Quality Assurance as A Correlate to Quality Education Delivery in Public Universities in Rivers State

Osuji Catherine U, Blessing Wey-Amaewhule, and Njoku Chinesom
Department of Educational Management,
Faculty of Education, Rivers State University
catherine.osuji@ust.edu.ng, blessing.wey-amaewhule@ust.edu.ng,
chinesom.njoku@ust.edu.ng
DOI: 10.56201/wjimt.v8.no5.2024.pg34.44

Abstract

This study examined quality assurance as a correlate to quality education delivery in public universities in Rivers State. The study was guided by three research objectives, three research questions and three hypotheses. The study adopted a correlational survey design with a population of 3,647 staff comprising 92 principal officers and 3,554 lecturers in the three public universities in Rivers State. The sample size of the study was 453 respondents comprising 92 principal officers and management staff and 360 lecturers of the three public universities in Rivers State. The instruments for data collection were self-designed questionnaires titled: Quality Assurance in Public Universities Administration Questionnaire" and "Quality Education Delivery Questionnaire" respectively. The instruments were validated by two experts in Measurement and Evaluation. The internal consistencies were determined using the Cronbach Alpha method. Reliability coefficients of 0.88, 0.76, 0.90, and 0.83 were obtained. The research questions were answered using Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistics. The hypotheses were further subjected to t-transformation to establish the significance of the r-value at 0.05 level of significance. The result of the analyzed data revealed among others that respondents were of the opinion that there is a high and positive relationship between quality assurance in continuous Professional training, infrastructure development, management of finance and quality education delivery in Rivers State. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that University administrators should undertake periodic survey on the training needs of staff of public universities and make recommendations to the school authority. This will improve efficiency of the staff and the quality of education provided.

Key Words: Administrators, Continuous Professional Training, Infrastructure, Quality Assurance, Quality Education Delivery

Introduction

Education plays an indispensable role in the development of every nation. It is one of the major factors that determine the level of development of nations. Most developed countries attained their status due to the quality of education they have continued to provide for their citizens overtime. This eventually reflects in the quality of healthcare, governance, banking, engineering and other services they enjoy from professionals trained in their education system.

Many definitions of quality in education exist, testifying to its complexity and multifaceted nature. It is a multidimensional concept, which encompasses all the functions and activities in

schools. Adegbesan, (2019) views quality as what could be judged by both its ability to enable students to perform well in standard examinations and relevance to the needs of students, community, and the society as a whole. He concluded that quality serves as determination of graduation based on standard of excellence beneath which a mark of inferiority is imposed and above which grades of superiority are defined. Similarly, quality assurance in the university system implies the ability of the institutions to meet the expectations of the users of manpower in relation to the skills acquired by their outputs (Ajayi & Akindutire, 2017).

Quality assurance (QA) is a vital component of higher education institutions, ensuring that academic programs, administrative processes, and services meet established standards. In public universities, QA is crucial for maintaining excellence in education delivery, research, and community engagement. Effective QA mechanisms promote accountability, transparency, and continuous improvement, ultimately enhancing the quality of graduates and societal impact. (OECD, 2012). According to Sam-Kalagbor and Nwuke (2024), quality assurance has to do with policies, strategies and practices aimed at ensuring that secondary schools carryout programmes that meets high standards and deliver effective learning outcomes Quality education is a fundamental pillar for societal progress, and its significance at the secondary level cannot be overstated. In recent times, the need to enhance quality assurance mechanisms in secondary schools has gained prominence, particularly within specific regions such as Rivers State. Quality education is a fundamental pillar for societal progress, and its significance at the secondary level cannot be overstated. Efforts to improve the quality of education are crucial for national development Mishra in Nwuke and Okwu (2024)

Academic standard refers to the level of quality, rigor, and achievement expected in educational institutions(OECD,2014). According to National Research Council, (2020) Academic standards are the learning goals and expectations for students, outlining what they should know, understand, and be able to do in various subjects and disciplines. The key aspects of academic standard include: Curriculum design and content, assessment and evaluation methods, teaching and learning strategies, student performance expectations and institutional accreditation and accountability.

A university, according to Alemu (2018), is a higher learning institution that brings men and women to a high level of intellectual development in the arts and science, and in the traditional professional disciplines, and promotes high-level research. A university is an institution that is aimed at providing students with skills and knowledge relevant to the labor market (Ugiomoh, 2022). Oyewale (2021) viewed a university as a higher education institution that equips students with adequate and relevant job skills for today's modern world. A university is a specialized institution of higher learning that provides students with professional competence and academic excellence. (Agholor, (2020); Brennan, Cochrane, Lebeau, and Williams, (2018)

Allan, (2019) defines university administration as the management and leadership of a university, responsible for overseeing academic programs, research, student affairs, finance, and other operational aspects. University administration encompasses the planning, organizing, leading, and controlling of resources to achieve the institution's mission and goals. (Agholor, 2020). Kaplin (2020) stated that a university administration includes the president, provost, deans, department chairs, and other officials responsible for managing the institution's academic and non-academic programs.

Nigro in Amie-Ogan (2023) defined administration as the use of men and materials to accomplish a purpose. It is the process involving human beings jointly engaged in working towards common goals. Modern business management theory (2019) identifies six key functions of an administrator in an organization: Planning, organizing, staffing, directing, controlling, and budgeting. Skillful administration is essential to the success of any business or organization and requires a wide range of knowledge and skills.

Quality assurance in university administration is a vital aspect of ensuring the overall effectiveness and efficiency of academic institutions. The complexity of modern higher education institutions demands robust systems to monitor, evaluate, and enhance administrative processes. Quality assurance comprises administrative and procedural activities implemented in a quality system so that requirements and goals for a product, service or activity will be accomplished. Quality assurance measures could be carried out on the different administrators' responsibilities such as continuous staff development, provision of infrastructure, and management of finances.

Professional development reflects on renewal or upgrading of one's knowledge and skills in line with the new emerging realities and/or challenges arising from employees' profession. Quality assurance in staff training in universities involves several key considerations which include: training programmes should be tailored to the specific context of the university and its staff, develop training content that address the needs and challenges faced by staff in ensuring quality in education, utilize effective delivery methods that engage staff and promote active learning, define clear outcomes for the training program and establish mechanisms for assessing its effectiveness, implement processes for continuous improvement based on feedback and evaluation results (University of Bath, 2020).

According to World bank (2018), Infrastructure development refers to the process of designing, building, and maintaining physical structures and systems necessary for economic growth, social well-being, and quality of life. Infrastructure development is critical to quality education delivery, as it provides the necessary physical environment for effective teaching and learning. (UNESCO, 2019)

Management of finance: this is a very vital part of every organisation. For any organisation to survive, there should be proper accountability and management of finance in the institution. Brigham & Ehrhardt (2019) defined management of finance as the planning, organizing, directing, and controlling of financial resources to achieve organizational goals and objectives. According to World bank (2018) Financial management is a critical component of quality education delivery, as it ensures the effective allocation of resources. Financial Management ensures financial stability and sustainability, optimizes resource allocation, enhances decision-making .and minimizes financial risks.

It is worthy of note that there has been public outcry on the quality of graduates turned out from various public universities in Rivers State. Employers of labour are complaining that most graduates from public universities are unemployable. This has a ripple effect on the entire society as it leads to mediocre personnel manning various sectors of the economy which underscores the need for quality assurance in the administration of these universities. It is against this background that this study examined quality assurance as a correlate to quality education delivery in public universities in Rivers State

Statement of the Problem

Universities are the highest citadel of learning in the formal education structure. They are set up with the goal of training high level manpower needed for various sectors of the economy and to generate knowledge through research. The success of a university is determined to a large extent by how effective the administration of the university is.

The situation in public universities in Rivers State has been quite disturbing as there seems to be compromise in provision of facilities, professional development and management of finance. It has been observed that in most of these universities lecturers individually buy personal power generators to generate power to enable them work in their offices since the university management have complained of not being able to bear the cost of generating power. Furthermore, unlike what is obtainable in most advanced societies, lecturers are unable to access funds for continuous professional training which affects their productivity. All these issues question the effectiveness of the administrative structure of the Universities which is saddled with the responsibility of managing university resources, provision of infrastructure, continuous professional development and management of finance. Although, public universities in Rivers State have quality assurance directorates, often times their activities are targeted at assuring quality on operations of academic and other non-academic staff. They do not oversee activities of university administrators. The question then is, is there any relationship between quality assurance in public universities administration and quality education delivery in Rivers State? This study is poised to unravel plausible answers to the above question. Hence, the study investigated "quality assurance as a correlate to quality education delivery in public universities in Rivers State

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to examined quality assurance as a correlate to quality education delivery in public universities in Rivers State. Specifically, the study sought to achieve the following objectives:

1. Examine the relationship between provision of infrastructure in public universities and quality education delivery in Rivers State.
2. Find out the relationship between quality assurance in continuous professional development in public universities and quality education delivery in Rivers State.
3. Determine the relationship between quality assurance in management of finance in public universities and quality education delivery in Rivers State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:
1. What is the relationship between provision of infrastructure in public universities and quality education delivery in Rivers State?
2. What is the relationship between quality assurance in continuous professional development in public universities and quality education delivery in Rivers State?
3. What is the relationship between quality assurance in management of finance in public universities and quality education delivery in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant relationship between quality assurance in provision of infrastructure in public universities and quality education delivery in Rivers State.
2. There is no significant relationship between quality assurance in continuous professional development in public universities and quality education delivery in Rivers State.
3. There is no significant relationship between quality assurance in management of finance in public universities and quality education delivery in Rivers State.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a correlational research design. The study was carried out in Rivers State. The population of the study was 3,646 staff comprising 92 principal officers and Management Staff and 3,554 lecturers in the three public universities in Rivers State. These are University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. Taro Yamane formula was used to determine the sample size of lecturers of the three universities while the entire 92 management staff was studied without samplings. The instrument for data collection in this study were two sets of self-designed questionnaires tagged "Quality Assurance in Public Universities Administration Questionnaire" (QAPUAQ) and "Quality Education Delivery Questionnaire" (QEDQ). Responses to the questionnaire items were designed on a summated 4-point rating scale of: Strongly Agree (SA)=4, Agree (A)=3, Strongly Disagree (SD)=2, and Disagree (D)=1. To validate the instrument, face and content validity was adopted. Cronbach Alpha was used to determine the reliability of the instrument. The instrument was administered on 20 management staff in Niger Delta University, Bayelsa State which is outside the study area. The responses of the respondents were analyzed using Cronbach Alpha. Reliability coefficients of 0.88, 0.85, 0.89 and 0.83 were obtained for the various clusters of the two instruments. The research questions were answered using Pearson Product Moment Correlation – (PPMC). While the null hypotheses were tested using t-transformation at 0.05 level of significance with a critical value of $\pm$ 1.96.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between quality assurance in provision of infrastructure in public universities and quality education delivery in Rivers State?

Table 1.1: PPMC Analysis on the Relationship between Quality Assurance in Provision of Infrastructure in Public Universities and Quality Education Delivery in Rivers State

Variable	N	$\sum X \sum Y$	$\sum X^2 \sum Y^2$	$\sum X \sum Y$	r-cal	Remarks
Quality assurance in provision of infrastructure (X)	443	714.32	2665.10			
				2896.03	0.59	Moderate and Positive Relationship
Quality Education Delivery (Y)	443	1104.01	2426.01			

Source: Researcher SPSS Statistical Output (2024)

The analysis on Table 1.1 revealed that the correlation value of r is 0.59. This value is moderate and positive which implies that there is a moderate and positive relationship between quality assurance in provision of infrastructure in public universities and quality education delivery in Rivers State. In other words, this means that quality assurance in provision of infrastructure in public universities would lead to a moderately corresponding improvement in education delivery in Rivers State.

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between quality assurance in continuous professional development in public universities and quality education delivery in Rivers State?

Table 2.2: PPMC Analysis on the Relationship between Quality Assurance in Continuous Professional Development in Public Universities and Quality Education Delivery in Rivers State

Variable	N	$\sum X \sum Y$	$\sum X^2 \sum Y^2$	$\sum X \sum Y$	r-cal	Remarks
Quality assurance in continuous professional development (X)	443	645.30	2224.21			
				3334.12	0.79	High and Positive Relationship
Quality Education Delivery (Y)	443	3201.01	3102.06			

Source: Researcher SPSS Statistical Output (2024)

The analysis on Table 2.2 revealed that the correlation value of r is 0.79. This value is high and positive which implies that there is high and positive relationship between quality assurance in continuous professional development in public universities and quality education delivery in Rivers State. This implies that quality assurance in continuous professional development in public universities would lead to corresponding improvement in administration of public universities in Rivers State.

Research Question 3: What is the relationship between quality assurance in management of finance in public universities and quality education delivery in Rivers State?

Table 4.6: PPMC Analysis on the Relationship between Quality Assurance in Management of Finance in Public Universities and Quality Education Delivery in Rivers State

Variable	N	$\sum X \sum Y$	$\sum X^2 \sum Y^2$	$\sum X \sum Y$	r-cal	Remarks
Quality assurance in management of finance in public universities (X)	443	799.01	2003.01			
				2164.12	0.90	High and Positive Relationship
Quality Education Delivery (Y)	443	2311.01	3103.06			

Source: Researcher SPSS Statistical Output (2024)

The analysis on Table 3.3 revealed that the correlation value of r is 0.90. This value is high and positive which implies that there is high and positive relationship between quality assurance in management of finance in public universities and quality education delivery in Rivers State. This implies that quality assurance in the management of finance in public universities would lead to improved education delivery in Rivers State.

Test of Hypotheses

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between quality assurance in provision of infrastructure in public universities and quality education delivery in Rivers State.

Table 4.4:   t-Transformation Analysis of the Relationship between Quality Assurance in Provision of Infrastructure in Public Universities and Quality Education Delivery in Rivers State.

Variable	N	$\sum X \sum Y$	$\sum X^2 \sum Y^2$	$\sum X \sum Y$	Df	$\propto$	r_{cal}	t_{cal}	t_{crit}	P-value	Rmk
Quality assurance in provision of infrastructure (X)	443	714.32	2665.10								
				2896.03	441	0.05	0.59	19.05	±1.96	0.01	Sig. Reject H1
Quality Education Delivery (Y)	443	1104.01	2426.01								

The analysis in Table 4.4 showed t- transformation on the relationship between quality assurance in provision of infrastructure in public universities and quality education delivery in Rivers State. Result from Table 4.4 revealed that the t-cal. which is 19.05 is higher than the t-crit. of ±1.96. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between quality assurance in provision of infrastructure in public universities and quality education delivery in Rivers State was rejected. This implied that there is a significant relationship between quality assurance in provision of infrastructure in public universities and quality education delivery in Rivers State.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between quality assurance in continuous professional development in public universities and quality education delivery in Rivers State.

Table 4.5:   t-Transformation Analysis of the Relationship between Quality Assurance in Continuous Professional Development in Public Universities and Quality Education Delivery in Rivers State

Variable	N	$\sum X \sum Y$	$\sum X^2 \sum Y^2$	$\sum X \sum Y$	Df	$\propto$	r_{cal}	t_{cal}	t_{crit}	P-value	Rmk
Quality assurance in continuous professional	443	645.30	2224.21								

Variable	N	∑X ∑Y	∑X²∑Y²	∑X∑Y	Df	∝	r_{cal}	t_{cal}	t_{crit}	P-value	Rmk
development (X)											
				3334.12	441	0.05	0.79	20.09	±1.96	0.04	Sig. Reject H_2
Quality Education Delivery (Y)	443	3201.01	3102.06								

The analysis in Table 4.5 showed t- transformation on the relationship between quality assurance in continuous professional development in public universities and quality education delivery in Rivers State. Result from Table 4.5 revealed that the t-cal. which is 20.09 is higher than the t-crit. of ±1.96. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between quality assurance in continuous professional development in public universities and quality education delivery in Rivers State was rejected. This implied that there is a significant relationship between quality assurance in continuous professional development in public universities and quality education delivery in Rivers State.

Ho₃: There is no significant relationship between quality assurance in management of finance in public universities and quality education delivery in Rivers State.

Table 4.6: t-Transformation Analysis of the Relationship between Quality Assurance in Management of Finance in Public Universities and Quality Education Delivery In Rivers State

Variable	N	∑X ∑Y	∑X²∑ ∑Y²	∑X∑ ∑Y	Df	∝	r_{cal}	t_{cal}	t_{crit}	P-value	Rmk
Quality assurance in management of finance in public universities (X)	443	799.01	2003.01								
				2164.12	441	0.05	0.90	18.04	±1.96	0.02	Sig. Reject H_3
Quality Education Delivery (Y)	443	2311.01	3103.06								

The analysis in Table 4.6 showed that the t- transformation on the relationship between quality assurance in management of finance in public universities and quality education delivery in Rivers State. Result from Table 4.6 revealed that the t-cal. which is 18.04 is higher than the t-crit. of ±1.96. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between quality assurance in management of finance in public universities and quality education delivery in Rivers State was rejected. This implied that there is a significant relationship between quality assurance in management of finance in public universities and quality education delivery in Rivers State.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study for research question 1 showed that there is a moderately positive relationship between quality assurance in provision of infrastructure in public universities and

quality education delivery in Rivers State with r-value of 0.89. The corresponding hypothesis 1 revealed that there is a significant relationship between quality assurance in provision of infrastructure in public universities and quality education delivery in Rivers State with a t-transformation of 0.01. Since the t-critical value of ±1.96 is higher than the t-transformation value of 0.01, the null hypothesis is accepted and the alternative rejected. Hence there is a significant relationship between quality assurance in provision of infrastructures and quality education delivery in Rivers state. This finding disagrees with the findings of Asiyai (2014) which revealed that well-equipped and maintained facilities enhance student engagement, facilitate hands-on learning experiences, and support diverse teaching methodologies, ultimately contributing to improved academic outcomes.

. The findings of the study for research question 2 revealed that there is a high positive relationship between quality assurance in continuous professional development in public universities and quality education delivery in Rivers State with r-value of 0.79. The corresponding hypothesis 2 revealed that there is a significant relationship between quality assurance in continuous professional development in public universities and quality education delivery in Rivers State with a t-transformation of 0.04. Since the t-critical value of ±1.96 is higher than the t-transformation value of 0.01, the null hypothesis is accepted and the alternative rejected. Hence there is a significant relationship between quality assurance in continuous professional development and quality education delivery in Rivers state.

This finding is in support of the findings of a study by Osuji and Uriri (2022) which revealed that professional development as quality assurance will help in quality instructional delivery in universities in Rivers State The result of the findings for research question 3 revealed that there is a high positive relationship between quality assurance in management of finance in public universities and quality education delivery in Rivers State with r-value of 0.90. The corresponding hypothesis 3 revealed that there is a significant relationship between quality assurance in management of finance in public universities and quality education delivery in Rivers State with a t-transformation of 0.02. Since the t-critical value of ±1.96 is higher than the t-transformation value of 0.01, the null hypothesis is accepted and the alternative rejected. Hence there is a significant relationship between quality assurance in management of finance and quality education delivery in Rivers state.

. This is in line with the findings of Dearden, Fitzsimoas, and Wyness (2011) which revealed that institutions with adequate financial resources can invest in infrastructure, hire and retain qualified faculty, provide student support services, and acquire necessary instructional materials, all of which contribute to improved educational outcomes.

Conclusion.
Based on the findings, it was concluded that there is positive and significant relationship between provision of infrastructure, continuous professional development, management of finance, and quality education delivery in Rivers State.

Recommendations
Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:
1. University management in public universities should provide an internal quality assurance team for checking infrastructure provided by donor agencies and the universities to ensure they meet up set standards.
2. The Quality Assurance Directorate should undertake periodic survey on the training needs of staff of public universities and make recommendations to the school authority,

TET fund and other stakeholders to support in the continuous training of staff. This will improve efficiency of the staff and the quality of education provided.

3. University administrators should subject their finance and bursary department, to external auditing and set up internal quality assurance team to overseer the management of finances.

REFERENCES

Adegbesan, S. O. (2019). Establishing quality assurance in Nigerian education system: Implication for educational managers. *Educational Research and Reviews*. 6(2), 147-151

Agholor, D. (2020).Enhancing academic excellence in university education. *Journal of Higher Education and Policy,*22(1), 1-12.

Ajayi, I. A. and Akindutire, I. O. (2017). The unresolved issues of quality assurance in Nigerian universities. *Journal of Sociology and Education in Africa* 6(1) 56-65

Alemu .S.K. (2018). Meaning, Idea and History of University and Higher Education: *Brief Literature Review, Fire Forum for International Research in Education,* 4 (3)

Allan M. Hoffman (2019).University Administration: A Guide to Leadership and Management" Retrieved 15th Jan. 2024 from https://.www.researchgate.net

Amie-Ogan O.T (2023) Overwiew of Educational administration and educational management. In Amie-ogan,).O.T., Amadi, E. C., Osuji, C. U., Wey-Amaewhule, B. & Sam-Kalagbor, V.O. (Eds) *Educational management: Principles and Practice*. Port Harcourt C.W. Gbekee Ventures.

Amie-Ogan, O.T. & Epelle V. (2023) university autonomy and effective administration of Rivers State universities in Nigeria. *International Journal of Advanced Research and Learning*. 2 (4) 50-57

Asiyai, R. I. (2014). Management strategies for improving the functionality of tertiary education in Nigeria. *International Journal of Higher Education*, 8(4), 108- 114.

Brennan, J., Cochrane, A., Lebeau, Y., & Williams, G. (2018).The University in its Place: *A* Brigham & Ehrhardt (2019). Financial Management. Universal Press Publishers

Cobart, E. P. (2019).*School funding and their appointment*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Dearden,L, Fitzsimionas, E & Wyness, G.(2011). The Impact of tuition Fees and Support on University Participation in the United Kingdom. Retrieved on 12th March 2024 from https:// www.ideas.researchgate.net.

Ehiametalor, E. T. (2017). School facilities: Management practice in Nigeria. In N.A. Nwaguru, E. T. Ehiametalor, and M. A. Ogundu, M. Nwadiami (Eds), *Current issues in educational management in Nigeria*, 305-319. NAEAP Publication. Benin City: Ambik Press Ltd..

Financial of Management & Analysis, 28(1) 1-12.

Guthrie, J. (2019). Quality assurance in financial management: A review of the literature.

James, F. (2015). Interrogational equity issues of principles in allocation of social resources. Retrieved 20thJanury, 2024 from htpp//www.aph.gov.au.

Kaplin, W. A. (2020). The Law of Higher Education. London: Jossey-Bass.

Nwuke, T. J., & Okwu, F. B. (2024). Innovative funding strategies to financing quality assurance in secondary schools in Rivers State. *International Journal of Academia*, *7*(1).

OECD (2012). Quality Education for All: OECD Policy Brief. London: OECD Publishing.

OECD. (2014). Education at a Glance.London: OECD Publishing.

Osuji, C., & Uriri, C. (2022). Quality Assurance Strategies and Instructional Delivery in Universities in Rivers State. *International Journal of Contemporary Academic Research*, *3*(2).

Oyewale, A. (2021). Repositioning university education for sustainable development. Journal of Education and Sustainable Development, 15(2), 123-136.

Sam-Kalagbor, V. O., & Nwuke, T. J. (2024). Administrative strategies of principals in ensuring quality assurance in government owned schools in Rivers State. *African Education Indices*, *13(*1).

Subair, S. O. (2018). Infrastructure, welfare services and students' perceived motivation to learning in universities in South-West Nigeria. An Unpublished PhD thesis, Department of Educational Administration, University of Lagos.

Ugiomoh, M. (2022). Revitalizing university education in Nigeria. Journal of Higher Education

UNESCO. (2015). Education 2030: Framework for Action. Paris: UNESCO.

World Bank (2018). Constructing knowledge societies for tertiary education. Washington: