



Security Matters and Quality Assurance in the Development of 21st Century Nigeria: Curricular Implications

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Abstract

This paper stresses that, the development of any nation in the 21st century is critical to the economic survival and vibrancy of that nation. This is true for developing nation like Nigeria, who is still struggling with chronic factors like security and quality assurance which have kept her in the perpetual bondage of economic frustration and underdevelopment. This paper therefore reviews the current situation of security and quality assurance in the development of Nigeria in the 21st century by collecting data from related literatures through various media. The paper reviews the curricular implications for the security matters and quality assurance in the development of Nigeria. The paper among other things recommended: the inclusion of security education and periodic review of the curriculum to cater for the needs of Nigerians to enhance the development of Nigeria in the 21st century.

Keywords: Security, Quality, Curriculum, Quality Assurance.

Introduction

In the 21st century, there is no gainsaying the fact that adequate security and high quality assurance are very vital to the pace of social, cultural, political and economic development of any nation. This is why most nations of the world today devote a sizeable proportion of their Gross National Income to develop and strengthen their national security and ensure high standardisation and quality assurance in all services provided and products produced. The 21st century Nigeria refers to the present day Nigeria characterised by high insecurity and poor quality assurance in virtually all services. Security is the state of being safe and free from danger. It is the art of making a person or thing safe and free from danger. Insecurity is a state of fear characterised by lack of protection and safety which makes a person or thing liable to danger.

Quality refers to the standard of a product or service on comparative analysis. The word quality control and quality assurance go hand in hand or are sometimes used interchangeably. Quality control is the practice of checking goods as they are produced or services provided to make sure they are of high standard while quality assurance is the

practice of managing the way goods are produced or services are provided to make sure they are kept at a high standard (Burnham, 2007). He further stated that, in human organisation such as the school system; quality assurance is the systematic review of educational programmes to ensure that acceptable standards of education scholarship and infrastructure are being maintained. It is a mechanism by which an educational system ensures that the education it delivers serves the intended purpose (Farrant, 1990).

In the educational sector, there had been incessant media report of Nigerians acquiring certificates without knowledge. There are also several cases of failure of the curriculum to satisfy the purpose for which they were designed. One begin to wonder if the curriculum is inadequate or if there is a problem at the point of implementation

Currently the security condition in Nigeria is in a “pathetic” condition characterised by fear, danger, lack of trust, chaos, ritual killings, cultism, bomb blasts, internet crimes, armed robbery, uncertainties and other vices everywhere due to the high level of insecurity in Nigeria. Adesina (2011) attributed the pathetic condition of Nigeria security to lack of security education in the Nigeria educational curriculum. He further describes curriculum as the totality of the planned learning experiences which a learner is exposed to under the guidance of the school for the purpose of achieving educational goal and consequently reforming the learner to be a better citizen. He describes security education as the education that prepares individuals to be security conscious through adequate security awareness, orientation and security tips for a healthy living.

Review of literatures shows that there is no much empirical evidence concerning the curricular implications for the security matters and quality assurance in the development of 21st century Nigeria. Therefore, the objective of this paper is to review the curricular implications for the security matters and quality assurance in the development of Nigeria in

the 21st century. The paper attempt to highlight some contemporary issues on the current state of Nigeria's security, quality assurance and the curricular implications for Nigeria's development in the 21st century.

Conceptual View of Quality Assurance in Nigeria

Ijaiya (2001) defined quality assurance as all those planned and systematic actions necessary to provide adequate confidence that a product or service will satisfy given requirements of quality. Quality assurance is said to be a problem solving approach and preventive measure against wastage and failure. Ijaiya (2001) stated that prevention is the basis of quality assurance in any human organisation. He further stated that in human organisations such as the school system emphasis has shifted from quality control to quality assurance.

Assuring the quality of education provision is a fundamental aspect of gaining and maintaining credibility for programmes, institutions and national systems of education worldwide. Quality assurances is designed to prove and improve the quality of an institution's methods and educational products and outcomes. Ndilli (1988) perceived that the concept of quality has been one of the most important concepts in contemporary educational terminology.

Many educationists have attempted to define the quality of education and educational assurance. Quality as defined by the International Organisation for Standardisation (1994) is the totality of features and the characteristics of a product or services that bear on its ability to satisfy stated needs. According to Article II of the World Declaration on Education (2003), quality is a multidimensional concept which should encompass all the functions and activities in schools. Allele –Williams (2004) defines quality assurance in any educational institutions as that which indicates the pre-eminence and special features that makes the institution

distinct from other forms of institution. In a similar definition, Bolman and Deal (1984) indicated that educational reforms aimed at providing better quality in education worldwide and based on this, there must be reorganisation in order to achieve the stated goal.

Ndilli (1988) described the quality of education as dealing with issues of relevance, validity, functionalism and efficiency of education system in the achievement of national goals and objectives. According to Gaskell (1995), the heart of education is quality. Okafor (1990) explains that the quality of Nigeria refers to the degree of goodness and excellence in Nigeria's educational sector.

Oderinde (2004) enumerated two aspects of quality in education which are both internal and external. The internal aspect is the implementations of the school objectives while the external aspect deals with the implementation of the national objectives which are pre-requisites to the achievement of quality in the products and services of any nation. A systematic and consistent quality assurance (QA) system will help to establish a good reputation and image in Nigeria in the 21st century. It includes defined standard of achievement, process, established ways of responding to issues and clear accountability for outcomes. The result of good quality assurance in a nation is adequate security, public confidence, more satisfied students, efficient processes and staff who are likely to experience better quality instructions, learning materials and interactions with the institution and its staff, leading to enhanced learning outcomes.

Middlehurst (2001) described the scope of quality assurance as including the following dimensions:

- 1) Regulation (legal frameworks, governance, responsibilities and accountabilities, etc.)

- 2) Educational process (admissions, registrations or enrolment, curriculum design and delivery, support for leaving, assessment etc).
- 3) Curriculum design and content (validation and approval frameworks, levels and standards etc).
- 4) Learning experience (consumer protection, students experience, complaints and appeals etc).
- 5) Outcomes (qualifications, certificates, transcripts, security, transferability, recognition, currency and value, etc)

In summary, Middlehurst sees quality as a grade of achievement and a standard against which to judge others.

In the same vein, UNESCO (1998) says quality in education is multidimensional and embraces all functions and activities of school including teaching, academic programmes, research and scholarship, staffing, students, buildings, facilities, equipment, services to the community and the academic environment. Quality may also be considered on the basis of how good and efficient the teachers are; how adequate and accessible the facilities and materials needed for effective teaching and learning are; and how prepared the graduates are for meeting the challenges of life and for solving the societal problems. By this conceptual understanding, it can be said that the emphasis on quality assurance is the training of personnel to enhance their performance in work places. The conceptual overview indicates that the current state of security matters and quality assurance in Nigeria does not allow for development and therefore leaves a “question mark” in Nigeria’s educational curriculum.

Curricular Implications

Today, the situation of Nigeria security is in a “sorry” condition which breeds fear among Nigerians. Nigerians no longer feel safe due to the incessant cases of bomb blast in various places in Nigeria such as Abuja, Jos and Suleja to name a few. Kidnapping has become the common and easiest business in Nigeria. Armed robbery, fraud, assassination, rape, ritual killings, Internet crimes and several other social vices and uncertainties are now very rampant in Nigeria.

The insecurity of life and properties has jeopardised the quality assurance status of Nigeria’s products and services provided by the Nigeria workforce. The certificates of Nigerian graduates at various levels of education is now “questionable” because Nigerians acquire certificates without knowledge. This is because most schools offer incomplete services due to incessant closures due to one economic issue or the other such as strike, bombings, fear of vandalisation, social unrest, industrial relation actions and political instability. The high level of insecurity in Nigeria has greatly destabilised the smooth operations of economic activities leading to a decline in quality assurance and underdevelopment in Nigeria in the 21st century.

Yusuf Alli in a report from The Nation Newspaper of 12th September, 2011 revealed that security has been tightened in all the service buildings in Abuja and Jos by the Armed forces and other security agencies. Most workers in Abuja and Jos now undergo security check before being allowed into their offices. This is part of the precautionary measures against terrorist groups that may be responsible for the bombings in Nigeria. Also there are heavy security checks on all roads in Abuja and Jos. Even officers and men of the armed forces and other security agents, no matter their ranks are now being subjected to security checks at random intervals because no one can tell who is working for any terrorist

organisation. It appears as if the high level of insecurity and decline in quality assurance is an indication that the Nigeria educational curriculum is beginning to lose significance since it no longer reshape Nigerians into better citizens and consequently leads to underdevelopment.

Recommendations

- 1) The Federal government should provide adequate lecture and laboratory spaces, necessary reagents and modern day instructional facilities like projectors, computer based programmed maps to enhance the attainment of the curriculum objectives, thus ensuring quality assurance.
- 2) The government should also create an enabling environment suitable for learning such as an environment free from bomb blast, kidnapping, instability, labour-management or government disputes, armed robbery and other vices.
- 3) Adequate funding should be made available from managing agencies to ensure quality assurance in Nigeria schools. The non-availability of adequate funding for requisite equipment and materials have taunted the standards that need to be put in place and the morale of the teachers before assessing quality assurance.
- 4) Quality assurance committee should be set up at various educational levels and institutional levels to see to the effective execution of accreditation recommendation. A feedback system should be set up to ensure that the recommendations of the accreditation teams are implemented accordingly. It is important for student to be involved in the system.
- 5) The Nigeria educational curriculum should be reviewed and reformed to bring in innovations that will reform the learner on how to response appropriately to security issues to enhance the security and quality assurance. Security education should be incorporated in the curriculum for all levels of education to enable Nigerians to be

security conscious through awareness and orientation on security tips and appropriate reaction to security matters.

- 6) Religious organisations should make effort to sensitise the people on the need to be vigilant and watchful on security issues. “Safety First” should be the watchword.
- 7) The government should organise seminars and workshops in schools and public centres to sensitize Nigerians on the need to maintain good quality assurance in various sectors of the economy.
- 8) Quality assurance agencies in all sectors of the economy should adhere strictly to their regulations and functions when carrying out their job to ensure good quality of products and services in Nigeria.

Conclusion

This paper has extensively discussed the current state of security matters and quality assurance in the development of Nigeria in the 21st century. The paper also gave an insight into the conceptual view of security and quality assurance in Nigeria. It is quite clear from the foregoing that for Nigeria to achieve good security and quality assurance for development, crucial issues of policy, funding, data, curriculum review and capacity building gaps must be squarely addressed by various managers and stakeholders in all sectors of the economy.

Finally, some curricular implications and recommendations are presented. These include setting up quality assurance committee at the institutional level, adequate funding and inclusion of security education in Nigeria’s curriculum. It is hoped that if these recommendations are given the consideration they deserve, the security matters and quality assurance for the development of Nigeria in the 21st century will be improved and sustained.

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