

Heightening Quality Assurance in University Education to Foster Sustainable Peace, Security and Economy Development in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Quality assurance is a cornerstone of university education, fostering an environment conducive to security, economic development, and sustainable peace. Universities play a critical role in shaping future leaders across various professions, with the quality of education significantly impacting graduates' competence, effectiveness, and employability. This paper highlights the pivotal role of enhanced quality assurance in promoting sustainable development. As a standard practice, quality assurance ensures the continuous improvement of university education, reflecting positively on its graduates. This impact is evident in industrial growth, improved infrastructure, job creation, and the provision of social services. Furthermore, the paper underscores the link between heightened quality assurance and the promotion of peace, security, and economic stability. It addresses challenges such as substandard facilities and regulatory inefficiencies, proposing actionable solutions. In conclusion, strengthening quality assurance systems in universities is both essential and achievable, with far-reaching benefits for individuals, communities, and states.

ARTICLE INFO

Article History
Received: October, 2023
Received in revised form: November, 2023
Accepted: November, 2024
Published online: December, 2024

KEYWORDS

Quality Assurance, University Education, Sustainable peace, Security, Economic Development

INTRODUCTION

University education quality assurance tends to focus on continuous improvement and accountability in universities, therefore placing a strong emphasis on proper resource allocation that aligns with strategic management and leadership. A well planned, structured and organized management system is essential for university education institutions to achieve operational and organizational excellence as mentioned by (Ganbaatar, 2024). He further emphasized that university education quality assurance is important in areas of planning and implementation. In order to give effective and high-quality educational programs to students, quality assurance in university education is essential as seen by (Kayyali, 2023). The university education demand is on the increase daily so there has to be an established strong processes and structures that preserve and improve the quality of education offered by institutions. The quality of educaton in which students receive on a daily bases can have a huge impact in these areas, in the case of inadequate quality assurance the necessary skills and competence will undermine sustainable peace. However, Akpan and Etor (2016) agreed that despite government efforts to enhance the university earning environment and the National universities commission (NUC) efforts to oversee and accredit academic programs, the quality of university education in Nigeria appears to continually decline as the years passed.

The objectives of this paper is to examine the problems that arise in situations of inadequate quality assurance in university education, and how quality assurance can be improved in university education There exist other works carried out on this topic but there is a gap in the students role in the quality process, as there is a disconnect between students and the institution, leading to a non-existent feedback on the educational program. This is why this work on heightening quality assurance in university education for sustainable peace, security and development in Nigeria is being carried out.

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Quality Assurance

Quality is the extent to which standards, specifications are met. In education it is the degree to which programs, institutions and services meet up with the set standards. Odukoye and Agude (2015) described quality as upholding an evolving product or service to an international acceptable standard so that customers received a comparable value for their money. An item of value can be said to have quality if it brings about satisfaction to its beneficiary. In the same vein, Omemu (2015) citing Aikweze in Ofor-Douglas (2023) is of the opinion that quality education is a corpus of highly valued knowledge that is also reflected in observable behaviour and performance of the educational systems products. This indicates that the effect of education is reflected in the performance of students who participated in it.

The products of the university are the direct reflection of the quality of education received. The quality of education students receive at the tertiary level (university education inclusive) is a reflection of the quality of graduatees in the labor market as highlighted by (Belash et al., 2015). Likewise Uysal (2015) says by measurering students or graduates' satisfaction. higher education institutions (university education inclusive) will be able to identify their weaknesses that might need improvement and build on their strengths. This goes to show that a good feedback mechanism should exist between the students and the institution to checkmate inconsistencies. Nevertheless Ozoemena (2016) noted that poor quality education which is synonymous to educational failures pose five threats to economic growth and global competitiveness, physical safety, intellectual property. In a related position a good tool for assessing quality enhancement in the university is the students' appraisal of academic programs which enable students gain good experience when allowed to participate in external evaluation panels and quality assurance process (Stukalina, 2014). Quality assurance is an organized, structured plan or framework that ensures educational processes, internal operations, outputs meet set standards and objectives. Quality assurance in university education is the various processes employed by the university to ensure that the different programs keep up and maintain

established standards of education. Internal quality assurance (self-analysis, quality plan, monitoring and evaluation, external assurance (bench marking, audit, accountability and finally continuous improvement are all part of the QA system in higher education institutions as observed by (Mahfoodh, 2013).

In the university quality assurance is employed for continuous improvement by curriculum design. evaluating competence, and forms of learning. Ayodele cited in Onaifoh and Ukponu (2014) stated that quality assurance entails the quality of teaching, personnel, quality of available instructional materials, equipment and facility, school environment and students, and quality of educational delivery. Besides quality assurance in education involves efficient management, monitoring, evaluation and review of the resources, inputs and transformation process (teaching and learning) to produce quality students that meet set standard and expectation of the society (Elujekwute et al., 2021). Institutions can aim to provide an education that satisfies the needs and expectations of students, stakeholders and society at large as described by (Kayyali, 2023). University will generally have a quality assurance management plan to ensure they follow the curriculum guidelines, help students flourish and deliver good-quality teaching and learning to satisfy inspection and also help university administrators in effective management and planning of the university system (Wread, 2020). On the other hand Ekpe (2018) mentioned that quality assurance is used to carry out quality management and a method to help make sure certain quality standards are fulfilled. Tavares et al. (2017) is of the opinion that the use of information systems driven by internal quality assurance has a beneficial effect on improving teaching and learning in the perception of academics.

In the university quality assurance is very essential for a number of reasons. Quality assurance aids in bridging the gap between academic and the workplace by making sure that university education programs are in line with the needs and expectations of the institution (Kayyali, 2023). Quality assurance encourages ongoing development, enabling institutions to remain responsive to changing



JOURNAL OF SCIENCE TECHNOLOGY AND EDUCATION 12(4), DECEMBER, 2024 ISSN: 2277-0011; Journal homepage: www.atbuftejoste.com.ng



educational trends and framework that support quality control in university education (Althachi et al., 2019). Dillaba (2018) is of the opinion that quality assurance in the university helps to provide organizations with a good source of external and internal accountability, allowing them to create a set of goals to work towards. This requires steps which include quality assurance, quality control and quality improvement. Quality assurance forms an important part to maintain a well-structured part of improvement and innovation, allows for adaptability and creates room for improvement and quality university system. The two parts make up an organized and thorough system (Edward, 2017). Quality assurance is an important tool for university education and other tertiary education, so as to achieve academic excellence. Implementing quality assurance practices to ensure the quality of academic programs meet both local and international standards is still considered a challenge, especially in developing countries as observed by (Kahsay, 2012; Schomaker, 2015). Notably, quality management is not a total solution because it lacks benchmarks to determine the quality of delivery and instructor and faculty engagement (Matters, 2014). Meanwhile African Virtual University (2012) suggested that the primary motivation for quality assurance in the university is "to ensure that institution effectively deliver education, training which are community services which are enriching of high quality and which produce socially useful and enriching knowledge as well as a relevant range of graduate skills and competencies necessary for social and economic progress" (Machumu & Kisanga., 2014). This implies that where a good quality assurance system exists the university will produce products to curb social and economic challenges. Additionally, quality assurance is important for an institution to produce quality outputs in achieving the national education standards (Fransiska, 2018; Yuliyati 2020; Suradnya, 2021).

University Education

University education is education that is characterized by advanced learning immediately after secondary education. This education focuses on teaching and learning, research and community development with

subsequent dissemination of information to the society which involves theoretical and practical learning. Ayim (2012) clearly stated that the university is a community of scholars and students engaged in a complex task to which humanity looks up for new knowledge, innovation, ideas and way forward for overall human progress. A university environment tends to sharpen the ideology of individuals with new found knowledge and existing ideas. There is need to re-tool, re-skill and re-equip the Nigerian youth with the right skills and competencies to enable them fit into the realities of the new economic challenges of the emerging world order concerned with unemployment creation (Abubakar Muhammed, 2024). In order for the Nigerian youth to be fully meet up the existing economic challenges they have to be full equipped with knowledge and skills to combat them. It is worthy to note that the educational system is a prominent system which is focused on training specialists who will be competitive in the global markerts (Grangvist & Gustaffso, 2016). Universities have the need to sustain its economic growth and seek competitive advantage in the globalized knowledge economy which will be supported by graduating highly skilled and knowledgeable workforce. Innovative and critical thinking graduates that will boost the economy of the country (Ansah, Swanzy & Nudzor, 2017). University education is meant to be responsive to societal needs through doing what universities are uniquely structured to do, such as general knowledge and provide impartation educational experiences and skills that prepare graduates to meet societal needs and realise a meaningful rewarding life Thompson (2014) stand to benefit from improved social welfare, reduced income inequality and increased economic competitiveness the on global (Kwiatowski et al., 2019).

University education is more than the next level in the learning process, it is a critical component of human development worldwide. It provides not only the high-level skills necessary for every labour market but also the training essential for teachers, doctors, nurses, civil servants, engineers, humanists, entrepreneurs, scientists, social scientists, and a myriad of other personnel. It is these trained individuals



JOURNAL OF SCIENCE TECHNOLOGY AND EDUCATION 12(4), DECEMBER, 2024 ISSN: 2277-0011; Journal homepage: www.atbuftejoste.com.ng



who develop the capacity and analytical skills that drive local economys and support civil society, teach children, lead effective government and make important decisions while affect entire societies (Ofor-Douglas,2020). Nations with a large number of well-educated workforce tend to experience a rise in economic growth and increased productivity (Lisai et al., 2019).

Sustainable Peace

Sustainable peace is long term absence of violence and harm and a continuous state of harmony and tranquility. It is characterized by an absence of violence, conflict, and oppression taking consideration equity, equality and absence of disparity and respect of human rights. This peace can exist between individuals. communities, countries and there is an establishment of social, political, and economic processes that can address the root causes of conflict. Peace building is basically about the process of attaining peace (Hancock, 2017). It can be said to resolve or transform conflict, one has to understand and address the feelings. issues, and relationships as well as the behaviour of people involved in the conflict (Omisore & Abiodun, 2014). Collectively, maintaining peace becomes an important thing to achieve (Jaiyesimi, 2016). Amadi (2017) rightly said that the productivity, standard and quality of the systems outputs decreased with the degree of crises, disturbances, and antagonism. Quality assurance greatly contributes to sustainable peace in cases where it exists in education and community programs there will be a binding trust between all parties involved which will in turn foster unity and togetherness. In the presence of effective quality assurance there will exist accountability, credibility and trust in the institution and this will enhance social cohesion and peace. Quality assurance is important for establishing clear standards and processes and as such there will be consistency in ensuring students get the best out of the educational program. This effective service delivery will result to a reduction of tension amongst individuals in the university community. In situations of conflict quality assurance can come into play to provide room for conflict resolution.

Economic development

Economic development development that can be seen in the well-being and quality of life of a country's economy. This can be seen in employment, job creation, social amenities and industry growth. In economic development, quality assurance ensures that there is even distribution of resources, standards are met which will lead to enhanced productivity and customer satisfaction. Quality assurance systems are known to maintain certain standards. A university that is equipped with a good quality assurance system will produce students with relevant employability skills to meet up the ever-growing demands of the job market. An institution with an effective quality assurance will elevate the reputation of the university and make it a beacon of learning. collaborative body both locally internationally.

Security

Security involves the protection of lives and property against threats. These threats can be in form of crime, economic instability in which case basic human rights and needs are not met. Where there is peace a sense of security tends to follow. Alemika (2015) upheld that security means protection from danger, violence, fear and want that impair, or capable of impairing the full development and existential well-being of citizens. In light of the above, Vegher (2013) noted that peace and security have universally been recognized as necessary conditions for development in any society. Quality assurance involves risk management and assessment. A good quality system will minimize losses in the case of security breaches thereby protecting lives and property. A well-known feature of quality assurance is continuous improvement in grey areas, this allows for adaptive and relevant security measures to be put in place against potential threats.

Issues

Quality assurance has its own fair share of issues concerning it's hindrance in fostering security, economic development and sustainable peace





Substandard Infrastructure

Substandard infrastructures refers to facilities, physical structures that do not meet expected specifications and standards. This refers to a situation whereby the facilities meant for teaching, hostel living and general activities of the universities are not provided or are not enough to accommodate members of the university (Ofor-Douglas, 2023). Hence, in different universities it can be seen in classroom facilities, students' accommodation. In Nigeria, a lot of universities lack the necessary physical, technological, human resource to support quality education. Insufficient public funding, which limits the capacity to provide proper facilities, research and teaching among other areas of education (Logli, 2016).

Regulatory Ineffectiveness

This is the failure of regulatory bodies to achieve intended goals, standards and objectives. There is a lack of transparency and accountability leading to a dilapidated quality assurance system. Most universities in Nigeria lack an effective monitoring/supervisory system thus things are not properly. Fadhli (2020) stated that a quality assurance system needs to be implemented so that educational institutions can know the current position of the institutions quality and for further improvement. Sadly enough, Otokune (2011) cited in Ofor-Douglas (2023) is of the opinion that poor quality of graduates is due also to failure of university supervisory agencies. For instance unqualified staff and irresponsible students misbehave because they are not being effectively supervised by efficient supervisory agents and this would lead to a total breakdown of law and order within the university. To a large extent, educational policies and their implementations determines how the needs of the contemporary society are met (Ernest-Ekwe & Emerengwa, 2023).

Economic Instability

Instability economically is a situation where there is an experience of fluctuations, uncertainty in a country's economy. This is characterized by high inflation rates, currency devaluation, and unemployment. This is exactly the situation that is been faced by Nigeria today. There should be need for the government to

employ young university graduates into the labour market in various skilled areas and prevent them from roaming the street. These young graduates may be productive, but the government is busy carting away funds meant for investment outside the country, hence the high level of insecurity in the nation due to inadequate jobs to engage the teeming young youths as highlighted by (Amesi & Obi, 2023). Ofor-Douglas (2022) further expressed that the university is responsible for producing members of the workforce who would contribute to the growth of the nation's economy. Thus, the quality of a nation's university education would determine whether or not her economy will grow.

Insufficient Training and Retraining

This refers to the absence of adequate training programs, seminars. workshops to engage lecturers and students to acquire new knowledge. This is relatively bad as they lack the skills and training in quality assurance processes. This is founded on the belief that with acquisition of relevant skills, mindset competence, and knowledge complemented with sustainable practical knowledge/exposure. students. nogu graduation are more likely to become selfemployed and employers of labour (Chinonso, 2022). Based on the above Jones (2019). emphasized that manpower development of academic staff in universities should be geared towards acquiring or sharpening the capabilities of lecturers required to enhance their productivity. Having observed this ugly situation Dincer (2019) opined that continuous training to upgrade teaching skills of those in the university is very paramount. Vijeyaluxmy (2015) on the other hand asserted that continuous training is an essential factor that enhances positive attitude in service delivery. Universities are also in constant flux and there are willing and unwilling lecturers to be trained and retrained on regular basis (Johnson, 2016).

Insufficient Funding

Insufficient funding is the shortage of financial resources. In quality assurance this can discourage an effective quality system through compromise on its quality. Funding is an integral part of any system. In quality assurance adequate funding is important for promoting

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sustainable peace, economic development and security. Inadequate funding is a hindrance to quality assurance thereby inviting activities in infrastructure, resource allocation. This deficiency compromises educational quality, hindering service quality, organizational productivity and performance (Igbal et al 2024; Igbal et al 2023a; Igbal et al 2023b; Igbal et al 2023c).

CONCLUSION

The goal of the university is to graduate students who will be useful and impact positively to the growth and development of the country. Heightening quality assurance in university education to foster sustainable development, peace and security in Nigeria is not merely an institutional or individual job as it concerns members of the society. A consistent quality assurance process will enable a stabilized economy, promotes sustainable peace and security. A society that is educated on proper quality assurance process will ensure that individuals are aligned with contemporary societal needs and expectations. In other for quality education to be achievable quality assurance is paramount. This is to achieve high quality educational programs.

SUGGESTIONS

- Funding and investment from the government, private individuals and organizations for the day to day running of the university which ensures infrastructural, learning materials are in good shape and available when needed.
- Accreditation bodies should ensure they keep to standard and hold institutions accountable for their actions in order to enhance educational quality of the graduants.
- Economic conditions should be addressed to prevent encroachment in a university environment.
- Lecturers should be encouraged to attend workshops, seminars and conference. Continuous development programs should be put in place to ensure staff acquire and understand quality assurance processes.
- Funding issues can be curbed by a collaboration between the university and the government, organizations by careful

allocation and utilization of financial resources.

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