

QUALITY ASSURANCE IN BUSINESS EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

Quality assurance is a systematic review of educational provision in order to maintain and improve quality, equity and efficiency. This paper looked at quality assurance in business education for sustainable national development. The paper examined the concepts of quality, quality assurance, business education, sustainability, development, sustainable development and business education for sustainable development. The researcher posited that economic, social and environmental sustainability which are the fundamental pillars of sustainable national development can be achieved by ensuring quality in business education. Recommendation were made among others to include provision of facilities and infrastructures and continuous review of the quality of the curriculum, instructional resources (Human and material), facilities/equipment etc. to address contemporary issues towards the attainment of sustainable development.

Keyword: Quality, Quality Assurance, Business Education, Sustainability, Development and Sustainable Development.

Introduction

Education is an instrument of social and economic mobility and a vital factor for sustainable national development. An education system is relevant only to the extent it is able to address squarely the problems and aspirations of the people (Nwokike, Ezeabi and Jim, 2018). Business education is an aspect of vocational education that provides the recipients with skills, competences, attitudes and general knowledge to enable them live, function, imbibe and appreciate the present (Igwe, 2017).

Furthermore Akaeze, (2014) described business education as that which equips its recipients with creative skills that would make them to perform well as entrepreneurs. This is

to say that business education as a program in the general education systems equips students with requisite skills, abilities etc to become useful, functional and entrepreneurs in their societies. Hence the need to ensure quality in business education by maintaining quality in the factors such as the curriculum, instructional facilities, equipments, school management, building and physical resources would help to achieve effectiveness, and long term sustainable development.

Concept of Quality

The concept of quality in education is milky dimensional and embraces all functions and activities in the academic sphere (Maduewesi, 2005) it involves quality of instruction, academic programmes, instructors, facilitators and equipment, curricula and assessment of students performances. Okebukola, (2005) defined quality in education as fitness of purpose. While Fadife, (2005) viewed quality as appropriateness of resources (Human and Material) available to education. However, Akpan and Esirah, (2005) maintained that the concept of quality varies from that of providing special service to conforming to standards or fitness for purpose. In support of the above, Babalola, (2004) stated that quality of education refers to the worth of education with reference to its input, the teaching process and the output or outcome and is measured against set standards.

Concept of Quality Assurance

Quality assurance deals with proactive means of ensuring academic achievement of students and environment. (Babalola, 2004). Ciwar, (2005) defines quality assurance as the practice of managing the way goods are produced or services are provided to make sure they are kept at a high standard. Quality assurance is a process of ensuring quality and good standard in the education system, and the need to ensure standard in business education cannot be under estimated. This will help to address the need of the society. To this effect, Ijaiya (2001) observed that without quality, education not only becomes wastage but also poses danger to the individual beneficiaries and the society. Ijaiya also maintained that the worth of any educational system as an investment lies in its capacity to continuously serve its customers (students, parents, employers of labour, the society) better and still provides for quality and quantity. This is to say that quality assurance is about consistently doing things according to set standard while at the same time meeting the expectations of the users in relation to the quality of skills, knowledge, abilities etc acquired by the students for personal use and the development of the society.

Concept of Business Education

Business education entails education programmes for economic understanding, business entrepreneurship and office occupation which seek to develop in students basic skills for personal use in future. (Onajife in Nwokike, Ezeabi, Jim, 2018). According to Osuala in Azuka and Nwosu, (2018), business education is an essential part of the preparation of youths for life and living. In the view of Ezeani in Amah & Moore, (2020), business education is an umbrella name for those educational processes concerned with the study of techniques, relayed science as well as acquisition of attitudes, practical skills and knowledge relating to occupations in vocational sectors of the economic and social lives of people. Ukairo, (2017) submitted that business education is needed by students because it develops life skills

for economic success and sustainable development, which is one of the core goals of business education. However, Abdulkarim in Anyaeneh & Nzegwu (2015), outlined some of the goals of business education to include; equipping students with required knowledge for making rational decisions in the business world, adapting to the changes in the business world and making innovations that lead to efficiency and proficiency in operating and analyzing business activities, develop a mature understanding of business etc. From the definitions and goals of business education, above it is clear that business education is concerned with the acquisition of desirable skills, abilities, attitudes, competences, creativity, industry, and attitude required for personal adjustment in the society, as an employer, employee, a producer, a consumer of goods and services. It therefore, implies that for the goals of business education to be realized, there is need to ensure quality and sustainable standard.

Concept of Sustainability

Sustainability consists of fulfilling the needs of current generations without compromising the need of future generations while ensuring a balance between economic growth, environmental care and social well-being (Bosede, 2020). It is the ability to provide for, maintain or nourish something for an indefinite period without depleting or damaging. Horton (2013) viewed sustainability as the process of living within the limits of available social, physical as well as natural resources in a manner that allows the living system in which humans are embedded to thrive in perpetuity. Okafor and Egenti, (2021) maintained that sustainability consists of three aspects; the protection of natural environment, the maintenance of economic vitality and observance of specific social considerations about human development.

Concept of Development

Development is a process of change over time. Zaki in Okafor and Egenti, (2020) defined development as a continuous process of positive change in quality and the span of life of a person or group of persons. This means that development is a process of improving the material condition of people through the diffusion of knowledge and technology. And it is a combination of factors such as economic, social, political, technological and cultural development and they are interrelated and interdependent. Bosede, (2020) opined that development goes beyond the increase in per-capita income or economic growth, but also include sustainable improvements in the living standard of the people, which is guaranteed through the provision of gainful employment, presence and availability of social and economic infrastructures. This goes to show that development is a combination of sustainable social and economic growth.

Concept of Sustainable Development

Sustainable development according to Brundland report is defined as the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generation to meet their own needs. This looked at an approach to the economic development of societies without compromising with the quality of the environment for future generations. This approach requires societies to meet human needs by increasing productive activities and ensuring equitable opportunities for all through relevant education provision whereby students are equipped with relevant skills, knowledge, competences and attitudes that will

make them employable or self employed. Sustainable development according to Ahenkam and Osei-Kojo in Okafor and Egenti is the development path along which maximization of human well-being for today's generation does not lead to the declines in the well-being of the future generation. This is to say that sustainable development goals adopted as global goals which the world is set to achieve by 2020 would be achieved by ensuring quality in business education.

Quality Assurance in Business Education for Sustainable Development

Quality assurance is the reviewing of educational provision systematically and continuously to maintain and improve its quality and effectiveness. It encompasses school self evaluation, external evaluation, evaluation of teachers and school leaders, facilities and students assessment. Quality assurance, therefore, is important to carry out quality management and is a method that helps to make sure that certain quality standards are fulfilled, ensures that an education system develops permanently in line with the curriculum and that standards are in place. For the goals of business education to be realized, there is need to ensure quality and sustainable standards through effective monitoring and quality control of the academic activities.

Factors that Enhance Quality in Business Education

1. Relevance:

To assure quality in business education, curriculum content needs to be re-ordered to focus on relevance and functionality. There should be flexible curriculum that would adjust to the needs of the society.

2. Adequate Funding

Fund refers to money needed for effective teaching and learning. Business education which is both theoretical and practical need funds to function effectively. And to maintain quality, there should be adequate funding of the academic programmes. To this end, Onyeachu, (2006) noted that enough funds should be allotted for payment of salaries, building of new classroom, renovation of school buildings, purchase of equipments and machines, furniture's and other instructional materials.

3. Availability of Infrastructural Facilities

Facilities are those factors which enable production workers to achieve the goals of an organization. Facilities such as buildings, plants, equipments etc enable business education to perform effectively and students to learn better (Ehiamezor, 2001) quality becomes difficult to attain where facilities are not in place.

4. Provision of Instructional Resources/materials

Curriculum materials are indispensable in the teaching and learning process and implementation. (Maduewesi, 2000). Babalola, (2004) recognizes curriculum materials as ways and means of making the teaching and learning process easy, more meaningful and understandable. Mkpa (2007) observes that good quality resources are positively related to good quality products. He further suggested that for effective results adequacy of resource

supply to the production process has to be constantly maintained. Business educators and students should have access to ICT resources, have the knowledge and skills to use new digital tools and resources to help students achieve high quality standard.

5. Quality and Experience Instructors/facilitators

The teachers or instructors are the most important of all the inputs that go into the educational provision. This is because education of the high quality requires teachers of the highest quality. Unqualified and inexperienced facilitators are deficient in content and methodology and so cannot impart knowledge and skills. According to Ojo, (2006) education is power while the teacher is the dispenser of power education, as such, the teacher holds the secret to the power. Teachers with good qualification and experience dispense better.

6. Updating Teachers knowledge and skills

Business education centre majorly on knowledge competencies, attitudes and skills acquisition. It is then imperative that teachers knowledge, should be updated to be able to impart knowledge and skills to the learners, as this is one of the enhancing factors towards maintaining quality and sustainable standard. This would be achieved through capacity building of teachers in the areas of their deficiencies, such as content knowledge, methodology, instructional materials improvisation and utilization, ICT and continuous assessment. To this effect, Hallinger, (2014) defined teacher capacity building as the process of exposing individual teachers to training and re-training through workshops, seminars, leachiest and conferences to make them more confident, efficient and effective in carrying out their instructional duties.

Conclusion

Business education equips students and youths with knowledge and skills that will make them employable or self employed. This can only be achieved by ensuring standard in education. Sustainable development is a global goal which every nation strives to achieve. The study has shown that maintaining high quality assurance in business education is vital and inevitable for achieving sustainable development in Nigeria.

Recommendations

1. Business education curriculum should be continually reviewed, modified by curriculum planners to ensure that the content continues to be relevant, and address contemporary issues towards achieving sustainable development.
2. Government, institutions, management, teachers and other donor agencies should mobilize adequate funds to support, procure and maintain relevant business education resources.
3. Quality assurance and control units in educational system should be motivated to be more efficient in their duties.
4. Teachers and education facilitators should be encouraged to update their knowledge, competencies and skills in the area of ICT and others to keep pace with emerging technologies.

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