



INFLUENCE OF ICT IN ENHANCING THE QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCEDURE IN EDUCATION SYSTEM IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This research is concerned with the benefit of ICT in enhancing the quality assurance procedure in Education system in Nigeria. Numerous definitions and interpretations have been advanced by all sectors of human society without an agreeable definition. Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) is increasingly becoming indispensable part of the education system. It has changed many aspects of lives, these changes have caused educational institutions, administrators, teachers to rethink their benefit, teaching and vision for the future. ICT has opened new challenges for quality education. The purpose of this review article is to discuss the benefits of Information Communication Technology in education for enhancement of teaching and learning. It highlights the impacts and benefits of ICT in education, its limitations and challenges to education systems. The study Briefly looked the concept of quality assurance, strategies for building quality assurance into the education system and challenges were discussed. The study identified some challenges affecting quality assurance to include shortage of funds, insecurity, policy inconsistency, and lack of regular training of staff etc. The paper concludes that since the essence of education is to make an individual useful, quality assurance strategies should be monitored and evaluated on regular basis in order to improve the quality of the educational system in Nigeria. The study therefore recommends amongst others improved funding of the education sector, regular training and retraining of staff and provision of adequate security for learning environment in the country as a way forward.

KEYWORDS: ICT, Quality Assurance, Education,

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria has earned the designation of the giant of Africa by good worth of its size, population and vast resources. However, the pitiable state of infrastructure, low standard of education, wearing a way of value system, and many other tribulations prevalent in the society has

caused the country to be fast losing its respect across the sphere. Nigeria is blessed amply with all the resources to be the best in all ramifications but yet the educational system is in shambles just because it is a product of Nigerian norm where in most cases normal things are abnormal and abnormal things are normal (Usman,2018). The world has realized that the economic success of the states is directly determined by the quality of their education systems (Pavel,2012). It is worrying that while some countries have recognized the value of investing heavily in education as a vehicle for irremediable growth and brawny economy, Nigeria still prioritizes sustaining an excessively expensive system of governance ahead of instituting mechanisms that will guarantee quality education (Usman,2018).The widespread recognition that education is a major driver of economic competitiveness in an increasingly knowledge-driven global economy has made high-quality education more important than ever before (Asiyai, 2015). Therefore, it is imperative for countries to strive towards raising candidates with higher level employment skills and sustain a globally competitive research and knowledge breeding base to the benefit of society (Ewuzie, 2020).Quality education equips people with the ability that will enable them explore the world and manipulate it for their survival and establishment (Njoku, 2016).It has been the backbone of development in most countries of the world, because it propels both economic and social emancipation of a nation (Iniobong, 2013).

Therefore, the means of providing education should be effective to promote quality sustenance so as to enable the educational system to be well developed and effective (Okoli,2016).For quality education to be achieved in a nation, the principal actors of learning (teachers, learners and the environment) should be cooperatively organized. In other words, the teacher must be adequate in quality and quantity, the students must be well trained and required facilities must be provided as well (Adegbesan, 2011).The fact that Nigeria's education system is still characterized by a few high performing and many low performing schools is not acceptable to stakeholders in the education sector (Okebukola, 2013). The situation needs to be improved so that the country can compete with its peers in global competitive academic standards. In the education system, a vital mechanism required for the actualization of the educational objectives is to build a quality assurance model that will improve the quality of the teaching - learning process in the academic environment (Idialu, 2013).

Many nations around the globe now agree that the way out of series of bondage plaguing their nations and their citizens is through quality education (Njoku, 2016). Education in Nigeria has gone below its expectations because of little or no attention paid to the educational sector. The neglect has contributed to the present day collapse in the standard and quality of education in Nigeria (Uzorka, Uzorka & Okobia, (2011).However, this situation in the education sector is reversible if there is a positive attitudinal change and conscious affirmative action by all stakeholders.

Stakeholders in the education sector are advocating that Nigeria education institutions at all levels should be encouraged and supported to develop strong internal quality assurance mechanism to drive the sector process and progress. They observe that countries that thrive in all sectors of their economy did embrace education as their bed rock (Ewuzie, 2020).Achieving a robust quality

education status in a nation does not happen by chance but achieved through implementation of well thought out strategies that can upgrade the education standard and improve quality of products churned out from the various citadels of learning. Amongst the strategies needed to guarantee the desired quality of education is to build quality assurance mechanism into the learning process (Thom-Otuya & Inko-Tariah 2013). Quality and standards must be derived from a coherent policy framework, which provides clear directives and guidelines as well as principles, assumptions, structures, roles and responsibilities (Federal Ministry of Education (FME, 2014).

Concept of Quality and Quality Assurance in Education

Quality as a concept is multi-dimensional, hence it has been defined according to Okoro (2015) encapsulates the concept of meeting commonly agreed precepts or standards which may be defined by law, an institution, a coordinating body or a professional society. It is the degree with which a product, service, or phenomenon conforms to an established standard, and which makes it to be relatively superior to others (Oyewumi & Fatoki, 2015). According to UNESCO (2012), quality education is characterized by

- (i) Learners who are healthy, well-nourished and ready to participate and learn, and supported in by their families and communities
- (ii) Environments that are healthy, safe, protective and gender-sensitive, and provide adequate resources and facilities
- (iii) Content that is reflected in relevant curricula and materials for the acquisition of basic skills, especially in the areas of literacy, numeracy and skills for life etc
- (iv) Processes through which trained teachers use child centered teaching approaches in classrooms, schools and skillful assessment to facilitate learning and reduce disparities
- (v) Outcomes that encompass knowledge and attitudes linked to national goals for education and positive participation in society.

Quality of educational programme could be measured in terms of quality of input, quality of process, quality of context and quality of output (Adegbesan, 2011). Therefore, ensuring quality in education requires the right quantity and quality in everything that goes into the teaching-learning process or system as input and process (Okoye & Ashibogwu, 2018). This kind of productive synergy can ensure a clear focus on school development, providing data on aspects such as school climate and the well-being of all members of the school community, effective teaching, learning and the impact of innovations (Adeniran & Ekeruche, 2019). Federal Ministry of Education (2014) emphasizes that education quality assurance in Nigeria is a paradigm shift from the former practice of school supervision and inspection to a monitoring and evaluating process that provides a new operative mode of evaluation. This is carried out according to set standards that bring about improvement in teaching and learning. The strategic aim of quality assurance is therefore to prescribe standards and ensure that inputs, processes and outputs of the system meet these standards.

Quality Assurance (QA) Due to the function of education and the importance attached to it, there is need to ensure that education produces what it is intended for at each stratum of the system.

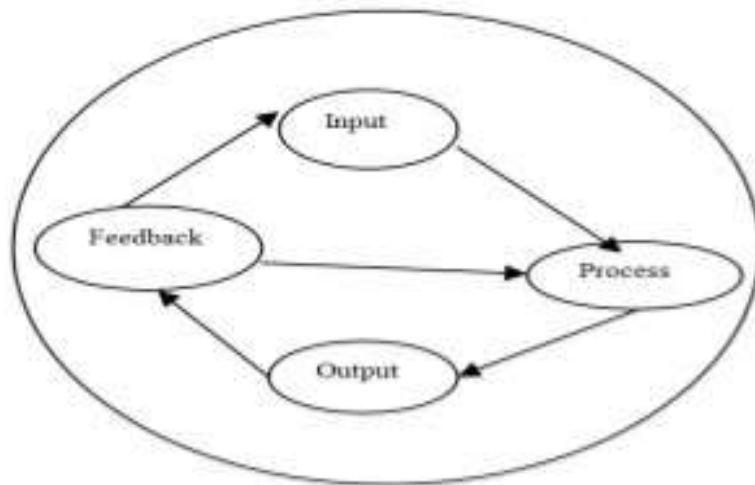
This means that curriculum content and instructional procedures would be improved upon while meticulously implementing the curriculum document in the primary schools. This calls for the mobilization of both human and material resources to determine and sustain, through monitoring and evaluation, quality and standard outcomes of education. Quality assurance is a wide ranging concept which covers all matters that individually or collectively influence the quality of products and services. The American Heritage Dictionary defines quality assurance as a system of evaluating performance, as in the delivery of services or the quality of products provided to consumers, customers, or patients, (clients). According to Wikipedia (undated) quality assurance is the systematic monitoring and evaluation of the various aspects of a project, service or facility to maximize the probability that minimum standards of the quality are being attained by the production process. In schools quality assurance activity focuses on whether learners are achieving as much as they can and whether everything the school provided has the best possible impact on learner (Olayanju, 2016). The system provides the evidence needed to establish confidence among all concerned that quality-related activities are being performed effectively (FME, 2014). The need for quality assurance in Nigerian schools cannot be overemphasized in order to ensure quality of teaching and learning. In this regard, Adegbesan (2011) enumerated the relevance of quality assurance to the education system in Nigeria to include; serving as indispensable component of quality control strategy in education; ensuring and maintaining high standard of education at all levels, assisting in monitoring and supervision of education, determining the quality of the teacher input, determining the number of classrooms needed based on the average class size to ensure quality control of education, determining the level of adequacy of the facilities available for quality control and regulating the prudent and judicious utilization of the available financial resources towards achieving the desired result.

Building Quality Assurance into Education system to fulfill the purpose of quality assurance in education , scholars had listed some basic strategies and educational management functions that should be streamlined and practiced in similar terms by educational managers in order to enhance quality assurance in the education system. Prominent amongst such strategies is good planning, regular monitoring and evaluation, quality control mechanism, effective supervision and conducive learning environment.

- **Planning** is an essential aspect of good management requires the ability of the manager to forecast and be able to formulate and select appropriate objectives and procedures to be followed within the school system with the aim of simply achieving the desired result (Okoro & Ogugum, 2017). Quality assurance is guaranteed when there is steady cycle of regular monitoring and evaluation activity with the aim of assessing the level of performance to find out how far set objectives are being met (Adegbesan, 2011).
- Quality control is one of the strategies for establishing quality assurance in the education system at all levels and should be of concern to the country in its drive towards economic recovery and technological development. (Olaleye & Oyewole, 2016). Supervision is an

indispensable variable in ensuring effective teaching and learning which brings about improved process needed to build quality into education system (Zunaed,2011).It is a fundamental component of education administration that assists in effective management of the human and material resources in the industry (Agih, 2015). According to Mogbeyiteren, Azeez and Abina, (2019) learning can occur anywhere, but the positive learning outcome generally sought by educational systems happens in quality learning environment. Therefore, Availability of school facilities and the conduciveness of the school learning environment potent factors that influence improvement in the school system (Fehintola, 2014).

- **Quality assurance measuring parameters:** In the education system, appraisal is very important because it creates a platform for gap analysis between the anticipated and the attained outcome. In this regard, Nnorom and Gaius-Oke (2013) identified; quality of resource input, quality of output, quality of process and quality of content as the basic measuring criteria for quality assurance in Nigeria. Quality of resource input consists of the quality and quantity of both human and material resources put into educational production process (Nnorom&Gaius-Oke, 2013).The quality of output implies the worth of the products of the education process which include academic achievement on tests, scores and progression and pass rates etc,(Giami & Nwokamma,2019).The output quality is a demonstration of the input quality thus; if the input is high-quality the output is assured to be equally of good quality and vice versa (Garba, 2014). Quality of process according Asiyai (2015) entails; studentteacher interaction, level of learner's participation and engagement in learning etc whereas the quality of content is another indicator which imply the value of curriculum content of learning in the education system. (Odo, 2015).Onyesom and Ashibogwu, (2013) further emphasized that the quality assurance factors all play a joint role in a cyclic process as depicted below;



- **Control mechanism:** According to Onyesom and Ashibogwu (2013) for quality assurance in Education system as show in Fig.1 above, emphasis is on the input and process combination that produces the output. The feedback mechanism helps to re-evaluate the extent of achievement of the objectives and to determine where corrective actions are required. The input component includes the teachers, equipment, funds, infrastructures, supervisors. The process element includes the system, curriculum, teaching/learning interactions among others. The output elements are the school products, students' achievements, skills, attitudes and general behavior. The reactions from each of these elements are channeled back to the input segment through the feedback mechanism for proper control. Quality assurance should be a continuous process aimed at encouraging attitude change and teamwork and the inculcation of a value that acknowledges the student as the best judge of quality deserving the best possible service (Obadara & Alaka, 2013).

Challenges facing Quality Assurance in Nigeria Education system.

The most prominent amongst the impediments of quality assurance in the education sector in Nigeria is underfunding. The issue of funding of education has been a recurrent decimal in the history of Nigeria's educational sector despite of the poor state of education system in the country (Amahua, 2010).An analysis by Abdusalam (2019) revealed that only 4%, 7.40%, 7.04% and 7.02% was allocated to the federal ministry of education by the government in 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019 respectively. The obvious low allocation is definitely a hindrance to the sector in implementing policies that reassures quality education.

In Nigeria, policies transforms recurrently with almost every change in country's' leadership leading to inconsistencies in education policies (Igborgbor, 2012). These frequent change of policies signifies the absence a workable strategic plan for education sector development and constitute a serious challenge to the reforms in the education sector (Asiyai,2015).

Another factor hindering quality assurance in Nigeria as observed by Odo (2015) is the politicization of appointments in the education sector. In some instances persons without requisite

experience or academic background in education are appointed into leadership of education and related institutions (Odo, 2015). Such misfit appointments can lead to absence of total quality management work culture in education system (Garba, 2015). Outbreak of diseases of public health concern like ebola and corona virus disease (COVID-19) is also hindrance to quality assurance. There is no arguing the fact that education is one of the major casualties of COVID-19 pandemic (Onunaiju, 2021).

The pandemic has affected educational systems worldwide, leading to the near-total closures of schools thereby disrupting academic activities (UNESCO, 2020). More worrisome is that, in Nigeria the presidential task force (PTF) formed since the outbreak of COVID-19 is perceived to have done more to orchestrate fear than articulate a better understanding of the nature of the disease (Onunaiju, 2021). School closures in response to the pandemics like COVID-19 etc have shaded more light on numerous issues affecting access and quality of education in Nigeria. According to Chidobi and Eze-Thecla (2016) supervision has been a great challenge in education as it lacks the needed commitment and coordination to survive. The internal and external organs of quality assurance in education in this regard have failed and any system or project that is not properly supervised is bound to derail from its expectations and intended objectives (Amoor, 2010). In another dimension, persistent insecurity and conflicts remains a menace that resulted from the weak institutions and social organization in the country (Abdullah, 2019). Over the years, educational institutions have become targets of bandits in carrying out their nefarious activities ranging from kidnappings and killings etc (Usman, 2020). Prominent amongst the cases which has disrupted school activities were recorded in Chibok in Borno state 2014, Dapchi in Yobe state 2018, Kankara in Katsina state 2020, Kagara in Niger state, 2021 and Afaka in Kaduna state, 2021 etc. Okebukola (2013) observed that poor management and governance of institutions by administrators is also having a consequential effect on quality assurance in the education sector. This problem characterizes every other sectors of Nigerian society. In this regard, Anioke (2013) posits that the problem in Nigeria is that the institutions for managing education whether at the local or national level are weak and inefficient because of the democracy deficit in our polity. It is certain that as long as management continues to play nonchalant role, quality assurance will continue to be jeopardized in the nation's institutions (Uzorka et al, 2011). Learning environment in modern day Nigeria has not been friendly with both learners and teachers. This has created a lot of quality vacuum in the learning process (Folami, Riaz & Musolihu, 2021)

Applications of ICT in Education system in Nigeria: There are many applications of ICT in teaching and learning depending on the knowledge of the user however, Collis and Moonen in Nguyen, Williams and Nguyen (2012) classification of these application in classroom teaching includes the learning resources, instructional organization of learning and communication. The classifications made use of educational software; computer- based testing system, e-mail system, internet, telephone, radio etc. Generally ICT will be applicable in Computer Assisted Instruction [CAI]; Computed Aided Design [CAD]; Teleconferences and Library Computer System [LCS]. There are many other general applications of ICT in education apart from those mentioned above but this review will briefly discussed those mentioned before going to applications in specific

subject. CAI Interactions among students and teachers can be presented on computers in the form of text or in multimedia forms; this could include photograph, videos, animations, speech and music. This program could involve questions posed to students, returned feedback and additional questions could follow based on the students' responses. CAD This is used to design a plan or a product which could be architecture in nature or in automobile. This is commonly used in industry for mass production of scientific and other equipment to reduce cost of production, reducing energy and time in production.

Teleconferences: Teachers and students can view, take part in conferences and take part in a debate in the comfort of their offices or home through this medium. Through satellites, transmission of conference proceeding from far distance could be made available within few seconds without travelling at reduced expenses.

Electronic Library: Many library are computerized in such a way that students and teachers need not to stress themselves searching for books in the shelves again. Many books and journals are already archived in the library database and any information on such books and journal could be retrieved in a matter of seconds. Applications of ICT in Education system are as follows; biology education, chemistry education, physics education, Computer and Mathematics.

Applications of ICT in Education System in Nigeria

1. Computers help students visualize objects that are difficult or impossible to view. For example, computers can be used to display human anatomy, internal structure of human and animal cells. Software are already developed which shows actions of viruses and bacteria which if teacher were to teach such; apart from the danger poses to both teacher's and student's health these micro organisms cannot be well learnt without seen them in action. Law is already promulgated in some part of the world against killing animal for experimental purpose instead models and computer animation could be used by students for experiment in life science. Many plants in botany, animals in zoology and insects in entomology can never be found here in Nigeria, yet must be learnt by students; with ICT all these are made available to students as if they are in real forms. CAI tools, like word processors, spreadsheets, and databases, is used to collect, organize, analyze, and transmit information. These tools also facilitate communication among students, between students and instructors, even beyond the classroom experience to distant students and instructors.
2. Chemistry deals with chemicals and their reactions most of which are very dangerous to life if not handle with caution Teachers usually explain these reactions abstractly and through molecular diagram. CAI has been of tremendous help in solving this problem; software is available where students could watch this reaction on computer as in real life. Animations and videos of complex molecular structures in chemistry are available for classroom teaching for all categories of students in chemistry. For example students will find it difficult to appreciate the chemistry of atom if not supported using ICT; other area of chemistry that would be difficult to teach and learn if not supported by ICT are quantum theory, chemical reaction, ionization, electrochemistry and many more. There are rate of

reactions and graph that are so complex to teach by the teacher which ICT can help the teacher to manipulate for the student proper understanding. Many times information needed in chemistry class may not be available as at the time of the lesson; students or the teacher can access such information using internet facility at anytime.

3. Physics is regarded as an abstract subject by many people (Adeyemo, 2010); this may be because of the way the teacher teaches it. If concepts in physics are taught very well with the aid of ICTs nobody would call it abstract subject again; it is true some mechanism may be complex to explain but technology has solved the problem through educational software. Educational software can be used to teach difficult concepts or observe difficult skills in physics. For example teaching of electric generator in physics can be facilitated with the assistance of educational software.

The rotation of the coil in the magnetic field is very clear when student see it demonstrated through this software. Most physics teachers could not explain the mechanism of electric generator to student properly because of its complexity; the teacher could use projector and computer to allow students view action of electric generator by a large physics class. Information on text, picture, tables and graph are presented to students using ICT especially to visualize a complex process in physics teaching. When this information is presented students can manipulate it to make changes and at the same time evaluate the changes made. Feedback is very important in teaching and learning process (Aina & Adedo, 2013) because it improve student learning. This could be done through computer. For example CAI tools like word- processor and spreadsheet help student to learn how to spell words correctly, when text is being underlined by the computer. Without the presence of a teacher student can learn any activity prepared for that period through already programmed work in a system. Students can improve their learning when they spend quality time working or practicing any skill already learnt on the computer. Generally, applications of ICT in science education are so many; the limit to these applications is a matter of knowledge; the more knowledgeable someone is in ICT the more he or she will be able to apply it. Teacher is able to send class activities and assignment through mobile phone like in business world. Subscribing to bundles of SMS can help teacher to reach hundreds of students at a time; this method could be employed when the teacher is not even present in the class and could afford student the opportunity of working at their own pace. Learning activities are communicated through e-mail system nowadays (Nguyen, Williams & Nguyen 2012). Teacher could be in a far distance away from school and still perform his/her duty sending learning activities through e-mail. Both teacher and student can communicate together outside classroom situation through internet. Learning activities are sent to student and the student will respond once they are connected online; this is the principle behind online degree many possesses today.

PROBLEM MILITATING AGAINST APPLICATION OF ICT IN EDUCATION SYSTEMN IN NIGERIA

As good as ICT might seem to be to any nation yet there are some problems militating against its application even in developed countries of the world. Therefore the problems highlighted below might not be peculiar to Nigeria alone.

Inadequate funding: The money needed for full ICT compliance is huge and this fund is not available because of economic situation of the country. Equipment like computers, projectors and internet facility are required; these materials are very costly to purchase by any school except there is external aids. Government is not sincere to quality education of the citizens this is reflected in the annual budget of the government. Akindutire (2010) observed that Nigeria government has not met the UNESCO recommendations of 26% of the total budgetary allocation to education sector as reflected in her yearly budget.

Teachers' factors: Majority of science teachers are not computer literate and have remained in that condition for long time without seminar, conference, workshop and refresher course in computer. The best way to say this is that there is shortage of certificated computer teacher in our schools (Ajayi and Ojo, 2010). Many of the few computer teachers available don't have personal computer either because their low income could not afford one or they did not see the need for it.

Corruption and insecurity: There is high level of corruption and insecurity in the nation (Olagunju, 2012; Aina, 2012) this is affecting every aspect of life of Nigerians including education. Money meant for the purchase of educational equipment are mismanaged and misappropriated by government officials. When government awards contracts for the purchase of school equipment like computers and the like; it is not done or executed poorly yet millions of naira must have gone into these contracts. Insurgents and kidnappers have destroyed infrastructures meant for teaching and learning in schools while many teachers have been kidnapped and killed at his duty post. All these have created fear for teachers and they are not ready to come out of their home for computer seminar, workshop, conference and refresher course just anywhere in the country; they remain as they were for many years.

Lack of stable power supply: Nigeria is a country where electric power supply is probably the worst among developing nations.

Electric power supply is not reliable in the country therefore anything that make use of electric power will surely have problem like ICT. All government effort to solve the problem has not yield good result.

Conclusion

The study was conducted with the aim of establishing the benefit of ICT in enhancing quality assurance procedures in education system in Nigeria. The concept of quality assurance, strategies for building quality assurance into education system and parameters for measuring quality assurance and challenges were discussed. The study identified some challenges affecting quality assurance to include shortage of funds, insecurity, policy inconsistency and lack of regular training of staff etc. The study therefore recommends amongst others improved funding of the education sector, regular training and retraining of staff and provision of adequate security for learning environment in the country as a way forward.

Recommendations

ICT have many applications in Nigerian education system that can facilitate learning of difficult concepts like geography, mathematics, biology, chemistry and physics. However, there are problems militating against the full application of ICT in education system; based on this conclusion the following suggestions are recommended:

- (1) ICT centre should be established in all schools and fund be made available to purchase computers and other ICT equipment
- (2) More trained computer teachers should be employed and teachers who are not computer literate should be mandated to go for computer training
- (3) Government should make it mandatory for science and computer teachers to always; attend seminar, workshop, conference and refresher course in computer;
- (4) Government should provide more jobs for young unemployed graduates as a measure of security for the nation;
- (5) There should be a serious punishment for any individual or group who mismanaged or misappropriate money meant for education
- (6) Government should provide all teachers with laptop;
- (7) Government should work hard to solve problem of power failure in the country

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