Quality Assurance in the Effective Teaching and Learning of Adult Education for National Development and Sustainability in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This paper considers quality assurance in the teaching and learning of adult education for national development and sustainability. It starts with the prospects and analysis of adult education and the concepts of teaching and learning, quality and quality assurance. This is followed by the essential steps for the promotion of effective teaching and learning of adult education. The contributions of quality assurance in teaching and learning for National development and sustainability were highlighted with recommendations in the way forward. Thus, it can be concluded that quality assurance is going to be the catalyst in educational development for national development and sustainability in Nigeria.

Keywords: Quality assurance, effective teaching, learning and adult education.

INTRODUCTION

One of the cardinal objectives of the reform agenda of the Federal government is to strengthen education system by advancing its goals of continuous improvement in the teaching, student-learning and achievements in education. This portrays education as dynamic for its explicit ability to respond to rapid changes in the society and global scene. This therefore implies that all education sector-primary, secondary and tertiary should hitherto respond to this changes globally. The dynamic nature also entails a continuous review of educational programmes to keep abreast with emergent realities in adult education which is an integral aspect of general education.
Adult education is a collective name for all forms of schooling and learning programmes in which adults participate [1]. It is an exciting field with dynamism and great opportunities. Most recently, it is viewed as on critical element that buttresses a holistic system of education, a system which is flexible, diverse and efficient and responsive to knowledge economy. Adult education encompasses a wide variety of educational inputs, all aimed at enabling the individual learner to build on their innate capacities and acquire unique skills to reduce risks, face challenges and make informed decisions. The facilitators of adult education also will indicate attempt to train and improve the quality of practice, standardize professional response, better defined collection of persons as representing a field of adult education.

[2], reveal that there are more prospects towards a positive holistic approach to adult education than any other form of education because it makes important contributions to the emerging evidence through an in-depth exploration of the process involved in teaching complex diverse groups, facilitator preparation curriculum development and inter-institutional collaboration.

There are wide range of activities and practices that fall within the framework of adult education which provides the maximum standard guiding the provision of adult and non-formal education in Nigeria at different levels. Experts in adult and non-formal education [3], [4] and [5] view recent development issues in adult education and theses issues haunt them incessantly. Prominent among the issues are appropriate curriculum, learning materials, provision of adequate facilities and qualified facilitators.

To this effect therefore, policies and structures were received to move towards re-engineering a qualitative learning society. In a fashionable style, learning society refers to extending education beyond formal learning. It is an educational philosophy advocated by UNESCO that positions education as the key to a nation’s economy. Facilitators of adult education programme [2], [6] and [7]
have established the need for a spring board on which adult education programme will produce the right type of adult learners and adequate facilitators that the society needs for the purpose of re-volatilization and expansion of the programme. That summons the intimate relationship between learners and facilitators in their nature, their needs and interests respectively. This is also the recognition that adult learners should be able to adapt in the society so as to serve, and be useful to themselves. Also, adult education facilitators are meant to adopt the right approach and harness the interests of adult learners. In all these therefore, there is need for quality assurance.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

Quality is a concept often used in the context of standard which implies accepted principles, rules and guidelines. Equally, quality assurance can also be seen as a concept of total quality management so that every progress and activity is implemented right in time and appropriately [8].

Quality assurance according to [5] refer to a practice of ensuring that educational institutions deliver what they should deliver, and that what they deliver produces desired outcomes. It encompasses how learning is organized and managed, what the content of learning is, what level of learning is achieved, what it leads to in terms of outcomes and what goes on in the teaching and learning environment. The council for higher education accreditation in its glossary for international quality review as cited by [9], state that quality assurance is a planned and systematic review of any acceptable standards of education, scholarship, and infrastructure and being maintained and enhanced.

The fact about teaching and learning is that they are interrelated terms, one can hardly regard something as having been taught if it has not been learned. It is generally recognized, that the process of teaching is hardly complete if no learning
is stimulated. Teaching according to Duncan as cited by [10], is unique, professional, rational and human activity in which one creativity and imaginatively uses himself and his knowledge to promote learning and welfare of others. Learning is often a poorly defined concept. For many people, its meaning is biased towards what happens in the traditional schooling and training context. To learn would mean to acquire knowledge or skills through study experience or being taught. Learning is the act of acquiring new, or modifying and reinforcing. [3] defined learning as measurable and relatively permanent change in behaviour through experience, instruction, or study. Learning cannot be measured, but its results can be. It can also be defined as knowledge acquired by systematic study in any field.

Essential steps for the promotion of teaching and learning of adult education for quality assurance

[11], reveal that there are some inputs functions which planners place in order to promote the teaching and learning of adult education and achieve quality assurance namely- review or curriculum content, learning materials, provision of adequate facilities and properly trained adult educators/facilitators. All these variables are of great importance.

The first essential step to be taken for the promotion of effective teaching and learning in the quest for quality assurance is the review of curriculum content. Curriculum is defined as the formal and informal content and process by which learners gain knowledge and understand, develop skills and alter attitudes, appreciation and value under the auspices of the institution [12]. [13] defined curriculum as the sum total of the school’s planned programme of education designed to bring about desirable changes in behaviour. Curriculum content in adult education refer to the subject matter that is presented to adult learners during the instructional process in order to realize the curriculum objectives. The realization of the goal of the planned curriculum is predicated to a large extent on the selection of relevant curriculum content. This is why [14] suggested that the
following criteria must guide the selection of curriculum content. They include the criteria for validity, utility, significance, learnability and interest. [15] stated that a content remains valid if it can lead to the realization of curriculum objectives.

Another criterion of content validity is the authenticity of the subject matter to be selected. An authentic content must be true, and must reflect current research findings. [9] behoves that the criterion of utility demands that the curriculum content to be selected must be capable of helping adults learners to solve real life problems. This is because the major aim of adult education is to prepare adult learners to live useful lives in the society. The criterion of significance demands that for a content to be selected, it must be able to help adult learners to make the required progress.

The criterion for learnability demands that learners must be able to learn the content. For quality assurance in the learning of adult education, the curriculum planners must take into consideration, the age and mental development of adult learners. Finally, the criterion of interest demands that content to be selected for adult learners must be interesting because adult learners learn better when what they are learning is interesting.

The review of curriculum content for quality assurance in the effective teaching and learning of adult education must take into consideration the following this [9] revealed that adult educators must:

1. Take full advantage of adult local knowledge
2. Integrate activities of adult learners in order to promote learning
3. Adopt the contents according to what the adult learners already knew on their experiences
4. Make the contents appropriate for the level of literacy of adult learners
5. Incorporate subject areas that are of interest to the adult learners
6. Use new information and communication technologies to adult learners where available
7. Shape the contents to motivate adult learners and to promote learning after programme completion.

[13], asserts that for effective teaching, the facilitator must have good knowledge of the subject matter, effective use of teaching resources and effective use of communication skills. It is explicit that an adult education facilitator with all these competences must be committed and would implement the curriculum effectively. Thus an adult education facilitator becomes the vehicle that makes sure the curriculum is implemented effectively.

Second, the role of textbook and relevant learning materials in the promotion of quality assurance in adult education centers is very crucial. Textbook learning materials are known as curriculum materials [13]. They remain the vehicles or instruments, through which the curriculum contents are implemented.

[9], reveal that for effective teaching and learning for the quest of quality assurance, it is necessary to determine how to design, produce, write and disseminate basic and advanced materials to adult learners and their facilitators. Effective teaching and learning materials typically consist of adult education facilitator’s guide, textbooks for adult participants and facilitators supporting reading materials. These are very important and relevant in most of our adult education centers.

Third, the provision of adequate facilities in various adult education centers constitute another important input factors listed by [11] in the quest for the promotion of quality assurance in adult education. Such facilities include good school building, well ventilated adult education centers, good seats for adult learners comfort, functional library stock with relevant books/learning and teaching materials, adult recreational facilities. All these create the enabling environment for effective teaching and learning to strive.

Many scholars [4], [9] and [15] have revealed that there is a need for tremendous improvements in the
conditions and quality of adult education teaching and learning through improved infrastructures (classrooms, learning instructional materials).

Fourth, the development of adequate manpower resources is one of the most important contributions of the facilitator, specifically adult education facilitators for sustainable development of any society.

[16], stated this when they asserted that adult education facilitators play vital role in the educational development and the overall progress of the learner, the state and the nation for sustainability. Thus, adult education facilitator being at the center of the entire education at all levels is the most potent instrument for ensuring the fullest possible development of man and in consequence the nation. The adult education facilitators help to expose adult learners to numerous possibilities which they can explore to deal with their individual and group problems. This is why they are the initiators of creativity. The quality assurance towards national development and sustainability has in its core content of objectives that an adult educator/facilitator is expected to collate, encourage, reward, develop and disseminate creative ideals in the society through his/her learner creativity. In this way, [17], states that the students creative potentials are activated and used to solve problems within and outside the school environment. Also, [9], summarize the qualities an adult educator should possess as part of quality assurance for teaching and learning. They are as follows:

1. Understand and take into account the motivation and participation patterns of adult learners.
2. Understand and provide for the need of adult learners.
3. He/she is versed in the theory and experienced in the practice of adult education.
4. Know the community and its needs.
5. Know how to use the various methods and technologies of instruction.
6. Possess communication skills including listening.
7. Know where to locate and how to use educational materials.
8. Has an open mind and provides an atmosphere that allows adults to pursue their needs and interests.
9. Continue his own education.
10. Is able to appraise and evaluate programmes.

Contributions of quality assurance in teaching and learning for national development and sustainability in Nigeria

National development and sustainability are two interwoven concepts, each portraying how it would be used to attain growth in the country. For one, national development can be put in jeopardy if it has not been made to be sustained. According to [3], national development is the ability of a country to improve the social welfare of the people. It involves development of infrastructural facilities such as roads, hospitals, airports, schools, health, sports, as well as its citizenry. National development in the context of this study would refer to the improvement in the material welfare of the people as well as eradication of mass poverty and its correlates of illiteracy, diseases and short life expectancy. A nation is said to be developed when it can provide qualitative education and ensure adequate supply of basic amenities and food.

Sustainable development is a difficult concept to define, it is also continually evolving which makes it doubtfully difficult to define. [4], defined sustainable development as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Also [12] defined sustainable development is about improving human well being without jeopardizing anyone’s opportunities to do the same locally, globally or in the future. Consequently, to the attempted definition and explanations above, it is obvious that relation of quality assurance and national development for sustainability cannot be over emphasized. Worthy of note is the relevance of quality assurance to national analyst and planners who are primarily
concerned with the spatial aspect of development. This implies that, they are interested in how quality assurance of teaching and learning in adult education, national development and sustainability are reflected in space.

Teaching and learning of adult education in particular need to be critically examined, especially for the achievement of sustainable development. This point was strongly made by [18] when they stated that we must also take a critical look at the knowledge we handle.

Establishing quality assurance in any educational development is one of the most important contributions for any nation and the sustainable development of any society. Thus quality assurance becomes the most potent instrument for ensuring the fullest possible development of man and in consequence, the nation.

In today’s world, no nation would want to be lagging behind other nations. This calls for quality education that will propel the engine of educational development. Quality assurance is one of such imperative in education.

In fact, no nation whose adults have poor learning and teaching can hope for sustainable development. Rather all the world aspire to attain sustainable development for the overall welfare of the citizens. Also, without well trained and well developed facilitator, sustainability becomes impossible. This means that the level of Nigeria’s quality assurance is the sole determinant of the standard or yardstick for its sustainable development which depends on her level of educational attainment. The teaching and learning of adult education in various programmes should be watched sincerely and zealously to ensure sustainable development. Proper learning and teaching may be achieved through the application of quality assurance models to monitor the direction adult educational activities are moving and re-direct it to the course of sustainable development.

CONCLUSION
Quality assurance is a permanent solution in this millennium for learning and teaching of adult education activities and is going to be catalyst for national development and sustainability in Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Against this background of quality assurance in the learning and teaching of adult in sustainable development, the following recommendations have been made.

1. An enabling environment must be created for policy makers who ensure quality assurance to help the nation realize national development and the sustainability of it.

2. Educational policy makers should constantly adopt nouveau strategies in order to design ways for ensuring quality assurance for national development and sustainability.

REFERENCES


