



## INFLUENCE OF EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES MAINTENANCE PRACTICES ON QUALITY ASSURANCE IN PUBLIC HIGHER INSTITUTIONS IN LAGOS STATE, NIGERIA

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### ABSTRACT

School building improvement and maintenance are essential aspects of school plant management which requires constant attention and careful planning by administrators. The purpose of the study was ascertain if planned school maintenance programme feature in the activities of accreditation agencies. Research hypothesis was generated, the research is of correlational as well as ex-post facto design. The population of the study consisted of the of all the lecturers and undergraduate students of conventional public Higher Institutions in Lagos State. Data collected using two self developed questionnaires were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The results show that there is no significant difference regarding maintenance practices in federal and state owned higher educational institutions in Lagos State. The Null Hypothesis is therefore not rejected. It was concluded that the Architects and policy makers should endeavour to give Nigerians “maintenance – free buildings or building that required low level of maintenance.

**Key Words:** *Quality Assurance, Higher Institutions, Maintenance, Quality.*

### 1.1 Background to the Study

Education is a means of transmitting society's culture, establishing the present and improving or changing the future from one generation to another. It is the process of bringing about a change in human behaviour. As the oldest industry, it is the main instrument used by society to preserve, maintain and upgrade its social equilibrium. A society's future probably depends largely on the quality of its citizen's education, because education is a major determinant of the development of nations, since the sum of individual educational experiences has significant implications for aggregate macro conditions in the nation. Thus the relative importance of education as a process is that education is at the centre of policy discussions which affects human growth and development.

According to Friend-Pereira, Lutz and Heerens (2002), Quality Assurance (QA) clearly emerged as a principal business methodology in the Western world throughout the 1950s and in the early 1960s. It must be stated that the concept of ‘quality’ is rather elusive, because it expresses a relative, though, noticeable difference between one thing and another. Relative terms such as ‘better’, ‘superior’, ‘acceptable’ are applied to judge quality.

The quality assurance of teaching and learning as part of universities’ governance and quality management has become a major subject in higher education and higher education politics worldwide (Steinhardt, Schneijderberg,, Götze,, Baumann,, & Krücken,2016). Quality assurance should be viewed in the context of a country’s public policies to provide educational opportunities for citizens within the framework of school mapping and facility maintenance. The state has a regulatory role to assure that all education providers meet certain quality and equity standards. Quality is not determined solely by institutional type as a public or private institution, but on whether or not an institution adheres to externally established standards promulgated by the academic community (Johnstone, 2001).

The infrastructural development in higher education is complex and cost intensive. This is because it involves provision of buildings, classrooms, hostels, staff quarters, workshops, laboratories, Information Communication Technology (ICT) centres, libraries, health centres and sporting facilities. It also include provision of stimulating learning environment with adequate safety considerations.

School building improvement and maintenance according to the Department of Education (2010), are essential aspects of school plant management which requires constant attention and careful planning by administrators. The educational administrators need to undertake the maintenance and minor repair of the school buildings using available resources. This is necessary because educational buildings need to evolve and incorporate technical innovations in virtually all aspect of school facilities. In addition to basic checklist procedures, educational administrators should put in place prudent planning and proactive measures today that will allow flexible usage of school facilities.

## 1.2 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to find out the extent to which the accreditation agencies and state of educational facilities in higher institutions are contributing towards quality assurance in public higher institutions in Lagos State. Specifically and also to ascertain if planned school maintenance programme feature in the activities of accreditation agencies.

## 1.3 Research Hypothesis

H<sub>01</sub>: There is no statistical significant difference between federal and state owned institutions in Lagos State regarding maintenance practices towards the achievement of quality assurance.

## 1.4 Significance of the Study

The study is of significance to education sector stakeholders, that is, the government, teachers, parents and guardians, students and others by assisting towards the establishment of culture of quality within the institutions of higher learning. Due to globalization, there is increasing importance of higher education to competitiveness and economic development. Changes brought about by the transition to a knowledge economy have resulted to increase in demand for higher skill levels in most occupations.

The study will be of benefit to both the students and teachers (lecturers) in the sense that it will assist tremendously in improving the quality of the Higher Institutions education by detecting any barrier or hindrances in the area of facilities that might be working against efficiency in our Higher Institutions of learning.

Finally, the study will serve as reference point for other researcher who might be interested in studying quality assurance related phenomena.

## The Concept of Quality Assurance in Education

Quality Assurance is the means by which an institution can guarantee with confidence and certainty, that the standards and quality of its educational provision are being maintained and enhanced. While Quality control refers to the verification procedures (both formal and informal) used by institutions in order to monitor quality and standards to a satisfactory standard and as intended.

Within the context of higher education, as observed by Oladosu (2011) quality is multidimensional and captures a wide range of functions and activities. In a university setting, for example, it permeates every aspect of the University System including: teaching, learning, academic programmes, research, scholarship, academic and non-academic staff, students, physical structures, facilities, equipment, community services and academic milieu. Internal self-evaluation and external review, conducted openly by independent specialists, if possible with international expertise, are vital for enhancing quality. Mishra (2006) identified five different approaches to defining quality:

1. in terms of exceptional (exceeding high standards and passing a required standard);
2. in terms of consistency (exhibited through zero defects and getting right the first time making quality a culture)
3. as fitness for purpose (meaning the product or service meets the stated purpose, customer specifications and satisfaction)
4. as value for money (through efficiency and effectiveness); and
5. as transformative (in term of qualitative change).

## Educational Facilities

The main purpose of educational facilities is to aid, stimulate and facilitate instructional process. Educational facilities are the physical infrastructures that contribute directly or remotely to the teaching and learning process in the educational system. Lackney and Picus (2013) noted that an effective school facility is responsive to the changing programs of educational delivery, and at a minimum should provide a physical environment that is comfortable, safe, secure, accessible, well illuminated, well ventilated, and aesthetically pleasing. The school facility consists of not only the physical structure and the variety of building systems, such as mechanical, plumbing, electrical and power, telecommunications, security, and fire suppression systems. The facility also includes furnishings, materials and supplies, equipment and information technology, as well as various aspects of the building grounds, namely, athletic fields, playgrounds, areas for outdoor learning, and vehicular access and parking. Lackney and Picus (2013) further noted that the school facility is much more than a passive container of the educational process: it is, rather, an integral component of the conditions of learning. The layout and design of a facility contributes to the *place experience* of students, educators, and community members. Depending on the quality of its design and management, the facility can contribute to a sense of ownership, safety and security, personalization and control, privacy as well as sociality, and spaciousness or crowdedness. When planning, designing, or managing the school facility, these facets of place experience should, when possible, be taken into consideration. Blessing et al (2015) observed that higher education institutions face immediate pressure to preserve existing building facilities within the campuses and enhance the capacity of their higher education system to address growing demands of an increasing influx of students and academic activities. There is no doubt that dilapidated and

unhealthy buildings in a decaying environment depresses the quality of life and contributes in some measure to antisocial behaviours.

Olaniyonu and Gbenu (2007) described school facilities as a controlled environment which facilitates the teaching-learning process while they protect the physical well-being of the students. In the secondary school, modern teaching of sciences, social sciences, arts and other vocational studies will necessitate laboratories and many other learning aid facilities such as electronic aids comprising films, microfilms, transparencies, programmed instruction and computers. Lackney and Picus (2013) observed that many communities recognize that in addition to school facilities being cost effective, they should be more learner-centered, developmentally and age appropriate, safe, comfortable, accessible, flexible, diverse, and equitable. By location of new facilities in residential neighborhoods and partnering with other community-based organizations, schools are becoming true community centers. In addition, schools are taking advantage of educational resources in the community, as well as partnering with museums, zoos, libraries, and other public institutions and local businesses.

### 3.1 Research Design

The research is of correlational as well as ex-post facto design. It is correlational because the study examined the nature of relationship that exists among accreditation agencies, state of educational facilities and quality assurance in public Higher Educational institutions in Lagos state, Nigeria. The study is also an ex-post facto one because it investigated and found out the extent to which the already existing input variables affect the quality assurance in public Higher Institutions in Lagos State without any manipulation.

### 3.2 Population of the Study

The population of the study consisted of the of all the lecturers and undergraduate students of conventional public Higher Institutions in Lagos State.

### 3.3 Sample and Sampling Techniques

The sample of this study was judgmentally selected. Each Institutions consisted of 3 sample Faculties/Schools. From each of the selected Faculty/Schools, 15 lecturers, and 15 final year students were randomly selected as participants in the study.

### 3.4 The Research Instruments

The instruments for this study are (I) Lecturer Questionnaire and Educational Resource Inventory Checklist on Accreditation Agency, State of Educational Facilities and Quality Assurance in Public Higher Institutions in Lagos State (LQCAALS). (II) Students' Questionnaire and Educational Resource Inventory Checklist on Accreditation Agency, state of Educational Facilities and Quality Assurance in Public Higher Institutions in Lagos State (SQCAALS)

### 4.1 Method of Data Analysis

Data collected were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Some of the descriptive statistics that were used include tables, percentage and figures.

**H<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant difference between federal and state owned institutions in Lagos State regarding maintenance practices.

**Table I**

Group Statistics					
	INSTITUTION OWNERSHIP	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Maintenance Practices	FEDERAL	135	32.5481	4.22452	.36359
	STATE	180	32.9833	3.98107	.29673

**Table II**  
**Independent Samples Test**

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	T	df	Sig(2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Educational-Facilities	Equal variances assumed	.112	.738	-.935	313	.350	-.43519	.46533
	Equal variances not assumed			-.927	279.219	.350	-.46930	.46930

The results in tables II show that there is no significant difference regarding maintenance practices in federal and state owned higher educational institutions in Lagos State, (federal institution (M=32.5, SD= 4.22) and state institutions (M=32.98, SD=4.01),  $t(313) = -.935$ ,  $p=0.35$ ). The Null Hypothesis is therefore not rejected. The study revealed that there is no statistical significant difference regarding maintenance practices in federal and state owned higher educational institutions in Lagos State towards the realization of quality assurance. This is because, federal institution (M=32.5, SD= 4.22) and state institutions (M=32.98, SD=4.01),  $t(313) = -.935$ ,  $p=0.35$ . This result is in line with Uchendu, Ekanem, and Jonah(2013) that stated one of the fundamental ways of ensuring the optimum utility of available resources is through, maintenance culture. Maintenance culture of any school speaks much about such an institution. Okebukola (2010) who noted that apparent under-funding of the universities has, overtime, led to the deterioration of existing structures and the lack of additional structures to match the phenomenal rise in student populations. More than that, it has caused a decline in the quantity and quality of the wide array of teaching facilities that would normally enhance the practical aspects of training. The point was also made that managers of the universities can be more resourceful in the acquisition, control, use and maintenance of facilities.

## 5.1 Conclusion and Recommendations

1. Since it generally believed that “Nigerians lack maintenance culture”, the Architects and policy makers should endeavour to give Nigerians “maintenance – free buildings or building that required low level of maintenance. This will go a long way in solving the Maintenance problems that is the order of the day in higher institutions of learning in Nigeria.
2. Accreditation exercises and conducts should be properly managed and supervised without playing politics so as to achieve education standards, quality and effectiveness for purpose of accomplishing goals of higher education in Nigeria.

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