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QUALITY ASSURANCE AS A TOOL FOR STANDARDIZING BUSINESS EDUCATION PROGRAMME IN UNIVERSITY OF ILORIN, ILORIN, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study is aimed at investigating the relationship between the quality assurance tool and standardization of business education in University of Ilorin, Kwara State. The study was guided by three research questions, and three hypotheses. Questionnaire on Quality Assurance, (QAQ) was designed and administered. Data were gathered from the university students of levels 100 – 400 and from the lecturers of business education. Sample size of 250 was selected from the entire population of 638 students and 22 lecturers. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics for the research questions and Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

The findings of this study revealed that there was a positive relationship between various quality assurance tools and the standardization of business education, that curriculum structure can serve as a tool for standardization of business education, that school infrastructure can serve as a tool for standardization of business education, and finally that industrial training can serve as a tool for standardization of business education.

The study concluded that Business education students can get the best of programmes only when the university is very much mindful of the quality of the infrastructures and lecturers deployed for business education in the University under study.

Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended that lecturers should properly implement the curriculum contents so as to enhance standardization of business education programme.

Key words: Standardization, business education, quality assurance, industrial training

Introduction

Business Education is a type of education that assists individual to acquire skills that are relevant for self-employment and which they can apply to solve problems in business and office occupations (Adams, 2014). Ntukidem (2012) is of the same view when he asserted that Business Education has a definite role in preparing and equipping students with skills that increase their chances of finding jobs across territorial boundaries after schooling.

Business Education is offered in tertiary institutions while in secondary schools it is offered as Business Studies. At the tertiary level, Business Education is offered in colleges of education and universities. Courses are taught in Accounting, Management, Office Technology and management (OTM) and marketing. Students are expected to have relevant skills, knowledge and attitude to enable them perform effectively in their private businesses and public offices. Olufunwa, Waziri and Olorunmolu (2013) are of the opinion 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.

Standardization is described as the process of complying or evaluating by comparing with a standard. It is also the process of establishing a standard. Regarding education about standardization, UNECE complements the activities of various national standardization bodies and regional and international organizations by promoting international cooperation, raising public awareness, and developing training materials, with an emphasis on the multi-disciplinary character of standards and their value for professionals of non-technical disciplines. Standardization as a process of ensuring the quality of education provision is a fundamental aspect of gaining and maintaining credibility for programmes, institutions and national systems of higher education worldwide.

It is noted that business education and skills development for industry has been explosively developed and played an instrumental role in boosting economies worldwide. According to Van de Lagemaat (1986, p. 28), business education has a twofold purpose: disclosing the subject matter for students, and disclosing students for the subject matter. Applied to standardisation education, the purpose of standardisation education is to disclose the standardisation phenomenon in such a way that students can understand it and to act with students in a way that they get accustomed with standardisation, get knowledge about it and are equipped for using this knowledge in standardisation practice.

Therefore, quality assurance refers to the planned and systematic activities implemented in a quality system so that quality requirement for a product or service will be fulfilled. It is the systematic measurement, comparison with a standard

monitoring of process and an associated feedback that confers error prevention (Chibuike, 2013). This can be contrasted with quality control which is focused on process outputs whose principles include fit for purpose. The product should be suitable for the intended purpose and right; first time mistake should be eliminated (Dhaka, 2011). Nnorom and Gaius-Oke (2013) have identified some measuring criteria for quality assurance in Business Education: quality of resource input, quality of output, quality of process and quality of content. The inability of schools to acquire relevant teaching materials together with the present emphasis on electronic driven method of teaching have generally posed a threat to quality education in our school system.

Statement of the Problem

Considering the fact that graduates of Business Education programme in tertiary institutions have been viewed as not performing up to expectation in recent times, questions have been asked as to what factors are responsible for this especially in University of Ilorin. Inability to attain quality assurance in Business Education in Nigerian Universities, most especially, in University of Ilorin which seems to result from ineffective and inefficient delivery system, has been the bane of the education programme in Nigeria and other developing countries. Institutions offering Business Education have found themselves lagging behind in the realization of its objectives due to inherent poor delivery system, insufficiency of qualified resource personnel, the products of the programme are ill-equipped and short of the necessary and needed ingredients for self-reliance. As a result, the society has been denied the much desired benefit of the programme as the products cannot contribute adequately and meaningfully to the economic and social growth of the society.

The problem of the study, put in question form is therefore, how quality assurance can be used as a tool for standardizing business education programme in University of Ilorin?

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to investigate can quality assurance be used as a tool for standardizing business education programme in University of Ilorin. Specifically, the study intends to investigate: How the curriculum structure can be used as a tool for standardizing business education programme in University of Ilorin, how the level of school infrastructure can be used as a tool for standardizing Business Education programme in University of Ilorin and finally, how the system of industrial training can be used as a tool for standardizing Business Education programme in University of Ilorin.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study.

1. To what extent can curriculum structure serve as a tool for standardizing Business Education programme in University of Ilorin?
2. To what extent can the level of school infrastructure serve as a tool for standardizing Business Education programme in University of Ilorin?
3. To what extent can the system of industrial training serve as a tool for standardizing Business Education programme in University of Ilorin?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses guided the study.

H₀₁ There is no significant relationship between curriculum structure and standardization of Business Education programme of University of Ilorin.

H₀₂ There is no significant relationship between school infrastructure and standardization of Business Education programme of University of Ilorin.

H₀₃ There is no significant relationship between system of industrial training and standardization of Business Education programme of University of Ilorin.

Review of related literature

Quality assurance is way of preventing error or mistake and defects in manufactured products and avoiding any problems at the delivery of such products or services to the customer. It is also a part of quality management which focus on providing confidence that quality requirement will be fulfilled. Quality is the totality of features and characteristics of a product that bears on its ability to satisfy the stated or implied needs.

Quality assurance refers to all systematic and planned actions which are necessary to provide adequate confidence that a product or service will satisfy the given requirement for quality. As a matter of fact, programme of Education in Nigeria is expected to be given priority at all levels so as to produce qualified individuals who will give back the quality required to the society. Olowookere (2019).

Quality assurance in education aims at preventing quality problems and ensuring that the products of the system conform to standards (Harman 2002 cited by Abdulkareem, Fasasi and Oyeniran (2012). However, quality of education is of great concern in Nigeria. There is a growing recognition of the potentially powerful role of tertiary education for national growth and it is a natural response to public perception that educational quality is being compromised in the effort to expand enrolment in recent years. The following areas are necessary for quality to be maintained in the system, these are, supervision, curriculum structure, industrial training, school infrastructure, teaching methodology and instructional resource usage.

Quality assurance has been defined as the systematic management and assessment procedures adopted by higher institutions of learning and systems in order to monitor performance against objectives, and to ensure achievement of quality outputs and quality improvement (Harman, 2000). Quality assurance clearly emerged as a principal business method in the Western world throughout the 1950s and in the early 1960s. The topic of quality assurance has always been of utmost importance, originally, in business but now also in education and other public service sectors. Quality assurance is designed to prove and improve the quality of an institutions methods, and educational products and outcomes. Oyebede, Oladipo & Adetoro (2008); Zolovys (2004) perceived that the concept of quality has been one of the most important concepts in contemporary educational terminology. Quality remains the most important attribute that creates value about a product or service for the receiver.

The need for quality teaching and learning in higher education has been felt all over the world. The NUC Act of (2004) brought with it increasing concerns about how universities perform and the quality and services they provide. Chacha (2004) observed that globally, the environment of higher education is facing relentless and rapid change. .

The yardsticks for measuring quality assurance according to Okoro (2015) includes curriculum structure, school infrastructure, industrial training, level of job performance of graduates, teaching methodology ability to set up business without failure, teaching facilities, ability to cope with modern technology, availability of funds, availability of qualified lecturers amongst others.

Business education is one of the occupational areas that are richly provided by vocational and technical education in Nigeria. Business education refers to a programme of instruction that offers various skills in accounting, marketing and Office Technology and Management (OTM). Major topics include: office practice, book keeping, business mathematics, business communication, secretarial duties, word processing, advertising (Ajisafe, Bolarinwa & Edeh, 2015). Edokpolor and Egbri (2017) had stipulated that the actual goals of business education shall be to:

1. Prepare students for specific career in office occupations;
2. Equip students with the requisite skills for job creation and entrepreneurship; and
3. Expose students to knowledge about business, including a good blend of computer technology, which incorporates Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

They further explained that the first two goals involve education 'for' business, which is aimed at equipping recipients with the requisite attributes (knowledge, skills, competencies, and attitudes) to become gainfully employed in the world of work, whereas the later addresses education 'about' business, which is aimed at providing a

sound basis for further studies at the graduate and post-graduate levels. Some contemporary thinkers in education and training conceive of business education as a major contributor to human resource, entrepreneurial and national development. Despite these laudable roles, available indications have shown that Nigeria have been handling business education with levity (Oladunjoye,2016)

Methodology

Research Design

The research design that was adopted for this study is a descriptive survey. A descriptive survey approach is considered appropriate for the study since the researcher was interested in collecting information from a representative sample of business education students and lecturers of University of Ilorin on quality assurance as a tool for standardising Business Education programme.

Population, Sample and Techniques

The population for this study would be limited to University of Ilorin, and the target population comprises of both lecturers and students in the Department of Educational Management while the sample for the study comprises of students offering Business Education as a course at the undergraduate level in University of Ilorin. This consists of 638 students of 100 Level to 400 Level offering Business Education as a course in University of Ilorin.

The random sampling technique was used in selecting respondents for the study from each level to make a total number of 250 respondents in all, while purposive sampling technique was used in selecting lecturers from the department.

Instrumentation

A researcher designed questionnaire titled 'Quality Assurance questionnaire (QAQ) was used in collecting data for this study.

Method of Data Analysis

The collected data was analyzed using descriptive statistics for the research questions and Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Data analysis and interpretation

Research question one: To what extent can curriculum structure serve as a tool for standardizing Business Education programme in University of Ilorin?

Table 5: The extent curriculum structure can serve as a tool for standardization of business education

S/N	ITEMS	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
1.	Business Education programme needs inclusion of vocational skill acquisition in its curriculum content.	185(68.0)	87(32.0)	-	-
2.	Business Education programme 205(75.4) curriculum design is well structured.	-	67(24.6)		
3.	Business Education programme has standardized curriculum content.	-	66(24.3)	206(75.7)	
4.	The curriculum of business - education needs review	231(84.9)	20(7.4)	21(7.7)	
5.	There is good method of teaching - Business Education programme in University of Ilorin.	-	160(58.8)	112(41.2)	
6.	Business Education programme has proper accreditation	90(33.1)	93(34.2)	89(32.7)	
7.	The curriculum of business -education needs to be well implemented by the lecturers	185(68.0)	46(16.9)	46(15.1)	
8.	Business education textbook 64(23.5) content is efficient for skill acquisition	-	-	208(76.5)	
9.	The curriculum of business 21(7.7) education needs constant review	138(50.7)	93(34.2)	20(7.4)	
10.	There is adequate textbooks 64(23.5) on business education courses	-	208(76.5)	-	

The table showed that 231(84.9%) strongly agreed that the curriculum of business education needed review, 185(68.0%) strongly agreed that the curriculum of business education needs to be well implemented by the lecturers, 185(68.0%)

strongly agreed that Business Education programme needs inclusion of vocational skill acquisition in its curriculum content, 138(50.7%) strongly agreed that the curriculum of business education needs constant review. It was revealed that most of the respondents strongly agreed on the itemized curriculum structure.

Research question two: To what extent can school infrastructure serve as a tool for standardizing Business Education programme in University of Ilorin?

Table 6: The extent school infrastructure can serve as a tool for standardization of business education

S/N	ITEMS	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
1.	Model office is available in the department of Business Education	137(50.4)	46(16.9)	41(15.1)	48(17.6)
2.	There is availability of functional typing pool in the department of Business Education	224(82.4)	-	48(17.6)	-
3.	Business Education programme has adequate textbooks in the library.	94(34.6)	110(40.4)	68(25.0)	-
4.	Business Education programme has well-equipped computer room	-	-	204(75.0)	68(25.0)
5.	Business Education programme has adequate Information and Communication Technology (ICT) facilities	-	-	183(67.3)	89(32.7)
6.	Business Education programme has adequate instructional materials	-	89(32.7)	95(34.9)	88(32.4)
7.	Business Education programme has adequate qualified lecturers	89(32.7)	93(34.2)	50(18.4)	40(14.7)
8.	Business Education programme needs a department and adequate number of lecturers of its own so that it can offer postgraduate programmes	94(34.6)	89(32.7)	89(32.7)	-
9.	Funds are made available for students of Business Education	-	43(15.8)	162(59.6)	67(24.6)

	programme to be enterprise oriented even on campus				
10.	Business Education programme needs a department and adequate number of lecturers of its own rather than being a unit under educational management.	94(34.6)	111(40.8)	21(7.7)	46(16.9)

The result from the table showed that, 224(82.4%) strongly agreed that there was availability of functional typing pool in the department of Business Education, 94(34.6%) strongly agreed that Business Education programme needs a department and adequate number of lecturers of its own so that it can offer postgraduate programmes, 94(34.6%) strongly agreed that Business Education programme needs a department and adequate number of lecturers of its own rather than being a unit under educational management, 137(50.4%) strongly agreed that model office is available in the department of Business Education. The above result implied that most of the respondents strongly agreed on the itemized school infrastructure.

Research question three: To what extent can system of industrial training serve as a tool for Standardizing of Business Education programme in University of Ilorin?

Table 7: The extent system of industrial training can serve as a tool for standardization of business education

S/N	ITEMS	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
1.	Business Education programme has a good industrial training structure.	158(58.1)	20(7.4)	46(16.9)	48(17.6)
2.	Industrial training of business education has adequate duration	137(50.4)	67(24.6)	20(7.4)	48(17.6)
3.	Industrial Training of Business Education programme has adequate funding.	-	90(33.1)	114(41.9)	68(25.0)
4.	Industrial training of	137(50.4)	66(24.3)	69(25.4)	

Business Education programme has adequate supervision.				
5.	Industrial training of Business Education programme should be structured in such a way that it will not clash with lectures.	151(55.5) 11(4.0)	70(25.7)	40(14.7)
6.	Fair number of supervisors need to be attached to each participant of industrial training.	130(47.8)	30(11.0)	62(22.8) 50(18.4)
7.	Industrial training of business education in terms of location needs to be extended beyond Ilorin metropolis	137(50.4)	66(24.3)	69(25.4) -
8.	The participants of industrial training in business education needs to be well screened to ascertain whether proper training has been achieved or not	113(41.5)	69(25.4)	90(33.1) -
9.	Participants of industrial training in business education needs to be attached to the right establishment in terms of placement.	150(55.1)	87(40.0)	20(7.4) 15(5.5)
10.	Business Education programme system of teaching practice is well structured.	68(25.0)	184(67.6)	20(7.4) -

Table 7 showed that there were 113(41.5%) who strongly agreed that participants of industrial training needs to be well screened, 158(58.1%) strongly agreed that business education had a good industrial training structure, 68(25.0%) strongly agreed that business education programme system of teaching practice is well structured,

137(50.4%) strongly agreed that industrial training of business education in terms of location needed to be extended beyond Ilorin metropolis, 130(47.8%) strongly agreed that fair number of supervisors need to be attached to each participant, 137(50.4%) strongly agreed that industrial training of business education had adequate duration, 151(55.5%) strongly agreed that industrial training of business education should be structured in such a way that it will not clash with lectures. The result showed that most of the respondents strongly agreed on the system of industrial training.

Hypothesis one: there is no significant relationship between curriculum structure and of business education programme of university of Ilorin

Table 8: Relationship between curriculum structure and standardization of business education

	N	Mean	SD	Pearson Correlation	Sig (2-tailed)	Remark
Curriculum Structure	272	27.87	3.06	0.323	0.0005	Significant
Standardization of Business Education	272	35.19	1.39			$p < 0.05$

Table 8 showed that $r = 0.323$, $p\text{-value} = 0.0005$, $n = 272$. The result from the analysis showed that there was a significant and positive correlation between curriculum structure and standardization of business education programme of university of Ilorin

Hypothesis two: there is no significant relationship between school infrastructure and standardization of business education programme of university of Ilorin

Table 9: Relationship between school infrastructure and standardization of business education

	N	Mean	SD	Pearson Correlation	Sig (2-tailed)	Remark
School Infrastructure	272	24.28	6.29	0.425	0.0005	Significant
Standardization of Business Education	272	35.19	1.39			$p < 0.05$

Table 9 showed that $r = 0.425$, $p\text{-value} = 0.0005$, $n = 272$. The result from the analysis showed that there was a significant and positive correlation between school infrastructure and standardization of business education programme of university of Ilorin

Hypothesis three: there is no significant relationship between system of industrial training and standardization of business education programme of university of Ilorin

Table 10: Relationship between system of industrial training and standardization of business education

	N	Mean	SD	Pearson Correlation	Sig (2-tailed)	Remark
System of Industrial Training	272	29.12	6.61	0.511	0.0005	Significant
Standardization of Business Education	272	35.19	1.39			$p < 0.05$

Table 10 showed that $r = 0.511$, $p\text{-value} = 0.0005$, $n = 272$. The result from the analysis showed that there was a significant and positive correlation between school infrastructure and standardization of business education programme of university of Ilorin

Discussion of Results

The following discussion was based on the findings.

Table 5, which presents the extent curriculum structure can serve as a tool for standardization of business education revealed that most of the curriculum structures itemized were widely accepted. This is in line with the findings of Johanna et al (2016) that core curriculum standard educate the students to become better employees and Olaifa (2015) who described curriculum as a standard tool for imparting knowledge.

Table 6, which presents the extent school infrastructure can serve as a tool for standardization of business education showed that majority of the respondents strongly agreed on the need for school infrastructure. This also confirmed the findings of Peter et al (2019) that school infrastructure determine students' performance. In the same vein, Idris (2013) observed that adequate school infrastructure and proper maintenance of the same create a better learning situation.

Table 7, which presents the extent system of industrial training can serve as a tool for standardization of business education stated that industrial training was highly accepted by most respondents. This is also consistent with the findings of (UBEC, 2012) that IT exposes students to work environment, common practices, employment opportunities and work ethics in the relevant field of study. Ovie (2012) is of the opinions that IT gives students ample opportunity to practice what was learnt theoretically and develop themselves to become mastery of their disciplines.

Table 8; showed that there was a positive significant relationship between curriculum structure and standardization of business education. This supports the findings of Lewis (1999) who stated that curriculum reflects the state of the field; what is considered important, what is being taught, and how it is taught. Agunbiade and Adewusi (2018) also stated that structure of the curriculum contents and its proper implementation is a panacea to difficulties in learning.

Table 9; relationship between school infrastructure and standardization of business education revealed that there was a significant relationship between curriculum structure and standardization of business education. This is in line with the findings of Agomuo (2004) who stated that the extent to which the objective of producing disciplined, knowledgeable and devoted business tutors can be achieved depends to a great measure, on the effectiveness of the administration provided in the higher institution.

Table 10; relationship between system of industrial training and standardization of business education showed that there was a significant relationship between system of industrial training and standardization of business education. This is consistent with that of Mafe (2010), who stated that SIWES bridges the gap between class work (theoretical) and reality situation (practical). Also, Oyeniyi (2011) described SIWES as a

programme designed to expose students of higher institutions to industrial work situation which are likely employable skills and makes them self-reliant.

Conclusion

It can be concluded based on the findings of the study that knowledge of standards is an asset for students majoring in management, especially business education students which can help in the realization of school goals. Based on the findings, there was a correlation between the quality assurance tools and standardization of business education. Hence, it could be concluded that the curriculum structure should be restructured, standardized, supervised, and well implemented.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the research carried out:

1. The curriculum of business education should be restructured and well implemented.
2. There should be adequate instructional materials, ICT, and qualified lecturers. To ease the lecturers' work and also enhance students' learning and performance.
3. The industrial training should be well supervised to enable the students gain maximally.
4. Students should also be attached to the right establishment for their industrial training so as to bridge the gap between class work (theoretical) and reality situation (practical). There should also be adequate funding of industrial training.

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