Quality assurance mechanisms and universal basic education goal achievement in public secondary schools of Kwara State, Nigeria

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
	This paper examines quality assurance mechanisms as correlates of goal achievement of Universal Basic Education (UBE) in public secondary schools of Kwara State, Nigeria. A structured questionnaire was developed and issued to collect information from the study samples. The questionnaire was administered to one thousand, five hundred (1.500) respondents. Data collected were analysed using mean, standard deviation, factor analysis, correlation analysis and regression analysis. The results of the study revealed that instructional supervision, staff development practices, continuous assessment and learning environment had a significant positive relationship with goal achievement in UBE public secondary schools. From the results, it was recommended among others that ministry of education should organise workshops and seminars on quality assurance mechanisms, so that principals and teachers could gain in-depth knowledge and understanding of the identified quality assurance mechanisms.

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1.   INTRODUCTION

Education is regarded as an instrument for effective national development. It is a veritable tool through which nations achieve meaningful social and economic development. It is an appreciation of this fact that the Federal Government of Nigeria decided to launch the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme. The idea to launch UBE scheme in Nigeria, came up ten years after the World Conference on Education for All and framework for Action (WCEFA) which was held in Jomtien between 5th and 9th March, 1990. The package from the outcome of the conference became a sort of blue print for all countries of the world.

The UBE scheme which was launched in September 1999, at Sokoto by President Olusegun Obasanjo, was a construct designed to correct or minimise the deficiencies/defects of past programmes like the Universal Primary Education (UPE). The UPE was marred by inadequate planning, insufficient teachers, lack of infrastructure like classrooms, buildings, sitting desks, equipment and instructional materials. The UBE is not a new educational policy but a programme designed to further the achievements of the desired philosophy, goals, needs, yearnings and aspirations of the Nigerian Society. In other words, UBE programme is in line with the provisions of the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria [1], which states that

"Government shall direct its policy towards ensuring that there are equal and adequate opportunities at all levels. Government shall eradicate illiteracy, and to this end, government shall as and when practicable provide": Free compulsory and universal primary education, free secondary education and free adult literacy programmes. It is in the light of this provision that UBE has the following as its components; Programme for early child hood care and socialisation, education programme for the acquisition of functional literacy, numeracy and life skills especially for adults (persons aged 15 and above), Out of school non formal programmes, Non formal skills and apprenticeship training for adolescents and youths who have not had the benefit of formal education, The formal school system from the beginning of primary education to the end of the Junior Secondary School [2]. Therefore, to avoid pitfalls of the previous programme like UPE, certain measures must be taken to ensure quality control and assurance of the UBE programme. The measures become the motto to guide the country in the implementation of UBE scheme.

Quality assurance refers to "the practice of managing the way goods are produced or services are provided to make sure they are kept at a high standard" (Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary [3]. In relative terms, quality assurance in education has to do with effective management of educational resources in ensuring a high standard in the academic performance of the students trained under UBE scheme. S. A. Jimoh [4], refers to all the arrangements put in place to guarantee that a system achieves the objectives for which it was established as quality assurance. That is, the management of goods, services and activities from the input stage, through processing, to output stage. It aims at preventing problems and ensuring that only quality products reach the customers. In addition, defined quality assurance as a practical means of assuring quality inputs, quality through-puts, quality outcome, quality academic achievements of pupils and the environment before things get out of hand [5]. According to [6], explained that quality input refers to the worth of teachers, trainees, textbooks, technology of delivery and tasks or curriculum. Quality of the process deals with the teaching and learning process that involves lesson plan, delivery methods, classroom organization and control, student-teacher interactions, pupil's participation, assessment and evaluation, marking and so on. Quality of outcome and output involves the academic achievement ad attainment, value added through education, results of internal and external examinations, etc. quality environment involves the work of the environmental factors and sanitation, etc. As stated by [7], refers quality assurance as the value added to the overall teaching and learning in schools, leading to measurable improvement in the achievement of individual school and societal goals and objectives.

From these definitions, we can see that quality assurance in education has to do with setting standards for the various processes and activities that lead to production of quality students by the schools, Colleges and Universities. These processes and activities include: Requirements for entry programmes, adequate infrastructure facilities, the school environment from a wholistic perspective, quality and quantity co-curricular activities available to students, conducive classrooms, standard of instructional infrastructure facilities, quality of teaching and teachers, school administrators, functional library, course content i.e. total number and nature of subjects.

The concept of Quality Assurance, therefore, entails handling the aforementioned and other various elements of education in such a way that the goals of education as enumerated in the National Policy on Education [8] are effectively accomplished. The goals, among others, are: The inculcation of national consciousness and national unity; the inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the nation and Nigerian society, the training of the mind in the understanding of the world around; and the acquisition of appropriate skills and the development of mental, physical and social abilities and competence as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of his society [2].

In other words, the national goals for education constitute the standards by which we ought to judge the goal achievement of our students at primary, secondary and tertiary levels. A situation in which students fall short of these national aspirations only tells us that something has gone wrong with our educational system. In view of this, the study is aimed at looking at the relationship that may exist between quality assurance mechanisms and goal achievement of universal basic education in public secondary schools of Kwara State, Nigeria.

Quality education encompasses quality of educational inputs, processes and output in its totality. Researchers such as [9] believes that quality outputs could be viewed in terms of achievement, that is, what the students learn in terms of skills, knowledge, attitude and behaviour; attainment, that is, number of students who have completed prescribed programmes and quality of certificate awarded; standard, that is, the official learning and what the society expects.

The available studies showed that no studies have been carried out on the quality assurance mechanisms and Universal Basic Education (UBE) goal achievement in public secondary schools of Kwara State, Nigeria. For instance, various studies have been carried out on quality assurance mechanism and goal achievement, quality assurance practices and perceived effectiveness, benchmarking for improvement of quality in private schools, strategies for achieving quality assurance in science education, school quality

factors and secondary school students' achievement in mathematics, quality assurance system of higher education and the value of secondary schools quality in the UK. Some of these studies include: [10-20]. O. V. Ajibola [10] carried out his study on quality assurance mechanisms and goal achievement in private senior secondary schools in North-Central states, Nigeria. Centred his study on quality assurance practices and perceived effectiveness of pubic examination bodies in South-West, Nigeria [11]. Conducted on benchmarking for improvement of quality in private UBE Junior Secondary Schools in River State, Nigeria [12]. Examined the strategies for achieving assurance in science education in Akwa-Ibom State of Nigeria [13]. Investigated the impact of human resource allocation and utilization on the academic performance of students in Ondo State secondary school [14]. Jaiyeoba *et al.* [15] investigated quality sustenance in Nigeria educational system: challenges to government [16] school-base management, teacher efficiency and effectiveness in secondary schools in the South-eastern states of Nigeria [17] conducted a study on the determinants of patronage of secondary school in Festac town, Lagos State, Nigeria. Conducted a study on participatory action research for school-based management and teachers' professional development programme [18]. Conducted a study on quality assurance systems of higher education in Hong Kong and Singapore [19]. Carried out a study on the value of secondary schools quality in the UK and her focus was state-funded secondary schools in England [20].

A critical look of the studies cited shows that most of the works were carried out either in private secondary schools and most also focused on students' achievement on teaching subjects. However, the present study was on universal basic education in public secondary schools in Kwara State, Nigeria. The dependent variable of works cited were effectiveness, goal achievement, organisational structure, students' achievement and students' academic performance in private and public senior and junior secondary schools while the present study is on goal achievement of UBE in public secondary schools. These are some of the missing gaps the present study intends to fill.

The following main and operational hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. Main Hypothesis, HO1: There is no significant relationship between quality assurance mechanisms and UBE goal achievement in public secondary schools in Kwara State, Nigeria.

Operational Hypotheses, HO1: There is no significant relationship between instructional supervision and UBE goal achievement in public secondary schools of Kwara State, Nigeria. HO2: There is no significant relationship between staff development practices and UBE goal achievement in public secondary schools of Kwara State, Nigeria. HO3: There is no significant relationship between continuous assessment and UBE goal achievement in public secondary schools of Kwara State, Nigeria. HO4: There is no significant relationship between learning environment and UBE goal achievement in public secondary schools of Kwara State, Nigeria.

2.   RESEARCH METHOD

The research design for this study was descriptive survey design of correlational type. The data were collected through the use of questionnaire by the researcher. The designed questionnaire titled "Quality Assurance Mechanisms Questionnaire" (QAMQ) was used to collect responses on quality assurance mechanisms practices as regards the four sub-variables used in the study which followed the Likert scale format which allowed the respondents to select among a range of alternatives along pre-specified continuum such as strongly-agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree. The Likert scale was used to measure the responses on the Quality Assurance Mechanism (QAM). While the second instrument tagged "Junior Secondary Certificate Results Proforma" (JSCEPF) was used to measure goal achievement and this was done by collecting the average performance score of students in Junior Secondary School Certificate Examinations in five consecutive years (2014-2018) in the selected UBE public secondary schools of Kwara State, Nigeria. Samples of 1500 respondents were selected using a convenience sampling technique and multi-stage sampling techniques. A cross-section of principals, vice-principals and teachers in all the three senatorial district in Kwara State (Kwara Central senatorial district, Kwara North Senatorial district and Kwara South senatorial district). The questionnaire was validated by lecturers in the Departments of Educational Management and Social Sciences. The reliability of instrument was done through the use of test re-test method, while the reliability values obtained for QAMQ was 0.76.

The statistical test used for the analysis of data included mean, standard deviation, factor analysis, correlation analysis and regression analysis. These were done through the use of statistical package for social science (SPSS) version 2.2. The following regression (1) is specified to estimate the effect of quality assurance mechanisms on goal achievement of UBE programmes in Kwara state, Nigeria.

$$Y = a0 + a1x1 + a2x2 + a3x3 + a4x4 + e \tag{1}$$

Y = Goal achievement
ao … a4 = regression coefficient
X1 = Instructional Supervision
X2 = Staff development practice
X3 = continuous assessment
X4 = learning environment
e = error term

3.   RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Table 1, shows the correlation analysis of the relationship between quality control mechanisms sub-variables and universal basic education goal achievement in public secondary schools in Kwara State, Nigeria.

Table 1. Summary of descriptive statistics of variables

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation
Instructional Supervision	3.26	0.63
Staff development practices	3.84	0.60
Continuous Assessment	3.67	0.68
Learning Environment	3.45	0.69
Goal Achievement	4.46	0.58

3.1. Factor analysis

Factor analysis aids in the reduction of data. The Kaiser – Meyer- Olkin (KMO) test and Bartlett's test ascertain the level of adequacy of factor analysis [21]. The KMO measure of sampling adequacy reflects the value of 0.804, which is well above the recommended level of 0.50 and a Bartlett's test of sphericity is significant at 0.05 level. This indicates the appropriateness of the data for factor analysis. Principal component analysis with varimax rotation was selected for the analysis [22]. Only variables whose loadings were 0.5 or more and factors whose Ergen values were equal to or greater than one was selected.

3.2. Correlation analysis

Table 2 shows that all the variables are positively correlated with each other. Results reflect that the correlation between variables is significant ($p<0.05$). This indicates that QAM (instructional supervision, staff development, continuous assessment and learning environment) have a positive relationship with goal achievement. The regression results of the effect of QAM on goal achievement of UBE programme in Kwara State, Nigeria are shown in Table 3.

Table 2. Correlation matrix of the independent variables and dependent variable

Variables	Instructional Supervision	Staff Development Practices	Continuous Assessment	Learning Environment	Goal Achievement
Instructional Supervision	1				
Staff development practices	0.507*	1			
Continuous Assessment	0.394*	0.551*	1		
Learning Environment	0.360*	0.356*	0.392*	1	
Goal Achievement	0.428*	0.404*	0.434*	0.701*	1

Note*: correlation is significant at 0.05 level
Source: Researchers' computation (2019)

Table 3. Regression results of the independent and dependent variables

Variables	Coefficient	Std.Error	T-Value	P-Value	
(constant)	-0.818	0.233	-3.507	0.001	Hypotheses
H01: Instructional Supervision	0.438	0.023	17.516	0.000	Significant
H02: Staff development Practices	0.334	0.041	7.530	0.001	Significant
H03: Continuous Assessment	0.261	0.047	5.697	0.002	Significant
H04: Learning environment	0.717	0.041	4.261	0.000	Significant

S.E of Estimate 0.170
F-statistics 224.732
R2 0.762
Adjusted R2 0.878
Prob (F-statistics) 0.000
P = 0.05
N = 1500

The regression results indicate that instructional Supervision, staff development practices, continuous assessment and learning environment positively and significantly affect goal achievement since their p-value of 0.00 is less than 0.05 level of significance.

When comparing the strength to which the independent variables affect the dependent variable, the co-efficient result showed that learning environment is the most significant that influenced goal achievement with a coefficient of 0.717, followed by instructional facilities (0.438), continuous assessment (0.261) and staff development practices (0.334) respectively.

These findings indicate that a unit change in learning environment 71.7 percent change (increase or decrease in goal achievement. A unit change in instructional supervision and continuous assessment results in approximately 43.8% and 26.1% change (increase or decrease) in goal achievement respectively.

The value of R2 put at 0.762 indicates that the independent variables jointly explain a 76.2% systematic variation in the dependent variable. The F-statistic of 224.732 and p<0.05 also shows that there are statistical significant relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable put together. By implication it means that quality assurance mechanisms positively and significantly influences goals achievement of UBE programmes in Kwara state, Nigeria.

This study found that instructional supervision has a significant positive relationship with goal achievement of UBE public secondary schools in Kwara State, Nigeria. This is contrary to assertion of [4] whose discovery that the mode of school/ instructional supervision in Nigeria public primary and secondary schools compounded the problem of quality education. He revealed that supervisors/inspectors hardly visit a school throughout an academic session to discover ways of helping school to carry out effective teaching and learning. However, the finding was in consonance with [23, 9] which in their individual findings discovered that there was a positive significant relationship between instructional supervision and goal achievement. The implication of this finding shows that there is adequate instructional supervision in UBE public secondary schools of Kwara State, there is the tendency of high improvement in the teaching and learning of students which is part of goal achievement of UBE.

One of the findings of this study which revealed that there is significant relationship between staff development practice and UBE goal achievement in public secondary schools of Kwara state, Nigeria. This result in line with the findings of [24] that teachers enjoyed staff development programmes were more efficient and effective in impacting knowledge to their students, that is, performing better in their jobs. O. V. Ajibola [9] findings also agreed with this that there was positive significant relationship between staff development practices and goal achievement in private secondary schools in North-Central states, Nigeria. This implies that there were teachers in UBE public secondary schools in Kwara State, Nigeria benefited in staff development programmes such as, study leave, in-service training, seminars, the better their performance and hence their teaching and learning in schools.

This study which showed that continuous assessment has a significant positive relationship with UBE goal achievement is consistent with previous studies of [25] that there were positive significant relationship between continuous assessment and academic performance in English language and mathematics. According to [9], it is also discovered that there was a significant relationship between continuous assessment and goal achievement in private senior secondary schools in North-central states, Nigeria. The implication of this findings shows that continuous assessment affords students the opportunity of knowing their performance level and this will encourage them to work harder and consequently translated to the UBE goal achievement.

Another finding from the study revealed that learning environment has a significant positive relationship with UBE goal achievement in public secondary schools of Kwara state, Nigeria. This was in line with the finding of [26] in their study assessment of school developing planning on the implementation of UBE programme in Kwara State. They discovered that school environment and the surrounding where secured and safe for pupils. They believed that a good school environment allow individual to work together as a group and encourages efficiency in accomplishing selected goals.

4.   CONCLUSION

It has been established from the study that quality assurance mechanisms had a positive significant relationship with goal achievement. This implies that adequacy of instructional supervision, staff development practices, continuous assessment and learning environment will adequately enhance teachers' effectiveness which will translate to goal achievement of UBE Public secondary schools in Kwara state, Nigeria. On this basis the following recommendations were made; the Ministry of Education should organise workshop and seminars on quality assurance mechanisms so that principals and teachers could gain in-depth knowledge and understanding of the identified quality assurance. In addition, efforts can further be made in the inspectorate division of the Ministry of Education to decentralise the operational activities of the division to perform its statutory role as standard bearer for the education system in general and instructional supervision in particular in the UBE schools. This is possible by establishing inspectorate division in the three senatorial districts in the state. This allows the Quality Assurance Officer (QAO) to be close to schools for instructional supervision in each senatorial districts; there exist policies on staff development programme in the state. Therefore in line with the existing policy the government should increase the number of teachers sponsored annually for higher education and development programmes in other to enhance their efficiency where in their respective responsibilities; the current practice of continuous assessment should be improved upon so that, it will afford students the opportunity of knowing their performance level and this will encourage them to work harder; and the present practice of ensuring good and secure learning environment should be maintained, while efforts should be geared towards student positive behaviours in the classrooms and school in general.

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