

The Imperative of Quality Assurance for Sustainable Quality Education in the Tertiary Institutions: A Case Study of Imo State University, Owerri, Nigeria

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Abstract

One of the agenda that Sustainable Development Goals is set to achieve is quality education; which is the number four goal. Meeting this expectation in the Nigerian tertiary institutions particularly in Imo State University, Owerri, Nigeria, necessitates quality assurance. With the aim of showing the relevance of quality assurance for sustainable quality education, this paper employed efficient service delivery theory as its theoretical tool and utilized survey research design. The data sourced through questionnaire were analyzed with the use of simple percentage and mean score based on a four-point likert scale as the analysis of data revealed that quality assurance is indispensable for the achievement of quality education. It also revealed that lack of quality assurance is largely responsible for poor quality education in Imo State University, Owerri, Nigeria. The paper, therefore, recommended the institutionalization of quality assurance measures and its effective monitoring and evaluation towards the realization of quality education which the Sustainable Development Goals is set to achieve.

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Background to the Study

Achieving quality education in the Nigerian educational institutions particularly in the universities is part of Nigerian national objective. This provided fillip for the introduction of quality assurance in the higher institutions (Okoroma, 2016). It is revealing to note that the Ministry of Education which was constitutionally empowered to maintain standards and quality of education in the country in line with the National Minimum Standards on Education and Establishment of Institutions Act 16 of 1985 in conjunction with the 1999 Constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria, delegated the task to the Federal Inspectorate Service Department who were not legally backed up by legislation to cover all schools. This was seen as a major challenge which was rectified through the Act 16 of 1985 as amended to provide adequate legal backing for ensuring quality assurance at elementary and post secondary education level. This was equally extended to the higher institution as National University Commission became a regulatory body of the universities in Nigeria with the responsibility of implementing quality assurance through continuous monitoring, supervision and evaluation. However, as Alaba (2010), puts it, the emphasis of National Educational Quality Assurance Policy was anchored on learner's welfare and participation, learners achievement and standards, care guidance and support, leadership and management, school community relationship; learning environment; teaching and learning, curriculum and other activities. Be that as it may, it has been argued that maintaining quality assurance is an essential condition for efficacy and high productivity quality, and sine-qua-non for achievement of the sustainable goals in education and national development (Okemakinde and Okemakinde, 2006).

Despite all the measures put in place to ensure that standard and quality is significantly improved in the Nigerian universities in general and Imo State University in particular, inadequate funding, leadership tussle, lack of adequate teaching and learning facilities, lack of accreditation and reaccreditation of academic programmes, poor supervision and monitoring of quality assurance, poor remuneration of lecturers and recruitment of incompetent and unqualified lecturers have continued to remain dominating factors that pose challenges to the success of quality assurance towards the realization of quality education which is one of the target of sustaining Development Goals.

However, several studies have been conducted on quality assurance in the higher institutions in Nigeria, such as Mogboyiteren (2019), Rakum (2017), among others, but there is little, if any, or possibly no research that focused on a state university in the Southeast Nigeria. And non has five variables to empirically measure quality assurance improvement. Therefore, this study is driven to fill the gaps left by the previous scholars. Another notable gap is in the use of efficiency service delivery theory which differs considerably from the theories of the earlier studies.

Against this background, this study is aimed at showing the relevance of quality assurance for sustainable quality education in Nigerian education institutions with reference to Imo State University, Owerri.

Conceptual Literature

The two major concepts that needed to be clarified in this study are: Quality Assurance and Quality Education.

Quality Assurance

Quality assurance has been defined in various perspectives. For Ehindero (2004), quality assurance focuses on (i) Learners entry behaviours, characteristics and attributes including some demographic factors that can inhibit or facilitate their learning (ii) The teacher entry qualification, values pedagogies stalls, professional preparedness, subject background, philosophical orientation etc (iii) The teaching/teaching 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.

The above definition implies that the quality assurance bothers on the student's admission process and their learning environment, recruitment of competent and qualified lecturers, the educational curriculum, the learning environment as well as the quality of the students being produced in terms of knowledge and attitudes.

For Ayeni (2012), quality assurance in the educational institutions involves the process of effective management, monitoring, evaluating and reviewing of the input resources by transformation process to produce quality results and meets the standards and expectations of the society. In other words, quality assurance deals with the processes of managing, monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the university activities in order to ensure that quality results are produced and the standards and expectations are met.

Similarly, Awodun and Boris (2020), view quality assurance in the academic institutions as the systematic monitoring, evaluating, regulating and reporting of educational programmes and practices to ensure that acceptable standards are attained and sustained. Quality assurance provides the needed guidance and support to schools for improved learning outcome for learners.

Awodun and Boris (2020), shared almost the same definition of quality assurance with Ayeni (2012) but added that regulation and reporting of outcomes should be employed for effective quality assurance in the higher institutions. This definition, therefore, communicated the perception of National Education Quality Assurance Policy (2014) which links quality assurance to all the various ways and processes of monitoring, assessing, evaluating and controlling of quality, accreditation of the education system and communication of judgment attained to all concerned in order to ensure quality with integrity, public accountability and consistent improvement.

Against the foregoing, quality assurance implies all those methods, strategies and processes designed to ensure that mistakes, defects, incompetence, inefficiency and wastages are prevented in teaching and learning and that all the necessary measures are put in place to promote and sustain quality and standard in the educational institution. It connotes any action taken to prevent quality problems from occurring.

Three approaches to definition of quality assurance control was presented by Mgbeyiteren, Azeez and Abina (2019), and they include: reputational approach, the outcomes approach and the total quality approach. The reputational approach sees quality assurance in terms of excellence; a standard attained in education sector. The outcomes approach regards quality assurance as efficient production. Here, there are no absolute standards but specification as the quality of a product is measured by the extent to which it measures customer's specification, whereas in the total quality approach, quality assurance is seen as value added to the abilities of students who have passed through the system regardless of their ability levels.

The essence of quality assurance is to set standard against which to measure performance or actions. It focuses on the comparison, measurement and degree of conformity to standards. It helps to improve productivity, competitive edge and position, knowledge and powers, and reduction of wastage and cost (Ebong and Efue, 2005).

Quality Education

Quality education is defined as a multi-dimensional concept which embraces all functions and activities such as teaching and academic programmes, research and scholarship, staffing, students, building facilities, equipment, and service to the community and academic environment (Onuh, 2007). In this case, quality education deals with the standardization of the university environment.

For Humphrey and Crawford (2015), quality education deals with the attainment of set standards which must conform with the societal expectations. Hence, the provision made by the National Policy on Education spells out the nature and purpose of education in Nigeria, and thus should serve as instrument per excellence for the realization of national development, national objective and to meet the needs and goals of the individuals and a tool for rapid social change (FRN, 2014). In this perspective, quality education means attainment of the highest standard and purpose of education that meet the national objective.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on efficiency service delivery theory. The theory is more prominent in public administration. It was developed by Mackenzie (1954), Sharpe (1970) and Hill (1974). The assumption of efficiency service delivery theory is that the existence of academic institutions is first and foremost justified for providing services that are academic in character and the quality and standard of these services are measured by the inspectorate of university education.

Gleaning from the narrative above, the function of the universities in Nigeria is to provide educational or academic services that will meet with the national standard. To be sure of meeting this expectation, quality assurance policy was introduced in the universities in order to ensure that the services they render are improved and that standard is not compromised. This is partly the reason why National University Commission was lawfully created and empowered to supervise and monitor the universities in Nigeria in order to sustain quality and standard.

From the foregoing, the significance and importance of efficiency service delivery theory in the study does not diminish as it reinforces universities interest in the quality assurance policy. In this wise, universities are mandated to ensure adequate funding, regular accreditation and reaccreditation of programmes, recruitment of competent and qualified lecturers, adequate remuneration of lecturers and provision of the necessary teaching and learning facilities such as laboratory, libraries and Information and Communication Technology Centre.

By the above perception, the main aim of efficiency service delivery theory is in tandem with quality assurance policy initiative which is intended to improve quality, standard and efficiency in the universities in Nigeria particularly in Imo State University, Owerri. Hence, quality assurance is a precondition for achieving sustainable quality education which is a vital goal in the Sustainable Development Goals target before 2030. Although efficiency service delivery theory has been criticized for being unrealistic and immeasurable, yet it provides a guide for the study of university institutions and the service they render.

Methodology

The study utilized descriptive survey design which focused on collection of data from sample of individual. And these respondents would serve as the representative of the population. The population of this study comprised the total number of immediate past and present executive members of Academic Staff Union of Universities, Imo State University chapter, the Deans of the Faculties and the Directors in Imo State University, Owerri. The population in this case is 56, which is considered to also serve as the sample size based on census enumeration sampling method. The reason for this is because of the smallness of the population and to ensure that there is a complete representation of the population (Asika, 2006). The study employed judgmental sampling technique. It benefited from both primary and secondary sources of data and utilized mean score with the use of four point likert scale to analyse the responses from the field.

Brief History of Imo State University

Imo State University, Owerri is the case study of this study. It was established in 1992 with Prof. Thomas Ndubuizu as the pioneer Vice Chancellor. The university is situated in the hearth of the Imo State Capital in Owerri known as Lake Nwaebere. Since then, the university has produced three successive substantive Vice Chancellors, namely: Prof. Anthony Anwuka, Prof. Ukachukwu Awuzie (former National Chairman of Academic Staff Union of Universities), and Prof. Adaobi Obasi (Mrs.). However, what is known as quality assurance in Imo State University was introduced five years ago with Prof. (Mrs.) Agnes Njoku as the pioneer director who has been recently succeeded by Prof. Johncliff Nwadike,.

The Imperative of Quality Assurance

The needs for quality assurance in Nigerian educational institutions were clearly spelt out by UNESCO (2005), and they include:

- i. To see standards in order to guarantee minimum quality for every aspect of the educational programmes.
- ii. To ensure provision of facilities that correspond with latest requirements and technologies available in sufficient number and well maintained.
- iii. To ensure that the value and success of educational programme is achieved.
- iv. To establish a strong link between the curricular and the needs of the labour market through close interaction.
- v. To turn out quality graduates and to help them get suitable employment in order to reduce the unemployment rates.
- vi. To ensure the delivery methods allow for a maximum learning effect.
- vii. To guarantee the attractiveness of educational programme.
- viii. To ensure that the learner benefits from sufficient practical and theoretical elements through training.
- ix. To ensure the development of educational system in ways that allows enough flexibility for the individual to move from one educational thread to another.
- x. To ensure that the teaching and training staff are well qualified, knowledgeable about the world of work and available in sufficient numbers.

Also, Adegbesan (2011, 148) summarized the need for quality assurance in Nigerian school which according to them are to maintain control strategy in education, to ensure and maintain high standard of education at all levels; to assist in monitoring and supervision of education; to determine the quality of the teacher input; to determine the number of classrooms and their sizes; to determine the level of adequacy of the facilities available for quality control; and to ensure how the financial resources available could be prudently and judiciously utilized.

Empirical Studies

Abdulahi (2020), was concerned with quality assurance and management of basic educational improvement in north central Nigeria with the aim of determining the relationship between external supervision, classroom-based student assessment, staff development and management of basic educational improvement in North Central. The study relied on theory "X" of McGregor which assumed that an average worker is naturally lazy, indolent, dislike work and may avoid it if possible hence he must be controlled, directed and possibly threatened to achieve organizational goals. The paper utilized survey design and employed t-test analytical tool in the analysis of data as results showed that there was no significant difference between external supervision, classroom-based student assessment, staff development and management of basic health in Nigeria. Based on these findings, the paper recommended continued concern and commitment towards effective supervision of all aspects of education, improvement on classroom-based student assessment as well as constant staff development to guarantee enhanced and effective management of basic education in Nigeria, especially in the north central.

Awodun (2020) researched on internal quality assurance in colleges of education in Nigeria in order to establish its benefits and challenges. The paper posited that quality education is a tool of human and national development for the production of NCE

teachers from Colleges of Education in Nigeria to teach in both primary and post primary schools. The paper was historical and descriptive in methodology and analysis. It depended on secondary sources of data as the results established that inadequate funding of the Colleges of Education, misappropriation of the available funds meant for the acquisition and equipment of libraries and laboratory facilities, examination malpractices, leadership tussle and destructive politics in the school as well as lack of integration and cohesion in recruitment, promotion, incentive system and staff appraisal are factors inhibiting quality assurance in Colleges of Education. The paper recommended strengthening of quality assurance measures such as adequate funding of schools, prudent management of resources and value orientation and ethical rebirth for staff and students.

Mogbeyiteren, Azeez and Abina (2019) studied the impacts of quality assurance in managing education in Nigerian schools. With the purpose of assessing the impact of quality assurance in managing education in Nigerian schools by paying attention on how it can be improved and promoted to meet the needs of the society, the paper argued that overpopulation, poor quality facilities, inadequate staff, poor supervision and lack of update of researches are factors that have contributed to low quality of education in Nigeria. Hence, quality education is bedrock of sustainable development. The paper was qualitative in nature and depended only on secondary sources of data as the descriptive analysis of data revealed that lack of quality assurance in schools had deteriorated the educational standard and the quality of the educated Nigerians. The paper, therefore, recommended among others strict enforcement of quality control measures, adequate funding, regular accreditation of courses, and improvement of ICT and provision of adequate educational materials, teacher's incentives.

Nji (2019), assessed the secondary school principalship as a determinant of quality education in selected government secondary schools in Yaoundé, Cameroon. The paper posited that principal's characteristic and resource management influence quality education in secondary schools in Yaoundé. The study employed survey research design and qualitative method of analysis based on the use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The results of the study uncovered that (i) principals characteristics are significant predictors of quality education in secondary schools in Yaoundé centre (ii) Resource managements is significant predictors of quality education in secondary schools in Yaoundé centre (iii) Both the above findings account for 62.3 percent of the variations in quality education in the secondary schools.

Adeyemo and Bakare (2017), were concerned with improving the higher education staff efficiency as a means of ensuring youth empowerment. The paper, though recognized that youths have not gotten formidable empowerment in the higher institution, but agreed that higher education staff efficiency plays a vital role in instilling basic skills into the life of student. The achievement of this helps to eradicate ignorance and improve economic and social development of any nation. The authors further posited that an effective, efficient and quality personnel is required to ensure that the skills of the

students are boosted. The study utilized ex-post facto design which is combined with survey method. It employed Pearson Product Moment correlation for data analysis as the results indicated that when staff in higher education was motivated for efficiency and effectiveness, it will most likely cause youths to acquire skills that can empower them. The paper recommended among others collaboration among governments, management of higher institutions and stakeholder to address the issues on ways of improving efficiency in higher institutions to enable youths to acquire skills for empowerment.

Rakum (2017), researched on achieving inclusive and equitable quality education in Nigeria with emphasis on the role of teacher education. The paper posited that quality education should not be compromised and should be equitably distributed among all the sections of the country and must have inclusive settings. As a qualitative paper, it employed secondary sources of data and utilized explanatory analytical approach. The results of the analysis showed that quality education, inclusive and equitable education have remained difficult to attain due to some impediments. The paper recommended improved and sustainable quality, inclusive and equitable quality education.

Thom-Otuya and Inko-tariah (2016), focused on quality education for national development in Nigeria. The paper was aimed at examining how the quality of education can enhance national development as well as ascertain the challenges therein. The paper argued that Nigerian policy on education is focused on the quantitative than qualitative aspect of institutional development. Because of this, no Nigerian universities is among the top fifty universities in Africa and also none is ranked among the top three thousand universities in the world. The authors further demonstrated that the use of three percent of Nigerian national budget on her educational sector is far less than the twenty percent recommended by UNESCO. The paper was purely descriptive in method and in its analysis. It discovered that poor quality of education has contributed to the huge capital flight out of Nigeria due to Nigerians trooping abroad to acquire quality education which undermines national development. The paper recommended among others adequate funding, effective monitoring of funds usage, adequate remuneration and motivation of teachers, provision of adequate teaching and learning facilities, meritocracy in the admission process, periodic accreditation and reaccreditation.

Egwa (2016), took a critical look at quality assurance in Nigerian tertiary institutions in order to show how significant it is for sustainable development. The paper argued that quality education is a bedrock of sustainable democracy and transformation of the society. And to ensure this, there is an overriding need to put modalities in place which will enhance quality assurance in the educational system. The paper was purely explanatory in design and descriptive in analysis. The paper, therefore, concluded that modification of the curriculum, strategic planning, and accreditation to tertiary institutions' programmes, human resource availability, adoption of information and communication technology as well as effective supervision are important means of quality education and quality assurance and control in the education sector. The paper called for strict quality assurance in the universities in Nigeria.

Kotride and Yunos (2014), looked at the impact of quality control in Nigerian secondary schools educational system with the aim of examining the impact of quality control for improving quality secondary school education and the effectiveness of teaching and learning and how teachers improved teaching quality and the effectiveness of supervision in secondary schools. The paper maintained that Nigeria's educational system needs improvement and development in terms of its standards so as to meet its objectives. The realism of this calls for readdressing and readjustment of the challenge of quality control which will enhance through supervisions in schools and stimulate professional growth and development of teachers. The paper was narrative in approach and concluded that the improvement of quality education in Nigerian secondary schools calls for retraining of supervisors, adequate facilities for teachers, adequate remuneration, attitudinal change among teachers and adequate statistical compilation in the school system. The paper recommended monitoring in the inputs and outputs in the schools among others.

Achor (2013), focused on how to improve quality education for sustainable development in Nigeria. The paper argued that once quality education is assured, the outcome of it is development. It further maintained that in some tertiary institutions in Nigeria, improved quality education is unattainable despite the accreditation of courses. This has undermined development efforts over the years. The study was historical in design and relied on secondary data as the findings proved that corruption and examination malpractice are the major factors responsible for neutralizing efforts towards the attainment of improved quality education for national development in Nigeria. The paper recommended strengthening of accreditation exercise in the tertiary institutions, sensitizing and monitoring of the school managers and administrators in the execution of their statutory functions and combined efforts of the school managers and administrators, teachers, parents and society at large to curb corruption and examination malpractice in schools.

Adegnesan (2011), focused on establishing quality assurance in Nigerian education system and its implication for educational managers. The author argued that the importance of quality education in the nation building is so important that there has been a call from the educational managers on how to make educational system very effective and efficient in the quality of its products following the poor quality of graduates produced in the various educational institutions in Nigeria which has generated endless argument. The paper was descriptive and analytical in its design and analysis as the findings uncovered that educational system is totally in shambles due to the politicization of recruitment process (which gives room for employment of poorly qualified teachers), poor evaluation and inspection. The paper concluded that quality assurance is the way out of poor quality education in Nigeria.

Factors that Threatens Quality Assurance for Quality Education

Poor Remuneration and Salaries

A major factor responsible for the poor performance of the quality assurance policy in the Nigerian universities and its concomitant low quality and standard is the poor and irregular remuneration of lecturers. Poor and delay remuneration serves as a demotivator. In this scenario, the lecturer's commitment to his work is reduced leading to development of poor work attitude, poor services and quality and standard (Ologboye, 2004).

Poor Supervision and Monitoring

Poor supervision and monitoring of quality of education in most universities has been a major problem to the success of quality assurance and control owing to the high level of non compliance from the lecturers without strict sanctions. However, non compliance with the quality assurance could be caused by lack of political will, constant change of leadership and lack of continuity (Okoroma, 2006).

Incessant Strikes

The inability of government to meet with ASUU demands for adequate funding of the universities often leads to strike; a situation where academic activities are suspended definitely or indefinitely pending the time of settlement between government university union. Strikes lead to closure of schools for a period of time. During this period, the students become emotionally and psychologically unstable (Ohiwerei and Onimawo, 2016). This influence them negatively resulting to the production of low quality graduates, distortion of academic calendar and low performance (Iwundu and Thom-Otuya, 2014; Shimawua, 2020) thereby undermining the realization of the aim of quality assurance for quality education.

Inadequate Funding

Funding is perhaps the singular most important challenge facing universities in Nigeria. The survival and sustainability of any system is largely dependent on the availability of adequate funds and the management of such funds. This is considered the ultimate and critical determinant of the growth of a university. For this reason, UNESCO recommended 26% of the national budget as the minimum for funding education, but this has not been adhered to. This neglect precipitated crises (Akujobi, 2011). Inadequate funding of universities is often responsible for poor provision of the necessary teaching and learning facilities, irregular payment of lecturers' salaries and other incentives (Iwundu and Thom-Otuya, 2014).

Lack of Adequate Teaching and Learning Facilities

Lack of adequate teaching and learning facilities undermine the policy assurance initiative in the universities in Nigeria. There are cases of lack of standard classrooms, lecture halls, equipped libraries and laboratories as well as lecturers offices. In the presence of these factors, teaching and learning is hampered leading to deterioration of academic quality and standard. Hence, where these problems are not addressed, quality assurance policy hardly thrives (Thom-Otuya, and Inko-tariah, 2016; Adeyemo and Bakare, 2017; and Peretomode, 2014).

Lack of Qualified and Competent Teachers

It is worrisome to note that the process or recruitment of lecturers in the university is usually based on politics rather than objectivity and merit. In theory, the recruitment of manpower is governed by the merit principle, which implies that all appointments are made on the basis of merit. This merit principle is to promote the standard and quality of services rendered by the university by appointing the best talented, qualified and competent lecturers through competitive means (Ogunna, 2007). But the politicization of recruitment process promotes sectionalism, familiarism, favouritism, godfatherism, corruption and bribery. This prevents the appointment of the most and best qualified, competent, intelligent, brilliant and skilled. This negative force contributes to the low results of quality assurance in the Nigerian universities.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Here we intend to present and analyse the data collected from the responses of respondents. 56 questionnaires were distributed to respondents in Imo State University. This work benefited from mean and four point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (DS) and rated 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. And the simple sample percentage method was also utilized.

Table 1: Showing the mean rating of the extent of which quality assurance has contributed to quality educational services

S/N	Questionnaire	Responses				Total		Decision
		SA	A	D	SD	Score	Mean	
1	Quality assurance has not adequately contributed towards improving laboratory and library facilities	16 (64)	10 (30)	08 (16)	04 (04)	38 (114)	3	Rejected
2	Quality assurance has not contributed towards the improvement of the accreditation and reaccreditation status of the school programmes	18 (72)	08 (24)	07 (14)	05 (05)	38 (115)	3	Rejected
3	Quality assurance has not contributed towards improving the ethics of teaching and learning	13 (52)	14 (42)	07 (14)	04 (04)	38 (112)	2.9	Rejected
4	Quality assurance has not contributed towards provision of sufficient classrooms/halls and office for lecturers	17 (68)	12 (36)	09 (18)	00 (00)	38 (122)	3.2	Rejected
5	Quality assurance has not adequately improved the funding of the university	26 (104)	12 (36)	00 (00)	00 (00)	38 (140)	3.7	Rejected
6	Quality assurance has not adequately improved the recruitment of qualified and competent lecturers	19 (76)	15 (45)	3 (06)	1 (01)	38 (128)	3.4	Rejected
7	Quality assurance has not adequately contributed in resolving issues associated with poor and delay salaries and incentives of lecturers	28 (112)	10 (30)	- (-)	- (-)	38 (143)	3.7	Rejected
	Grand Mean	137 (548)	81 (243)	34 (68)	14 (14)	266 (869)	3.3	Rejected

From the table above, it indicates that the mean score of items 1 to 7 are 3; 3; 2.9; 3.2; 3.7, 3.4 and 3.7 respectively and the grand mean score is 3.3. It shows that the quality assurance policy in Imo State University, Owerri has not adequately contributed in the improvement of quality and standard of educational services. it, therefore, implies that the quality assurance policy in place in the school has not significantly contributed towards efficient services.

Question: Identify the challenges undermining the operation of quality assurance towards improving quality education in Imo State University, Owerri

Here, open ended question was used. Based on the responses on the above question, it was discovered that the respondents identified those factors that are undermining the activities of quality assurance unit in Imo State University, Owerri as follows: (1) Inadequate funding (2) Lack of accreditation and reaccreditation of courses (3) Recruitment of unqualified and incompetent manpower (4) Inadequate and delay in the remuneration and incentives of lecturers (5) Lack of sufficient equipped libraries and laboratories (6) Lack of access to information and communication technology facilities (7) Incessant strikes (8) Poor supervision and monitoring of teaching and learning (9) Poor admission policy, and (10) Mismanagement of funds.

The Findings

Based on the analysis of this study, the following findings are made:

This paper discovered that quality assurance in the Nigerian universities is indispensable for the achievement of quality education. However, quality assurance in the Imo State University has not played significant role in ensuring enabling academic environment that is necessary for the improvement of quality education.

This research also revealed that lack of strong enforcement of quality assurance in Imo State University is largely responsible for poor laboratory and library facilities, problem of accreditation and reaccreditation, poor ethics of teaching and learning, insufficient classrooms/halls and officers, insufficient funding, recruitment of incompetent and unqualified manpower as well as poor and delay payment of workers' salaries and other incentives.

Generally, this paper discovered that factors such as lack of funding, lack of accreditation and reaccreditation of courses, delay and poor remuneration and incentives of workers, recruitment of unqualified and incompetent lecturers, lack of sufficient equipped libraries and laboratories, lack of access to information and communication technology facilities, incessant strikes, poor supervision and monitoring of teaching and learning, poor admission policy as well as mismanagement of funds in the university undermined the operation of quality assurance towards ensuring sustainable quality education in Nigeria.

Concluding Remarks

The desire to improve the quality of education in the universities in Nigeria particularly in Imo State University calls for regular supervision and monitoring of the university environment. This is one the reasons that informed the introduction of quality assurance in order to improve the quality of education towards meeting the sustainable Development Goals' target. However, it has sown that despite the plan and intention of establishment of quality assurance, there has been a widespread perception that quality assurance has not yet played a significant role in increasing the quality of education in Imo State University, Owerri. The assumed failure of quality assurance is linked inadequate funding, lack of accreditation and reaccreditation of courses, recruitment of unqualified

and incompetent lecturers, lack of sufficiently equipped libraries and laboratories, lack of access to ICT facilities, incessant strikes, poor supervision and monitoring of teaching and learning, poor admission policy and mismanagement of funds. However, for Imo State University to ensure quality education and achieve sustainable development goals, there must be adequate efforts to fashion out appropriate strategies or means of institutionalizing quality assurance policy and strict enforcement through effective and efficient supervision and monitoring.

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