Quality Assurance Activities in Adult and Non-Formal Education Programme in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: The paper titled quality assurance activities in adult and non-formal education programme in Nigeria examined different concepts of quality and quality assurance. For instance, quality means efficiency in meeting goals, relevant to human and environmental conditions and needs. While quality assurance is viewed as the standard of excellence that should be in conformity to a given level of excellence which represents particular standards or specifications. The paper also discusses on the goals of quality assurance and scope of quality assurance in adult and non-formal education. The paper further discusses the issue of monitoring and evaluation for instance, monitoring is a systematic activity which aims at assessing progress, impact, and otherwise of a design programmes. While, evaluation is a set on tests to determine how far the programme reached. Three prospects of monitoring were identified these are: provision of good information, monitoring of project and programme help greatly to control costs of projects and programmes and maintain the use of good standards. The paper also discusses on data collection process collection on adult and non-formal education. Lastly the paper ended with conclusion.

INTRODUCTION: Quality can be referred to mean standard of a product quality could be achieved when there are quality resources for production. Adult and Non-Formal Education programmes are designed with aim of producing quality human beings in different skills. The federal government of Nigeria sees the impact of the programme in curtailing the deficiency of the teaming population of Nigerian youths educationally, socially, political and economically. Mechanisms were set out on how these are going to be achieved by ensuring that provision for required resources are in place from personnel, materials, spaces and funds. Having put these in place brought about what will cater for the needs of different individual adults and youth needs. Programmes were set aside ranging from adult literacy education, post-literacy education, continuing education, vocational education etc. All these are meant to take care of the various needs of Nigerian citizens. In order to ensure certainty in delivery of the programme quality assurance departments were created with qualified personnel to always check and confirm that activities were conducted in accordance to the action plan.

CONCEPT OF QUALITY

Quality is all about good products that cherish public interest for patronage. Ajayi and Adegbesan (2007) re-affirm that quality is the total of the features of a process, product or service on its performance in customers or clients perception of that performance. It is not just a feature of a finished product or services but involves a focus on internal processes and outputs including the reduction of waste and the improvement or productivity. Fadokun, (2005) characterized quality by three interrelated and interdependent stands, efficiency in the meeting of its goals, relevance to human and environmental conditions and needs, something more that is the exploration of new ideas, the pursuit of excellence and encouragement of creativity.

With regards to education, the international institution for educational planning (IIEP) views quality from different perspectives. First is from the internal criteria of the system such as profile expiration and the external criteria which are the fitness and relevance of such education to its environment. Arikewugo (2004) views quality in education to be judged by both its ability to enable the students perform well in standard examinations and relevance to the needs of the students, community, and the society as a whole. Arikewugo finally concluded that quality serves as determinants of gradations based on standard of excellence beneath which a mark of inferiority is imposed or adduced and above which grades of superiority are defined. Ijaiya (2001) view quality as a concept concerned with how good or bad a product is, though difficult to deliver.

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CONCEPTS OF QUALITY ASSURANCE

Quality Assurance is a continuous process of monitoring and enhancement predicated upon provider autonomy, the professional competence of staff/facilitators and the active involvement of learners that provides public accountability for future reference. (Boland, 2018). Quality assurance is viewed as the standard of excellence that should be in conformity to a given level of excellence which represents particular standards or specifications (Aworh, 2005, in Adewale, 2016). the author further stressed that quality can only be achieved if those trusted with various functions perform them well. Thus, quality is usually specified with measurable indicators for comparative purpose. Howeover, quality assurance is viewed as the management of goods, services and activities from the input stage, through processes, to the output stage of production aimed at preventing quality problems and ensuring that only conforming products reach the customer (UBEC, 2012). In addition to this, quality assurance is also viewed as a process which involves the process of monitoring, assessing and evaluating as objectively as possible all aspects of schools life and communicating the outcome to all concerned with the aim of improving standard (FME, 2010). In other word, Wilger (1997) in Adewale (2016) argue that quality assurance is a collective process by which an academic institution ensures that the quality of education process is maintained to the standard it has set for itself. Therefore, one can conclude that quality assurance is an encompassing concept which includes all processes, policies and actions through which the quality of education is developed, improved and maintained.

GOALS OF QUALITY ASSURANCE IN ADULT AND NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

Goals are referred to be broad aspects to be achieved in a life time. Adult and non-formal education is a programme targeted to produce manpower requirement in some certain portion of country economy. Adult and non-formal education is a wide range of programmes with specific aim of producing adults with various degrees of skills in Reading, Writing and Arithmetic. In other words it is the type of education concerned with apprentice, on the job training, aesthetic education etc. The recognized body known as United Nations Organisation cited by Imhabekhai (2006) that non-formal education is: An integral part of the entire system of education, lying institutionally and significantly outside the formal system of education, and very much a supplement as well as a complement to it. It is the product of change and development in society, and it covers a wide range of activities, depending on the prevailing social, economic and political circumstances.

However, Adult and non-formal education serves as an essential instrument for creating awareness and consciousness for all youths and adults in the society, which enables them have more critical views of social, economic and political conditions in their given environments. It will also become a process of removing obstacles and impediments as well as bridging the gaps in education from policy to practice.

The goals of quality assurance are not beyond the goals of Adult Education since it is to ensure compliance to the outlined goals of the policies of adult and non-formal education. The quality assurance personnel are within the adult and non-formal education organization at each level of government who are charge with the responsibilities to ensuring adequate provision of resources, quality and quantity of facilitators, implementation and delivery of curriculum design to the targeted audience. Therefore, the goals of quality assurance is to ensure that the goals of adult and non-formal education are attained to the maximum levels. The goals are follows as identified by Ebeye (2014):

The adult and non-formal education encourages all forms of functional education given to youths and adults outside the formal school system, such as functional literacy, remedial and vocational education. The goals of Adult and Non-formal Education shall be to:

a. Provide functional literacy and continuing education for adults and youths who have had the advantage of formal education or who did not complete their primary education. These include the nomads, migrant families, the disabled and other categories or groups, especially the disadvantaged gender.
b. Provide functional and remedial education for those young people who did not complete secondary education.
c. Provide education for different categories of completers of the formal education system in order to improve their basic knowledge and skills.
d. Provide in-service, on-the-job, vocational and professional training for different categories of workers and professionals in order to improve their skill and,
e. To give the adult citizens of the country necessary aesthetic, cultural and civic   education for public enlightenment.

The core responsibilities of quality assurance department in Federal, State and Local Government is to make sure these outlined goals are met through constant supervision, monitoring and inspection at regular basis. Not only that, and to put in their report what is needed and make recommendations for the provision of those required facilitie

SCOPE OF QUALITY ASSURANCE IN ADULT AND NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

The scope of quality assurance is no different from the scope of conventional education which is to produce high quality students with qualification that will enable them become self-reliant. Adult and non-formal education may be different in terms of participants and purpose from each participant enrolled into a programme.

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Quality assurance is an umbrella concept for a host of activities that are designed to improve the quality of the non-formal education system. It embraces all the functions of the adult and non-formal activities as facilitating, personnel, structures, facilities and adult/youth development. The concern of quality assurance in adult and non-formal education is most desirable for the fact that it serves as foundation in creating a second opportunity for the teeming youth in a community. Ijaya (2010) opined that an educational system's (adult and non-formal) worth lies in its capability to continuously serve its customers, (community members, individual adults youths, employers) better and remains relevant. However, quantity in non-formal education sector is the main trust to produce people with required skills to function as good members of their societies, communities and country at large.

The utility value of quality assurance can be seen through the provision of information to the public and other interested parties about the worth or impact of the non-formal type of educational delivery system. It equally ensures accountability in respect of the investment of public funds (Okebukola 2007). Quality assurance is about ensuring that the sector is performing to expectations. It is also about compliance with regulations and checking the excesses of each departments concerns and performances within its responsibilities

Quality assurance practice is a systematic approach which as identified by Okebukola (2010) proposed a system approach to quality assurance. This demands that dimensions of input, process and output should be the focus. The input segment includes participants, facilitators, curriculum and facilities. On the process side, emphasis is on facilitation/and learning interactions, internal efficiency, evaluation procedure and management practices. The output includes the quality of beneficiaries of the programme as well as the system's external efficiency.

Resources mobilization distribution and utilization is critical to the activities of quality assurance personnel in adult and non formal educational programmes. At this point resources are the key factors determining the success of a programme. Their responsibilities are to ensure the availability of the required resources either human or material. Discharging their responsibility in bringing the resources required for the programme. Accordingly Obi (2011) as cited in Jegede (2019). That Quality assurance practice includes management of the quality of educational materials for adult and non-formal education development, as a part way for national development. It is a way of assuring the professional quality of a service or product such as adult and non-formal education for national development. It is equally the functions of quality assurance to make provision on resources for adult education programmes such as; physical resources which includes learning environment, classrooms, offices, material resources including instructional aides, stationery, education plans, objectives and prescribed methodologies; human resources (both facilitators and non-facilitating staff); and financial resources made up of all monetary input into the adult and non-formal educational system directed towards the achievement of specified objectives (Agabi, 2010).

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring is a systematic activity with the aim of assessing progress, impact and otherwise of a designed programme. While, evaluation is a set of test to determine how far the programme reached. The monitoring could be internal or internal depending on what type of the programme. Osman, (2002). Revealed that monitoring is the day-to-day management of the task of collecting and reviewing information that reveals how an operation is proceeding, and what aspects of it, if any, needs correcting. He further described that monitoring is a continuing function that uses the systematic collection of data on specified indicators to inform management, and the main stakeholders of an ongoing programme operation of the extent of progress and achievement on results in the use of allocated funds.

Mechanisms were provided to track the impact of programmes mounted for communities' livelihood, growth and development in communities, organizational activities and improved labor skills of workers. UNDAF (2017) considers monitoring to entail the regular and systematic assessment of performance, allowing an understanding of where programmes are in relation to planned results, and enabling the identification of issues requiring decision making to accelerate progress. Monitoring allows real-time learning and feeds into evaluation. Monitoring should be undertaken as close to real time as possible. Real-time monitoring approaches provide a constant flow of data and analysis to allow for timely decision-making. Advances in information communications and technology (ICT), such as SMS-based applications, facilitate real-time monitoring, and provide new opportunities to enhance the coherence and impact of the adult and non-formal educational systems. These tools offer new ways of working with governments, civil society organizations, researchers, citizen groups and communities, providing opportunities to innovate and adapt ways in which data are generated and used. They enable broader participation of populations in programme development and delivery, and facilitate quick feedback to service providers and authorities on programme interventions. Evaluation refers to a systematic and impartial assessment of a policy, programme, strategy or other intervention, to determine its relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability to support decision-making. It seeks to strengthen programme accountability and learning. Drawing from a solid development of theories of change and results frameworks, monitoring establishes the foundation for credible evaluations.

Evaluation as a critical point in quality assurance is an aspect set to establish how far a programme has been achieved. In this place it is every point or plan of the programme that is analyzed in order to dissect steps involved in the action plan.

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Evaluation: this is a proper procedure done in a programme setting. It depends on accessible information which is utilized to shape ends. It could be developmental or summative. The point of assessment as quality assurance procedure is to perceive how the framework can be helped to enhance the present degree of execution. Evaluation in the word of Nafukho, Wawire & Lam, (2011) is about measuring the impact or contribution made by a programme, service or product.' It is important to point out the difference between monitoring and evaluation, since these two terms are often used interchangeably.

The prospects of monitoring adult education projects and programmes for sustainability in Nigeria are as follows:

1) **Provision of good information:** The provision of good information is seen as an important prospect of monitoring of adult education projects and programmes for sustainability in Nigeria. In the views of Feuerstein (1988), as cited in Ojo & Abu (2018), good monitoring of projects and programmes should provide regular information of activities to know the progress being made in the projects and programmes. The appropriate utilization of the information obtained from monitoring of projects and programmes is very vital for effective implementation and management of the concerned projects and programmes in human environment.

2) **Monitoring of projects and programmes helps greatly to control costs of projects and programmes:** The desire to keep monitoring of budgets of projects and programmes cannot be overemphasized for effective service delivery. Batchelor (2010) as cited in Ojo & Abu (2018) states that to keep monitoring of budget when the project is being implemented is an ideal thing in project implementation, this certainly, controls project costs in human environment.

3) **Maintain the use of good standard:** The desire to ensure that the use of good standard is being maintained is also another important prospect of monitoring of adult education projects and programmes for sustainability in Nigeria. Feuerstein (1988) as cited in Ojo & Abu (2018) rightly notes that monitoring of projects and programmes helps to see whether good standards are being maintained as well adherence to laid down action plans

DATA COLLECTION PROCESS ON ADULT AND NON-FORMAL EDUCATION PROGRAMME

A programme should gather and use data for the purposes of program improvement and accountability. Over the last several years, accountability has become an increasingly important issue in the operation of adult education programmes. The attention to this issue led to the establishment of regulatory bodies in countries. For instance, the National Reporting System (NRS), Nigeria National Council for Adult Education (NNCAE). The data-collection process also provides an important support to planning and evaluation processes. Data collection, therefore, is an important element in both accountability and programme improvement. (John & Lisa 200)

The professional wisdom literature identifies data-collection processes as supportive of planning and evaluation, monitoring, decision-making, and responding to requests for information (Cook, 1996; Mayer, 1987; MILG, 1990; Stein, 1993 as cited in John & Lisa 2006). For a data-collection system to operate effectively, staff should understand the role and importance of data collection and record keeping, have the skills or training necessary to carry out such tasks, and have clear, well-defined data-collection processes and procedures involved in it.

To ascertain the usefulness and feasibility of data collection, Stein (1993) suggests" that "facilitators/instructors, learners/students and administrators be involved in developing data collection procedures that can be integrated into ongoing programme activities". The researcher further recommends that processes for a periodic review should be considered most and documentation of data collected "in light of learner needs and satisfactions, programme goals, and funding requirements to assess progress and determine the need for change in programme processes and structures" are essential.

The information gathered through a programmers data-collection processes should be pertaining to learners/students, facilitators, administrative staff, and programmes activities and performance (Mayer, 1987). Data to be collected include: demographics, goals, learners attendance, test scores, other achievements, and outcomes for learners/students; personnel information, background and experience, job descriptions, course certificates, goals, and professional development plans for administrative staff; and program activities (including information on recruitment, intake, orientation, enrollment, wait lists, retention, course descriptions, and support service provision); program operations (including information on staff meetings, board and advisory meetings, and finance); and community information (including demographics, educational needs, resources, and referral links) (Cook, 1996, Mayer, 1987).

Data gathered should provide a programme and its funding sources/agencies with evidence of the programmes impact on learners/students (MILG, 1990). Data should be used to prepare reports, such as an annual report to the board of directors or advisory committee, funding sources/agencies, or the community at large (Mayer, 1987). Such a report would provide: financial statements; data on learners/students (in aggregate form), instructors, programme performance, and programme profile; an assessment of the programme accomplishments for the period earmarked; success stories; an updated assessment of literacy problems,social needs, health needs in the community; and a statement of future goals (Mayer, 1987).

CONCLUSION

Adult and Non-Formal Education is known as second chance to whoever missed the earlier opportunities to make use of it and meet with their life challenges. The programme is like any other programme designed must go along with quality in its provision,

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delivery services, human and material and quality products. Adult and Non-Formal Education consist of different programmes which provide adult youths with a means to be self-reliant and to earn their livelihood. These couldn't be attained without an organized body that will look after and ensure things are being done in according to the action plan. Therefore, provision of monitoring in every programme is necessary to ascertain quality. Quality assurance departments with well trained personnel must maintain standard in terms of quality and quantity of products. However, because of this adult and non-formal education emphasizes on quality in it programmes and ensures participation of programme beneficiaries, community members and all stakeholders in the decision making process.

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