

University Administrators' Planning Management Capacity as a Predictor of Quality Assurance in Federal Universities in North-East Geo-Political Zone, Nigeria

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Article DOI:

10.48028/iiprds/esjprcd.v13.i1.12

Keywords:

University administrator,
Planning, Organizing
and Quality assurance

Abstract

Quality in education has become a global concern in the world. The demand for the resources needed for quality education in Nigerian universities is high and their availability is inadequate; which necessitates the need for proper planning of resources by university administrators for quality assurance. This study set out to determine university administrators' planning management capacity as it predicts internal quality assurance in federal universities in North-East zone; two objectives, one research question and one hypothesis emerged. The population is 3,417 Academic Staff and 683 were sampled for the study. Mean, standard deviation and linear regression were used for analysis. The result shows that; University administrators' planning capacity explained 95.4% of the variance in internal quality assurance in the universities. The study recommends that; university administrators should ensure adequate planning is made and implemented for internal quality assurance to be achieved.

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Background to the Study

There is a global emphasis on quality assurance in education as education is widely recognized as the major instrument for enhancing socio-economic, political and cultural development of a nation. This explains the establishment of the department of quality assurance virtually in all universities in the world. Higher education is recognized as an instrument for social change and economic development. University education is therefore needed for the provision of manpower for socio-economic development (Ekundayo & Ajayi, 2009). Universities are responsible for raising highest level manpower and the development of technical capacities necessary for economic growth and development. According to Adelabu and Akinwumi (2008) universities are seen in many African countries as vital institutions for developments and many aspects of knowledge are taught to a high level leading to the production of educated citizens who are to serve the community and the entire nation.

Quality of teaching and learning in higher education has become the major concern of the world at large over the past decades. For this reason, people have been agitating for a functional and qualitative education all over the world. This led to the resolutions of Education for All (EFA) conference at Jomtien (Thailand) in 1995, Dakar conference in 2000 and the 56th Assembly of the United Nations meeting all of which emphasized the importance of quality education in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). (International Organization for Migration (IOM), 2014). Similarly, the UNESCO Global Convention on Higher Education (2023-2025) commits states to strengthen international mobility with quality assurance mechanisms. The convention brought a globally binding instrument that influences quality assurance practices across member states.

Governments in various countries such as Europe, United Kingdom, China, and in African continent countries such as South Africa, Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania, Nigeria and others have developed and established national standards for quality education. These countries have flagged off various programmes to ensure that quality education is obtained in their universities. The Bologna process is an intergovernmental cooperation of 48 European countries in the field of higher education on how to improve the internationalization of higher education as well as to make degrees and learning more comparable across all universities in Europe. In the United Kingdom (UK), the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) is the designated quality body for higher education saddled with the responsibility for managing quality assurance elements of higher education regulatory framework (Edge Hill University, 2020). The history of quality assurance in higher education in China dates back to 1980's and by 2004, the Ministry of Education (MoE) established the Higher Education Evaluation Centre (HEEC) to oversee and organize university teaching evaluation.

To achieve quality, African Standard Guideline for Quality Assurance (ASG-QA) was developed. The ASG-QA contains a set of standards for internal and external quality assurance in African higher education institutions. In South Africa, the Council of Higher Education (CHE) established the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) which is responsible for institutional audits, programme accreditation and quality promotion in

higher institutions of the country. In Tanzania, Higher Education Accreditation Council (HEAC) was established in 1995 to address the issues of quality education in the country's universities. HEAC was saddled with the responsibility of registering and accreditation of private universities in the country. Kenya's Quality Assurance in Higher Education is a commission for University Education established in 1995 under the university act. The commission centers on internal quality assurance, external quality assurance and accreditation process in the universities. Ghana's National Accreditation Board (NAB) is a legally established agency responsible for quality assurance in higher education institutions in the country.

In Nigeria, the National Universities Commission (NUC) which was established in 1962 is charged with the responsibility of overseeing the activities of Nigerian universities. It regulates the academic, administrative and financial activities of Nigerian universities. Decree No. 1 of 1974 gives the NUC the responsibility of ensuring that quality is maintained in the universities. Act No. 16 of 1985 further empowers the NUC to lay down the Minimum Academic Standard (MAS) and accredit programmes in Nigerian universities. This has a direct bearing on quality assurance in the universities. The NUC in trying to maintain quality determines the carrying capacity of every university to ensure that the number of students admitted can be supported by the number of human and material resources available in the university (Oluremi & Kolade, 2016). University administrators move to collaborate with the NUC to manage the activities of the university system effectively. Hence, university administrators manage the internal quality assurance while the NUC takes care of the external quality assurance measures towards the realization of qualitative education. Both internal and external quality assurance is necessary for effective goal realization in the university.

The Concept of Management, Planning and Quality Assurance

Daramola and Amos (2016) viewed management as the “ability to cope with complexity, to devise structures and systems that produce order and harmony. Management involves leading and directing the 'knowledge drivers’”. University management is carried out in two ways, internal and external. The internal control is from the university management through the vice chancellor while the external control is from the federal government through the National Universities Commission a body responsible for the coordination and assessment of university education through programme accreditation (Adetunji (2015) and (Ademola & Adewale, 2017).

The university administrator's capacity to manage both human and material resources for quality assurance is crucial to the effective management of higher education institutions. According to Adu-Oppong (2014:135), these functions (capacity) comprises of planning which is the general outline of the activities required to accomplish the goals of an organization necessary for good management. Planning determines the direction the organization is going and the general approach it will use to reach there. It takes care of the future and arranges the necessary plans of operations for goals to be achieved. The university

Administrator understands the organization in order to formulate and select appropriate objectives and procedures to be followed within the administrative system. To ensure quality administrative management, university administrators takes active roles in planning and managing activities.

Fabunmi (2020) opines that quality refers to “meeting the set or desired objectives in terms of content, process and output”. According to Olabanji and Abayomi (2013), Quality can be defined as “fitness for purpose”. It encompasses the concept of meeting standards upon which agreement is reached; such standards may be defined by law, an institution, a coordinating body or a professional society. Quality in education as seen by Owuor (2012) refers to the “character of the elements of input, process and output of the education system that provides services that completely satisfy both internal and external stakeholders by meeting their implicit and explicit expectations”. Quality is therefore all efforts put in place to ensure that the input, process and output meet the desired goals.

Oduma (2013) is of the view that quality assurance in education involves many functions and activities such as teaching, research, staffing, academic environment, facilities and equipment and the quality of education delivery necessary to make teaching and learning effective and efficient. Machunu and Kisanga (2014) opined that Quality assurance can be viewed as the measures taken by an institution to be satisfied and demonstrate to its clients that it has constant capacity to keep its promise to deliver goods and services of the desired standard.

There are two basic mechanisms used within and outside the university system in order to ensure quality in education. These mechanisms are:

- i. The internal quality assurance and
- ii. The external quality assurance

Kawday (2019) defines internal quality assurance as 'a self-regulated mechanism by the institution with an aim of continuous improvement of quality and acquiring academic excellence which centered on the quest for excellence in curriculum aspect, teaching/learning and evaluation, research innovation and extension, infrastructure and learning resources, student support and progression, governance, leadership and management and institutional values and best practices. In relation to universities, Akpan (2014) asserts that the external quality assurance mechanism deals with the activities of NUC in the supervision of academic activities in Nigerian university. External quality assurance evaluates the operation of a university or its programmes to ascertain its compliance to a set minimum standard and it is normally conducted through accreditation.

Objectives of the Study, Research Question and Hypotheses

The specific objectives of this study are:

1. To determine university administrators planning management capacity as it predicts the level of internal quality assurance in Federal Universities in North East Geo-Political Zone of Nigeria and

2. To apply the findings on planning management capacity as it predicts internal quality assurance in Federal Universities in North East Geo-Political Zone of Nigeria in proper planning of activities in the universities.

Based on these objectives, two research question and one hypothesis emerged. The research questions are:

- i. To what level are university administrators able to plan to ensure internal quality assurance in Federal Universities in North East Geo-Political Zone of Nigeria?
- ii. How would university administrators planning management capacity enhance the activities in Federal Universities in North East Geo-Political Zone of Nigeria?

The null hypotheses set for the study is as follows:

H₀: University administrators' planning capacity does not significantly predict internal quality assurance in Federal Universities in North East Geo-Political Zone of Nigeria.

Planning for Quality Assurance

Successful job performance requires effective management to co-ordinate and guides the effort of individuals towards the achievement of goal. This requires effective planning, organizing, staffing, directing and controlling to integrate individual's efforts in the workplace towards achieving the desired objective. Management therefore is the co-ordination of all resources through the process of planning, organizing, staffing, directing and controlling in order to attain desired goals and objectives (Bihar, 2013).

In Nigerian universities, the university administrator that is the Vice Chancellor (VC) work with the help of other administrators such as the Deputy Vice Chancellor (DVC), Registrar, Deans of Faculties, Directors of Institutes and Head of Departments and units. The VC and the university governing council collaborates to make sure that staff employed especially the academic staff are of high quality, the working condition of staff is made favorable and get more experienced and competent academicians that will mentor the young academic staff in order to ensure that quality is enhanced (Asiyai, 2015).

University administrators through adequate planning are responsible for the maintenance and appropriate usage of physical facilities, capacity building of teachers for effective service delivery and also the provision of instructional facilities and materials for quality teaching and learning process. Joshua (2012) maintains that school administrators should make it possible for teachers to have access to suitable school facilities for them to discharge their duties of achieving the educational objectives. Adetunji (2015) also laments that as enrolment continue to increase, resources required for the provision of quality education are scarce. In the same vein, Lawrence (2016) asserts that poor and inadequate facilities are a factor that leads to poor quality of education and even a poor education system. Hence, these necessitate the university administrators to play a vital role in planning for managing such facilities effectively.

Quality education can be enhanced through effective management of schools, prevention of wastage of resources; provision of guidance to staff members and their motivation to enable them excel in their work (Sigilai, 2013). These are roles which a university administrator can perform for effective progress of his institution and these roles equally demands for adequate planning. It is the responsibility of the university administrator to establish high quality education by effectively managing all forms of teaching and learning, resources and processes, and by ensuring and providing leadership and direction for the school through adequate planning to meet its aims and goals. University Administrators may delegate responsibilities since they are responsible for actualizing the educational goals and objectives of the institutions. Their personal devotion to work and their ability to inspire the loyalty and trust of others to themselves, to their institutions and the country are matters of vital importance (Sigilai, 2013).

Without planning, human, material and financial resources available cannot be fairly utilized to achieve school goals (teaching and learning); as Weldon & Weingart cited in Aduwa-Ogiegbaen and Iyamu (2005) asserts that planning plays an important role in the goal effort and a group goal is expected to motivate planning. School activities are planned by school administrators and these activities include curriculum planning, timetabling, conferences, seminars, examinations, graduation ceremonies, duty post schedules, teachers duties, students schedules, sports activities, cultural days, school records organization, staff meetings, discipline, committee, school plant facilities, manpower, fund raising, supervisory and inspection activities and others are planned activities done by the school head and committee (Aduwa-Ogiegbaen and Iyamu, 2005). Fabunmi (2019) considers planning as essential for operations to be efficient and effective in education and that most educational plans failed because of deficiencies that manifest right from the planning process.

Methodology

The research design adopted for this study is the correlational survey research design. A Correlational study tries to find out whether an increase or decrease in one variable corresponds to an increase or decrease in the other (Siegle, 2015 & Kabir, 2017). The Area of the study is the North East Geo-Political Zone of Nigeria which comprises of six states namely Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe states. The population comprises of 3,417 Academic staff of the six universities under study. 20% of the population of the Academic staff of each university was sampled reaching a total of 683 academic staff from the six universities under study. A researcher-developed questionnaire called University Administrators Management Capacity and Quality Assurance Questionnaire (UAMCQAQ) was used to generate primary data. The instruments have a reliability coefficient of 0.88 and 0.81 for administrators' management capacity and the quality assurance items respectively. Mean and standard deviation was used to answer research questions. Linear regression statistics was used to test hypotheses while multiple regression statistics was used to test for composite prediction in hypotheses where the level to which the independent variable (planning) predicts the dependent variable that is internal quality assurance. One-way analysis of variance was used to determine the relative contribution of the variables.

Result and Discussions

The research questions were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. The results on the research questions are presented in table 1.

Research Question 1: To what level are university administrators able to plan to ensure internal quality assurance in Federal Universities in North East Geo-Political Zone of Nigeria?

Research Question 2: How would university administrators planning management capacity enhance the activities in Federal Universities in North East Geo-Political Zone of Nigeria?

The results in respect of research questions are presented in table 1 showing the number of respondents, mean and standard deviation.

Table 1: Level of University Administrators' planning capacity and Ability to Plan

Item	N	Mean	S. D	Remarks	Internal Quality Assurance
Recruitment of qualified lecturers.	530	3.56	.71467	Moderate	Moderate
Adequate instructional materials	530	2.97	.86365	Low	Low
Adequate school buildings	530	3.43	.68771	Moderate	Moderate
Good research culture	530	3.02	.88017	Moderate	Moderate
Average Mean		3.25			

S.D: Standard Deviation

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Table 1 indicates the level to which university administrators planning management capacity and ability to plan the activities of Federal Universities in North East Geo-Political Zone of Nigeria. A grand means of 3.25 which is a little above the cut off point for the weighted mean 3.00 indicates moderate level to which university administrators are able to plan the activities of Federal Universities. However, university administrators rated low in their ability to plan for university instructional facilities. Internal quality assurance due to planning is also rated moderate on the average. By implication, university administrators enhance the activities of internal quality assurance in Federal Universities in North East Geo-Political Zone of Nigeria. The result on table 1 indicates that proper planning of internally quality assurance activities is moderate in the universities which signifies that the universities are moderate in having qualified lecturers, adequate instructional facilities, adequate school buildings and good research culture. These can enhance universities activities and guides towards goals achievement.

H_0^1 : University administrators' planning capacity does not significantly predict internal quality assurance in Federal Universities in North East Geo-Political Zone of Nigeria.

Table 2: Planning Capacity as a Predictor of Internal Quality Assurance

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	309.137	1	309.137	11080.493	.000 ^b
Residual	14.731	528	.028		
Total	323.868	529			

a. Dependent Variable: Internal Quality Assurance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Planning

Table 2 reveals University administrators' planning capacity as a significant predictor to internal quality assurance in Federal Universities in North East Geo-Political Zone of Nigeria. The results indicate that University administrators' planning capacity is a significant predictor of internal quality assurance in Federal Universities in North East Geo-Political Zone of Nigeria, $F(1, 529) = 11080.493$, $p = 0.000$. Since the p-value (0.000) is less than 0.05 alpha levels, it can be concluded that the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that University administrators' planning capacity significantly predict internal quality assurance in Federal Universities in North East Geo-Political Zone of Nigeria.

Table 3: Model Summary of the Hypotheses

Model R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.977 ^a	.955	.954	.16703

a. Predictors: (Constant), Planning

Table 3 indicates how the independent variable explains the variance in the dependent variable. The result shows that the University administrators' planning capacity explained 95.4% of the variance in internal quality assurance in Federal universities in North East Geo-Political zone, Nigeria.

Table 4: Linear Regression on Planning as a Predictor of Internal Quality Assurance

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	-.191	.033		-5.847	.000
Planning	1.032	.010	.977	105.264	.000

Source: Dependent Variable: Internal Quality Assurance

The result on regression analysis on planning as a predictor of internal quality assurance in Federal Universities in North East Geo-Political Zone is presented in table 4. The result shows standardized coefficient of 0.977, t-value of 105.264, p-value of 0.000. Since p-value 0.000 is less than 0.05 alpha level, hence the null hypotheses are rejected and the alternative upheld showing that planning management capacity significantly predict internal quality assurance in Federal Universities in North-East Geo-Political Zone, Nigeria.

Discussion of Results

Planning capacity of university administrators significantly predicted internal quality assurance in Federal Universities in North East Geo-Political Zone of Nigeria, (Adjusted R Square = 0.954, $p = 0.000$). Therefore, University administrators' planning capacity explained 95.4% of the variance in internal quality assurance. There is a significant relationship between university administrators planning capacity and internal quality assurance in Federal Universities in North East Geo-Political Zone of Nigeria. This finding emphasized the need for proper and effective planning in the universities for internal quality assurance to be enhanced. Planning implementation is necessary for quality assurance to be realized; university administrators need to channel their effort in ensuring that all planning processes are followed and carried out accordingly. This finding contradicts the findings of Silman, Gokcerus and Isman (2012) which reveal that there are serious efforts in the area of quality assurance but there is problem in the process of planning implementation. There was no monitoring and periodic review of programmes in the universities. Teaching and learning processes are not given due attention and need to be improved for accreditation of the universities.

Similarly, this finding falls in line with Akosile and Akinselure (2016); that properly established and implemented internal control significantly relates to prudent management of organizational resources in Nigerian universities. The study concludes that staff of the university should be trained regularly for goals accomplishment and that university management should include some selected internal control staff in the planning process to ensure the achievement of the university's goals through proper use of resources. By implication, these findings indicate that proper planning is necessary for the achievement of internal quality assurance in Federal Universities in North East Geo-Political Zone of Nigeria. Adequate planning by university administrators in the school infrastructural facilities, school plant, staff development and research activities ensures internal quality assurance in the university's activities.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The study determines university administrators' planning management capacity as it predicts internal quality assurance in federal universities in North-East Geo-Political Zone, Nigeria. The study reveals that there is a significant relationship between university administrators planning capacity and internal quality assurance in the Universities. This study contributed to knowledge through its findings and further reiterates the need for adequate and proper planning in the usage of universities resources by universities administrators for internal quality assurance to be realized. The findings can equally be utilized in other universities for quality assurance purposes. However, this study is delimited to only planning management capacity and internal quality assurance in federal universities in North-East Geo-Political Zone, Nigeria. It is can be replicated in state universities in the zone and equally in federal universities and state universities in other Geo-Political Zones of Nigeria. No organization can achieve its aims without proper planning and quality assurance; universities need capable and competent administrators to function effectively for its goal's realization. Based on this it

is concluded that no internal quality assurance can be achieved without dedicated university administrators who make adequate plans for the achievement of the university's goals. The following are recommended:

- 1) University administrators should dedicate more effort in proper planning is made and implementation of all university activities for quality assurance to be realized.
- 2) University administrators should apply their planning management capacity in all university's activities for the realization of the university's goals and objectives.

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