UNESCO budgetary allocation to Education.
5. Government should ensure the recruitment of professionally qualified lecturers and staff in the institutions. To this extent, there should be sufficient number of both teaching and nonteaching staff using the provisions of the prescribed NCCE as a bench mark to enhance quality.
6. The preparation towards students teaching practice exercise should be strengthened. The T. P exercise is the only training needed to certify someone as a professional teacher. Hence, Colleges of Education should observe this exercise with seriousness in terms of quality supervision of students for them to master the all the processes of teaching.
7. There should be effective accreditation of programmes by the NCCE to ensure curricula improvement for both self- regulation and comparative evaluation (peer review mechanism) with other institutions to maintain minimum standard in the quality of education curriculum.

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