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Research Paper

BUSINESS EDUCATORS' RATINGS OF STRATEGIES CONSIDERED EFFECTIVE FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN BUSINESS EDUCATION PROGRAMME IN UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTH EAST NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT **The study determined the business educators' ratings of strategies considered effective for quality assurance in business education programme in universities in South East**

n South East Nigeria. Two research questions guided the study and four null hypotheses tested at 0.05 level of significance. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population for the study consists of 75 business educators in federal and state universities in South-East Nigeria offering business education programme. The entire population of seventy-five business educators in the seven universities in South-East Nigeria offering business education programme was used due to the manageable size. Data were collected using questionnaire developed by the researcher titled "Questionnaire on Business Educators Ratings of Strategies Considered Effective for Quality Assurance in Business Education Programme (QBERSCEQABEP)". The instrument was validated by three business education and measurement and evaluation experts. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha which yielded an overall correlation co-efficient of 0.84. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while independence sample t-test was used to test the hypotheses. The findings revealed amongst others that infrastructural facilities evaluation strategy for quality assurance in business education programme is lowly effective, while the professional development training and regular accreditation visitation are highly effective strategies for quality assurance in business education programme in Universities. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that university managements should demonstrate compliance to NCCE guidelines by setting up Quality Assurance Units (QAU) and Quality Assurance Commission (QAC) in their institutions to ensure regular organization of workshops and seminars to further enhance professional development and training of business educators for efficiency and productivity of educational programme.

KEYWORDS :Business Educators, Strategies, Quality Assurance, Business Education

INTRODUCTION

. Introduction

Education is viewed as an instrument for national development and social change. It is the fundamental instrument of economic growth expansion, and technological progression of any society (Ogunlusi, 2015). In Nigeria, education has been regarded as the single most important industry for the production of high level manpower and human capital of the entire society. The National Policy on Education (NPE, 2013) stated that Nigerian education is aimed at providing education that is qualitative, comprehensive, functional and relevant to the needs of the society. This calls for quality education at all levels in the country to meet the aspirations of individuals and the society, especially in this era of knowledge-driven society and global competiveness.

In this 21st century global competitiveness, Adegbasan (2011) stressed that education today must have the effect of making it possible for a country to have a steady supply of highly

creative citizens who can help to improve the living conditions of the general citizenry, and also to solve the existing problems that are encountered from time to time. Education aims at raising the intellectual capacity of the society, broadening public mind and providing all round development of human nature so that people are able to use their talents to optimize their potentials. Thus, Adegbasan (2011) affirmed that education of which business education is a part is an upward key to building human capital and securing their future as quality citizens.

Business education is that part of the total education process that provides the

knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes needed to perform in the business world as a producer and/or consumer. Okoro (2012) opined that Business Education is a programme of vocational training designed to equip students with the knowledge, skills and attitude that are essential for gainful employment so that the students may learn to live as useful and acceptable members of their communities. Business education exposes the students to various careers in life after the completion of the programme of the study (Esene, 2012). Operationally, Business Education is the education that makes business education students to know skills, understand and modify their attitudes so as to do whatever is needed to be done in business transactions and situations.

Business Education includes education for office occupation, distribution and marketing occupation, business, teaching, administration and economic understanding.

Business Education as a course is offered in secondary school as business studies. Subjects such as book-keeping, commerce, office practice, shorthand, and typewriting as taught as business studies in junior secondary schools. In colleges of education and universities, accounting and management, marketing and secretarial studies are the major options of specialization (Odunaike, Ijaduola & Epetimehin, 2012).

Sequel to this, Business education plays a significant role in economic development by providing knowledge and skills to the learners. It enables teachers to adequately impart knowledge into others, so as to handle sophisticated office technologies and information systems. The goal of business education is primarily to produce competent, skilful and dynamic business teachers, office administrators and businessmen and women that will effectively compete in the world of work (Odunaike & Amoda 2008). Business Education was introduced in Nigerian schools with the hope that it will provide the students with appropriate skills for employment, abilities and competencies that will enable them after graduation to be self-employed.

Unfortunately, many graduates of business education are not self-employed and those

of them that set up their own businesses came out with failure (Okoro, 2013). In the same vein, Odesanya (2012) also revealed that there are inadequate instructional facilities, low interest of students in business education, facilities not regularly maintained, dearth of qualified teachers in business education. Nwafor (2003) emphasized on the dearth of physical facilities in the teaching of business education. It is believed that periodic appraisal of public higher institutions is the best way to reposition and transform them (NPE, 2013). Therefore, for the goal of business education programme to be achieved, there is need to ensure quality and sustainable standards in the education system.

Quality assurance in the educational system refers to the qualities of teaching personnel, instructional/teaching materials, equipment and facilities, school environment and pupils/students that are produced through excellent instructional delivery (Ofejebe & Ezeugo,

2010). Quality assurance embraces all functions and activities in the system and the curriculum, their implementation and their products. Achieving the best goals of education at

all times demands that quality assurance should be given optimum attention. Quality assurance

at the university level includes determination of standards, appropriate methods and quality

requirements designed by the supervising agency- the National University Commission

NUC). The NUC ensures continuous processes of inspection and evaluation that determines the extent to which practices meet standards.

Nnorom and Gaius-Oke (2013) identified some measuring criteria for quality assurance in business education at all levels which are quality of resource inputs, quality of outputs, quality of processes and quality of contents. In order to ensure quality in business education, the right quantity and quality in every factor that is utilized in the teaching and learning process must be adequate. Employing the right quality for teaching and learning process requires the use of strategy. Therefore, strategy is the mechanism put in place to maintain the degree o f quality or excellence of a product or service.

As it applies to quality assurance in education, strategy is the mechanism by which an educational system ensures that the services it delivers or intends to deliver serve the purpose for which it is intended and remains relevant and appropriate to the needs of the society. Strategy involves series of operational techniques and activities which include all actions taken for requirements of quality to be met (Shaw, 2012). Olufunwa, Olorunmolu and Waziri (2013) noted that if institutions that have the business education programme must achieve their goals, they must put in place quality- enhancing strategies that will ensure the production of quality graduates for national development.

Sequel to this, the following criteria towards quality assurance in tertiary education includes accreditation of programmes and courses in higher institutions, institutional ranking of undergraduate and postgraduate courses and programmes, monitoring, assessment/evaluation of the existing staff strength, students and facilities, prescribing the benchmarks and periodic review and production of documents on minimum standards, external moderation system capacity building for teaching and non-teaching and non –teaching personnel, exchange programme for teaching personnel and students, post-universities, polytechnics, monotechnics and colleges of education examination (UME, PCE/M Examinations) (Federal Ministry of Education (FME) 2010).

In the views of Okoro (2015) and Nnorom and Gaius-oke (2013), the following strategies for enhancing quality assurance in business education were identified: adequate

funding, high quality of syllabus and curriculum, development and training of teachers, effective monitoring and evaluation, accreditation council, instructional supervision, availability of infrastructural facilities, review of programmes. Others are: meeting up with minimum academic standards, recruitment of quality staff, use of quality course materials, effective assessment and development of staff ,standardization of requirements for intake of quality students, research and development, publications and research assessment. To establish and maintain high quality standards, universities have a shared responsibility in addressing some key strategies- infrastructural facilities, professional development training, instructional supervision and accreditation visit towards ensuring quality of business education programme in universities in South- East Nigeria (Okoro, 2015). For the purpose of this study, the following strategies were put into consideration: infrastructural facilities and professional development training

Infrastructural facility is one important strategy for maintaining high quality standards in universities. This includes adequate provision of facilities in terms of space, workshops, laboratories, instructional materials and modern equipment to ensure quality teaching and learning. Professional development training strategy involves training and development of teachers on regular research workshops, field trips, seminars and conferences for efficiency and productivity of educational programmes.

Despite the overaching significance of these strategies for quality education in business education programme, Okoro (2015) noted that a combination of infrastructural and manpower challenge is responsible for the sharp decline in the quality of Nigerian university graduates. Okoro further averred that there are currently debilitating skills and competency gaps in the nation's education sector. This is why Anioke (2011) noted that most Nigerian schools lack modern teaching facilities, laboratories, workshops and instructional facilities to impart the knowledge and skills needed to maintain quality education in the school system. Anioke emphasized that even when those facilities are available, it is either they are not enough for the learners or they are too obsolete to stand the test of time. This can negatively affect students in the process of acquiring the necessary skills and knowledge for graduate successful employment.

In the opinion of Okoro (2015), institutions offering business education have found themselves lagging behind in the realization of its objectives due to inherent poor delivery

system. Products of the programme are ill equipped and short of the necessary and needed ingredients for self-realization. Okoro further revealed lack of modern infrastructure, scarcity of teaching materials and inadequate research equipment in Nigerian educational institutions. It was noted also that staff-student ratios are high; hence

graduates were having low level of competencies in their work environments. This current situation in Nigeria indicate setback in the quality of university education which is the most essential level in developing manpower and human capital (Anioke, 2011). In turn, there are some factors which could make or mar the view of business educators on strategies adopted for quality assurance in business education programmes. Such factors any include gender and ownership of institutions.

Gender can be an influencing factor on the opinion of business educators on the

strategies adopted for quality assurance of business education programmes. Gender according to Ozioko (2015) is the varied socially and culturally constructed roles, qualities, and behaviours that are ascribed to women and men of different societies. It is important to note that the opinion of male business educators may differ from their female counterpart regarding strategies adopted for quality assurance of business education programme.

In addition, ownership of institution can also influence business educators' opinions regarding strategies considered effective for quality assurance of business education programme. This can be due to difference in budget allocation of funds by the government to universities. This is buttressed by NUC in Sani (2015) that the statistics of budget allocation differ between federal, state, and private higher education institutions, hence the need to introduce these variables in the study. Since business educators' plays important roles in ensuring quality of business education programme in Nigerian universities, it becomes imperative to determine business educators' ratings of strategies considered effective for quality assurance in business education programme in universities in South East, Nigeria.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Quality assurance in Nigeria educational system is an issue that gives educators serious concern. Inability to attain quality in education in Nigerian universities, which seems to result from ineffective and inefficient delivery system, has been the bane of the education programme in Nigeria. Institutions offering business education have found themselves lagging behind in

the realization of set objectives due to inherent poor delivery systems. Reports from past literatures revealed that various institutions affirmed that infrastructures in some universities have glorified classrooms as some students sit under tree due to insufficient classroom; teachers and support staff offices are insufficient thus making it difficult for lecturers to attend to students' needs appropriately.

These problems tallied with the researcher's personal observations that institutions that

offer business education in South East Nigeria lack modern business education books and

journals in libraries as well as essential apparati for carrying out practical works in the laboratories. Lecturers are not sufficient in their right qualities and numbers, there is also limited funding for research. The researcher's observation also shows that during NUC accreditation programme, business education in some institutions hire some equipment, books, journals and even professionals/competent business educators so as to pass the accreditation process.

Preliminary investigations gathered also revealed that the agitation for quality

assurance in most tertiary institutions in Nigeria and South East of Nigeria inclusive has led to continuous strike by teaching staff for many years. The last industrial action embarked by ASUU lasted for nine months (March, 2020 – January, 2021). Not only has this strike period affected the quality of graduates as a whole but also graduates of business education. Institutions that offer business education lack modern business education books and journals in libraries as well as essential apparatus for carrying out technical practice in laboratories. Lecturers are not sufficient in their right qualities and numbers, there is also limited funding for research. this is the worry that informed this study.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to determine the business educators' ratings of

strategies considered effective for quality assurance in business education programme in universities in South East Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to determine business educators' ratings of:

1. infrastructural facilities evaluation as an effective strategy for quality assurance in business education programme in universities in south-east Nigeria
2. professional development training as an effective strategy for quality assurance in business education programme in universities in south-east Nigeria.

1.3 Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study.

1. What are business educators' ratings of infrastructural facilities evaluation as an effective

strategy for quality assurance in business education programme in universities in south-east

Nigeria?

2. What are business educators' ratings of professional development training as an effective strategy for quality assurance in business education programme in universities in south-east Nigeria?

1.4 Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses will be tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male

and female business educators on infrastructural facilities evaluation as an effective strategy for quality assurance in business education programme in universities in south-east Nigeria.

2. Business educators in federal and state owned universities in south-east Nigeria do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on infrastructural facilities evaluation as an effective strategy for quality assurance in business education programme in universities.
3. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female business educators on professional development training as an effective strategy for quality

assurance in business education programme in universities in south-east Nigeria .

4. Business educators in federal and state owned universities in south-east Nigeria do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on professional development training as an effective strategy for quality assurance in business education programme in universities.
5. **Methods**

Descriptive survey research design was used for the study. This study was carried out in the South-Eastern geo-political zone of Nigeria. The population for the study consists of 75 business educators made up of 26 male and 49 female in seven federal and state universities in South-East Nigeria offering business education programme. The entire population of 75 business educators in the seven universities in South East Nigeria offering business education programme was used as sample for this study. Therefore, there is no sampling for the study since the population is of a manageable number.

A structured questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on Business Educators Ratings of Strategies Considered Effective for Quality Assurance in Business Education Programme" (QBERSCEQABEP) which was developed by the researcher with insight for the literature was

used for the study. The instrument consists of two sections A and B. Section A contains two items on demographical data of respondents while section B contains 17 items in four clusters (sections B1-B2) according to the research questions. Section B1 was based on a 5-point rating scale of Very Highly Effective (VHE), Highly Effective (HE), Moderately Effective (ME). The instrument was face validated by three experts made up of two experts from business education in the Department of Technology and Vocational Education and one expert in measurement and evaluation, Department of Educational Foundations, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The experts corrected the response options for section B1-B2, cancelled some items in the sections and corrected the format. The inputs of the experts were incorporated in the final copy of the instrument used for the study. The reliability of the instrument was determined through a trial testing. Copies of the instrument were administered to 10 lecturers of business education department from Delta State University, Abraka who were not part of the study population. The data collected were analyzed using Cronbach Coefficient Alpha to measure the internal consistency of the instrument which yielded coefficient values of 0.89 and 0.78 for B 1 and 2 with overall coefficient of 0.84.

The instrument was administered personally by researcher with the help of six research assistants (who are business educators in the seven Federal and State Universities) who briefed on the procedure to follow in the distribution and collection of its questionnaire. Descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation was used to analyze data to answer the research questions and determine the closeness of the respondents' mean. Decisions for the research questions were based on the real limits of numbers as shown below:

Responses	**Codes**	**Rating**	**Boundary Limits**
Very Highly Effective	(VHE)	5	4. 50-5.00
Highly Effective	(HE)	4	3. 50-4.49
Moderately Effective	(ME)	3	2. 50-3.49
Lowly Effective	(LE)	2	1. 50-2.49
Not Effective	(NE)	1	0. 50-1.49

Inferential statistics of t-test was employed in testing the formulated hypotheses at 0.05

level of significance; the t-test statistical tool is used to determine whether there are

significance differences in the mean of the two groups of the respondents; (Male and Female) and (Federal and State owned institutions). This was done with the aids of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.0 software packages. In testing the null hypotheses, when the p-value is less than or equal to alpha level of 0.05 ($p \leq 0.05$), the null hypothesis will be rejected. On the other hand, when the p-value is greater than the alpha level of 0.05 ($p \geq$

0.05), the null hypothesis will not be rejected. That is the accept reject criterion was based on the p-value, alternative hypothesis will be accepted.

Results

Research Question 1: What are business educators' ratings of infrastructural facilities evaluation as an effective strategy for quality assurance in business education programme in universities in south-east Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation scores of respondents' ratings on infrastructural
facilities evaluation as an effective strategy for quality assurance in business education programme

Data presented in Table 1 shows the item by item analysis of infrastructural facilities evaluation as an effective strategy for quality assurance in business education programme in universities in south-east Nigeria. The result revealed that items 2, 3, 4, 6, and 9 with scores of

1.52, 1.59, 1.61, 1.77, and 1.61 respectively were rated lowly effective, items 1, 5, and 8 with mean scores of 2.51, 2.59 and 2.72 respectively were rated moderately effective. Also, item 7

with mean score of 3.64 indicates that the respondents rated the item highly effective. The cluster mean of 2.17 summarizes the infrastructural facilities evaluation strategy for quality assurance in business education programme is lowly effective. The standard deviation scores ranging from 0.87 – 1.27 means that the mean scores of the respondents are not widely spread apart.

Research Question 2: What are business educators' ratings of professional development training as an effective strategy for quality assurance in business education programme in universities in south-

east Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation scores of respondents' ratings on professional development training as a effective strategy for quality assurance in business education programme

Data presented in Table 2 the item by item analysis of professional development training as an effective strategy for quality assurance in business education programme in universities in south-east Nigeria. The result revealed that items 14 and 15 with mean scores of 1.59 and 2.39 respectively indicates that these items were rated lowly effective. Also, items

10, 11, 12, 13, 16, and 17 with mean scores of 4.14, 4.29, 4.25, 4.02, 3.85 and 3.92 respectively indicates that the items were rated highly effective. The cluster mean of 3.56

summarily means that professional development training strategy for quality assurance in business education programme in universities is highly effective. The standard deviation scores ranging from 0.83-1.09 means that the mean scores of the respondents are not widely spread apart.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female business educators on infrastructural facilities evaluation as an effective strategy for quality assurance in business education programme in universities in south-east Nigeria.

Table 3: t-Test analysis of the significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female business educators on infrastructural facilities evaluation as an effective strategy for quality assurance in business education programme

ariables			**S**	**t**	**f**	**-value**	**-level**	
	26	33.23	3.858	.252				
					72	0.802	0.05	
Fe	48	33.47	4.346	.243				Significant

From the above table 3, the mean for male is 33.23 while that of female is 33.47. In this case the mean of female is higher than that of male. Looking at the confidence interval of the difference, male has lower value of 2.22 and 1.72 upper value, while the female has 2.30 and

1.81 respectively.

On the other hand, the sig (p-value) is 0.802 with 72 degree of freedom and a-level of

0.05 (0.802 > 0.05), with t-value less than 2 . We therefore accept the null hypotheses which stated that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female business educators on infrastructural facilities evaluation as an effective strategy for quality

assurance in business education programme in universities in south-east Nigeria.

Hypothesis 2: Business educators in federal and state owned universities in south-east Nigeria do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on infrastructural facilities evaluation as an effective strategy for quality assurance in business education programme in universities.

Table 4: t-Test analysis of the significant difference in the mean ratings of business educators on infrastructural facilities evaluation as an effective strategy for quality assurance in business education programme in federal and state owned universities

Variables	**N**	**X**	**SD**	**t**	**Df**	**p-value**	**a-level Remark**
Federal	41	33.83	4.15	1.04			
					72	0.000	0.05
Significant							
State	33	32.85	3.86	1.05			

From the above table 6, the mean of federal owned institutions is 30.32 while that of state owned institution is 30.21. In this case the mean of federal owned institutions is higher than that of the state. Looking at the confidence interval of the difference, federal owned institutions has lower value of 1.73 and1.94 upper value, while the state owned institutions has

1.70 and 1.91 respectively.

On the other hand, the sig (p-value) of the federal and state owned institutions are

0.908 with 72 degree of freedom and is higher than 0.05 a-level (0.908 > 0.05) with t-value less than 2. We therefore accept the null hypotheses, which stated that business educators in federal and state owned universities in south-east Nigeria do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on professional development training as an effective strategy for quality assurance in business education programme in universities.

4. **Discussion of Findings**

The finding in research question one revealed that infrastructural facilities evaluation strategy for quality assurance in business programme is lowly effective. This finding agreed

with the finding of Okoro (2015) that the use of strategies such as quality research and publications, quality curriculum, quality text books, discipline of teachers, quality infrastructure, and quality teaching facilities among others were lowly utilized for enhancing quality assurance in Business Teacher Education in Nigerian universities. On the other hand, this finding opposed the finding of Okoro (2015) that total quality management is moderately applied in business education. Although total quality management principles are emphasized, there are still inadequate instructional facilities, inadequate lecturers, inadequate lecture halls/classrooms among others. And this is due to current economic situation leading to poor funding and inadequate provision of the facilities.

The finding in hypothesis one revealed that there is no significant difference between male and female business educators on infrastructural facilities evaluation as an effective strategy for quality assurance in business education programme in universities in South East Nigeria. This finding opposed the finding Okoro (2013) that there is a significant difference in

the mean ratings of male and female business educators on instructional facilities as quality management of business education programme in college of education in south-east Nigeria. The difference between both findings could be respondents difference in terms of geographical locations and ownership of the institution.

The finding in hypothesis two revealed that business educators in federal and state

owned universities in south-east Nigeria differ significantly in their mean ratings on infrastructural facilities evaluation as an effective strategy for quality assurance in business education programme in universities. This finding was in line with the finding of Okoro (2015) that business teacher education does not differ significantly in their ratings of infrastructural facilities as strategies for enhancing quality assurance in federal and state owned universities in south –south Nigeria.

The finding in research question two revealed that professional development training strategy for quality assurance in business education programme in universities is highly effective. This is why Vesna and Jasna (2015) believed that continuous professional

development has the strongest impact on self-evaluation. This finding agreed with the finding

of Okoye and Ashibogwu (2018) that business educators considered moderation of examination results and proper in-service training given to career academic as effective strategies for quality assurance in business education programme.

The finding in hypothesis three revealed that there is no significant difference between male and female business educators on professional development training as an effective

strategy for quality assurance in business education programme in universities in South South Nigeria. This finding agreed with the finding of Okoye and Ashibogwu (2018) that there is no significant difference between male and female business educators on in-service training as a strategy for quality assurance in business education programme in universities in south-south Nigeria.

The finding in hypothesis four also revealed that business educators in federal and state owned universities in south-east Nigeria do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on professional development programme in universities. This finding agreed with the finding of Okoye and Ashibogwu (2018) that business educators in federal and state owned universities in south-south Nigeria do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on professional development training as an effective strategy for quality assurance in business education programme in universities.

CONCLUSION

Quality assurance is very important in ensuring that business education programme meet its mandate of producing quality graduates that will meet the needs of the labour market. However, the current situation in Nigeria indicates setback in the quality of university education. It is saddening to note that many of the indices that can guarantee quality assurance in university business education programmes are not taken into consideration in the nation to make university education teaching and learning process effective and efficient. To achieve quality standard especially in Nigeria universities requires the use of appropriate strategies which the study reveals that infrastructural facilities evaluation and professional development training by the school administrators are necessary and effective for quality assurance. Based on this, it is therefore concluded that application of appropriate strategies is necessary for quality assurance to be guaranteed in university business education programme in South East Nigeria.

Plan

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