INSTITUTIONAL QUALITY ASSURANCE UNITS IN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION IN DELTA STATE, NIGERIA: SUCCESSFUL PRACTICES, CHALLENGES AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

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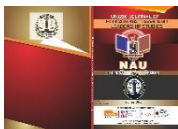P.M.B. 1044, Asaba, Delta State

ABSTRACT

The process of fostering an effective quality assurance system has been ongoing for quite some time in Nigerian higher education system. This involves setting up guidelines, rules and standards to ensure that higher education institutions like the colleges of education maintain equitable quality control system leading to quality results and outcomes. One means to ensure that institutions maintain equitable quality assurance control system, is through the establishment of institutional quality assurance units. This paper therefore discussed issues concerning institutional quality assurance units in colleges of education in Delta State, Nigeria, focusing on successful practices, challenges and future directions of institutional quality assurance units. Besides, some terms such as quality assurance and institutional quality assurance units were extensively described in the paper. The mandates of colleges of education as teacher education institutions which demands effective quality assurance unit were also discussed in the paper. The paper provided a broad view concerning the Federal Government policy directives and statements on the establishment of quality assurance agencies in higher education institutions, looking at their goals and responsibilities. Further discussed in the various sections of the paper were salient issues bordering on the topic, which led to the conclusion of the paper and references likewise included.

Keywords: Institutional, Quality, Assurance, Units, Practices, Challenges, Future, Directions
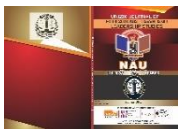
Introduction

Education is a formidable tool for sustainable national development in every society. It has been recognized, likewise considered as an instrument for any nation's socio-economic, cultural, political and environmental progress and development. Education generally is an 'instrument par excellence' in Nigeria which has led to establishment of different levels of education including higher education, as disclosed by the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2014) in the National Policy on Education (NPE). The Nigerian higher education popularly known for manpower training and development for the nation's economy, is a composition of different cadres of tertiary education institutions such as the Universities, Polytechnics, Colleges of Education (COEs), and others. According to the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2014), the Nigerian higher education is tertiary education given in institutions such as Universities and Inter-

University Centres such as the Nigerian French Language Village, Arabic Language Village, National Institutes of Nigerian Languages, institutions such as Innovation Enterprise Institutions (IEIs), and Colleges of Education, Monotechnics, Polytechnics and other specialized institutions such as Colleges of Agriculture, School of Health and Technology and the National Teacher's Institutes (NTI). The overall goals of the above mentioned Nigerian higher education institutions as further pointed out by the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2013) therefore are to: contribute to national development through high level manpower training and development, provide accessible and affordable quality learning opportunities in formal and informal education in response to the needs and interest of all Nigerians, provide high quality career counselling and lifelong learning programmes which prepare students with the knowledge and skills for self-reliance and the world of work, reduce skill shortages through the production of skilled manpower relevant to the needs of the labour market, promote and encourage scholarship, entrepreneurship and community service, forge and cement national unity, and promote national and international understanding and interaction. Achievement of all these goals in the higher education institutions, especially in colleges of education which is the main focus of the paper, cannot be possible without the provision of equitable quality control system or best practices which will foster quality assurance in the education system. These quality assurance control system or best practices are highly necessitated in the management of higher education institutions, in specific areas of the inputs, processes and output, which involves the general administration, admission processes and students' intake, coordination of teaching and learning activities, consultancy services, research and development, facilities/ resources provision, students' services, evaluation and assessment procedures, curriculum implementation and staff development, among others (FRN, 2013). Besides, the issues surrounding harnessing and enhancing effective quality control system and quality assurance in the management and administration of the Nigerian higher education system has been a serious challenge and a matter of discourse for many education stakeholders.

In this present time, the poor quality and falling standards of most higher education institutions especially those of the colleges of education in Nigeria and Delta State inclusive, has become so worrisome, raising doubts about the future of the graduates or products from these institutions. Notwithstanding, the Nigerian colleges of education (COEs) in Delta State are teacher education institutions established with the mandate of training would-be teachers for the basic, primary and junior secondary schools in the country. They are saddled with the responsibilities of producing quality teachers for the Nigerian education system. The COEs have their goals and mandate for the award on the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE). They also occupy the three cadre in the ladder of the Nigerian higher education. Given the need and demand for enhancement of quality assurance in the administration and management of higher education institutions coupled with compliance to the Federal Government policy directives and statements for the establishment of quality assurance agencies or departments in higher education institutions, quality assurance units or departments have been established for improvement of best practices in the COEs. Several successes leading to best practices as well as several challenges have been recorded since the inception of these quality assurance units or departments in the COEs. More so, all the issues relating to institutional quality assurance units which were discussed in the paper has led to future directions in the practices and operations of institutional quality assurance units in the Nigerian COEs in Delta State. The thrust of this paper therefore is to discuss matters arising from institutional quality assurance units, successful practices, challenges and future directions of institutional quality assurance units in colleges of education in Delta State, Nigeria. Discussions have been done in the paper in different sections in order to disclose matters as the relate to the thrust of this paper.
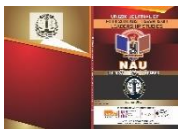
Conceptual Definition of Terms

In this section, several terms were defined and conceptualized by different scholars including the author as they include quality assurance (QA), quality assurance practices (QAP), Nigerian Colleges of Education and Institutional Quality Assurance Units (IQAU).
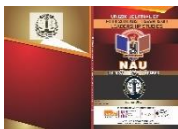
Quality Assurance (QA)

Scholars have defined quality assurance in different perspectives. However, the concept of quality was first defined in the paper. Quality can be perceived as the fitness to purpose in relation to the user and customer needs. It measures the degree to which a product conforms to standards, specifications or requirements (Babalola, Adedeji & Erwat, 2007). Quality according to Eldin (2011) has several meanings which has been described in different perspectives. For Eldin, quality means those features of products which meet customer needs and thereby provide customer satisfaction. In this sense, the meaning of quality is oriented to income. The purpose of such higher quality is to provide greater customer satisfaction and, one hopes, to increase income. However, providing more and/or better-quality features usually requires an investment and hence usually involves increases in costs. Higher quality in this sense usually costs more. Quality according to the aforementioned scholar also means freedom from deficiencies, that is, freedom from errors that require doing work over again (rework) or that result in field failures, customer dissatisfaction, customer claims, and so on. In this sense, the meaning of quality is oriented to costs, and higher quality usually 'costs less'. Quality therefore evolves from several definitions which includes: customer or clients' satisfaction and loyalty; doing right things right; providing a product which is 'fit for the purpose'; providing an acceptable product at an acceptable cost; a standard which can be accepted by both the supplier and the customer; the totality of features or characteristics of a product that bear on its ability to satisfy a given need; and something fitness for use (Eldin, 2011). Radziwill (2013) opined that quality involved the totality of characteristics of an entity that bear upon its ability to satisfy stated and implied needs. However, a product according to Radziwill is only likely to satisfy needs if it is deployed in the environment for which it was intended (and usually, this is covered by implied needs). A high-powered laptop with 32GB of memory and all the latest bells and whistles is not going to satisfy someone's data processing needs if he or she is sitting out in the middle of the desert with no battery and no electrical outlet. Quality also is the totality of characteristics of the entities, including people, processes, products, environments, standards, and learning — are all addressed by this framework. It suggests that when individuals improve themselves, they improve their ability to create quality in the world around them, and innovate to ensure quality in the future world. Deming (2000) as the founder of total quality management, described quality in different ways; quality is the degree to which performance meets expectations. Quality for Deming denotes an excellence in goods and services, especially to the degree they conform to requirements and satisfy customers. The essence of quality is to produce quality products. Quality can be termed as reliability. Reliability implies dependability – reliability introduces the concept of failure and time to failure: Quality and reliability go hand in hand. The customer expects a product of good quality that performs reliably. Reliability is the probability that a system or component can perform its intended function for a specified interval under stated conditions (Deming, 2000). Harvey and Green (1993) identify five categories or ways of thinking about quality. As cited in Watty (2003) key aspects of each of these categories can be summarized as follows: i. Exception: distinctive, embodies in excellence, passing a minimum set of standards. ii. Perfection: zero defects, getting things right the first time (focus on process as opposed to inputs and outputs). iii. Fitness for purpose: relates quality to a purpose, defined by the provider. iv. Value for money: a focus on efficiency and effectiveness, measuring outputs against inputs. v. Transformation: a qualitative change; education is about doing something to the student as opposed to

something for the consumer. Includes concepts of enhancing and empowering: democratization of the process, not just outcomes. Watty (2003) suggests that the dimension of quality as perfection can be removed, since higher education does not aim to produce defect-free graduates. Lomas (2001) suggests that fitness for purpose and transformation seem to be the two most appropriate definitions of quality, according to small-scale research with a sample of senior managers in higher education institutions.

Quality of the Nigerian COEs in Delta State as conceptualized within the context of this paper refers to the process of attainment of high degree of standards or effectiveness which measures the worth or worthiness of the colleges of education as regards to the overall operations, practices, services and entire management of the colleges of education. Quality here embraces promoting quality planning, quality control and quality improvement in the management of COEs. These three terms if effectively fostered will definitely lead to quality assurance of an institution. Given these definitions of quality, quality assurance according to Joseph and Agih (2007) deals with setting standards for the various processes, practices and activities that leads to the production of graduates by the training institutions. It connotes zero defects in the production of goods and services, that is, quality is attainable or maintained at the work process at all times. Quality assurance (QA) is a broad concept that focuses on the entire quality system including suppliers and ultimate consumers of the product or service. It includes all activities designed to produce products and services of appropriate quality. Quality assurance (QA) is equally a management technique which adopts a holistic approach in the work processes of an educational organization (Joseph & Agih, 2007). The International Organization for Standardization (ISO, 2000) stated quality assurance describes all the planned and systematic actions necessary to assure that a product or service will satisfy the specified requirements. Storey, Briggs, Jones and Russell (2000) attested that quality assurance (QA) is a management method that is defined as all those planned and systematic actions needed to provide adequate confidence that a product, service or result will satisfy given requirements for quality and be fit for use. Quality assurance programme is the sum total of the activities aimed at achieving that required standard (ISO cited in Storey, Briggs, Jones & Russell, 2000). According to the American Society for Quality (ASQ, 2020), quality assurance is part of quality management focused on providing confidence that quality requirements will be fulfilled. The confidence provided by quality assurance is twofold—internally to management and externally to customers, government agencies, regulators, certifiers, and third parties. An alternate definition is all the planned and systematic activities implemented within the quality system that can be demonstrated to provide confidence that a product or service will fulfill requirements for quality. Typically, quality assurance (QA) activities and responsibilities cover virtually all of the quality system in one fashion or another, which includes quality control which is a subset of the QA activities (ASQ, 2020). Quality control as further described by the American Society for Quality (ASQ, 2020), can be defined as part of quality management focused on fulfilling quality requirements. While quality assurance relates to how a process is performed or how a product is made, quality control is more the inspection aspect of quality management. An alternate definition is the operational techniques and activities used to fulfill requirements for quality. Quality management (QM) on the other hand is defined as a formalized system that documents processes, procedures, and responsibilities for achieving quality policies and objectives. Quality management is focused not only on product and service quality, but also on the means to achieve it. Quality management, therefore, uses quality assurance and control of processes as well as products to achieve more consistent quality. What a customer wants and is willing to pay for it determines quality. It is a written or unwritten commitment to a known or unknown consumer in the market. A quality management system (QMS) therefore helps coordinate and direct an organization's activities to meet customer and regulatory requirements and improve its effectiveness and efficiency on a continuous basis (ASQ, 2020). Given the above definitions
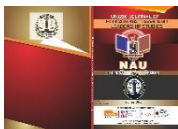
of the entire quality processes of quality control and quality management infused in quality assurance, the whole gains and benefits of QA are as follows: defining, improving, and controlling processes; reducing waste; preventing organizational mistakes; lowering costs; facilitating and identifying training opportunities for employees; engaging staff; setting organization-wide direction; and communicating a readiness to produce consistent results (ASQ, 2020).

Quality assurance in education as described by the European Commission (2018) involves the systematic review of educational programmes and processes to maintain and improve their quality, equity and efficiency. Quality assurance relies on approaches which also include certain mechanisms that are both external and internal to schools. Besides, approaches to quality assurance may need to be adapted over time to better meet needs for feedback and decision-making across systems. External quality mechanisms may include national or regional school evaluations and/or large-scale student assessments. Internal quality mechanisms may include the school self-evaluation, staff appraisal and classroom-based student assessments which could be controlled by setting up a quality assurance unit or department. However, the design of quality assurance mechanisms (tools, processes & actors) varies across national contexts, their common objective is to improve teaching and learning – with the ultimate goal to support the best outcomes for learners. From this explanation, quality assurance is important for accountability as well as to support ongoing development of schools and of teaching and learning. Well-functioning systems have mechanisms to support and balance vertical and horizontal, internal and external accountability. Quality assurance is focused on development supports for schools to adapt to the changing needs of learners. The focus is not only on improvement but also innovation – that is, the development or experimental testing of approaches in different contexts - to support quality, equity and efficiency (European Commission, 2018). The whole idea of QA as deduced from all the foregoing explanations is that it requires quality processes of maintaining a standardized system, quality control system, quality management system, quality improvements, quality planning, quality assessment and quality auditing, among others.
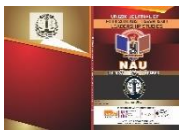
Quality Assurance Practices (QAP)

To ensure that quality assurance is enhanced or fostered in the COEs, certain practices are maintained. Practice could be termed as technique or methodology that through experience and research has proven reliably to lead to the desired result. These practices need to be shared and adopted to benefit more people. In the context of education, a practical definition of a practice is knowledge about what works in specific situations and contexts, without using inordinate resources to achieve the desired results, and which can be used to develop and implement solutions adapted to similar educational problems in other situations and contexts (World Health Organization Regional Office for Africa, 2017). Best practices if adopted in the COEs should meet at least the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, sustainability, ethical soundness, possibility of duplication, the involvement of partners and the community and political commitment criteria, in addition to one or more of the other criteria. A best practice need not meet all the above criteria, because it can be anything that works to produce results without using inordinate resources, in full or in part, and that can be useful in providing lessons learned (World Health Organization Regional Office for Africa, 2017). According to Schmidt (2014), a practice, is not reduced to mere activity, more or less regular sequences of operation, but is taken to also encompass the ways in which workers competently handle contingencies and variations, ensure orderly alignment of their distributed activities, as well as sundry intellectual activities such as envisioning the outcome, devising methods and plans, identifying tasks, preparing and allocating tasks, etc. The modern concept of practice as further described by Schmidt (2014) can be seen as rules guiding an operation. Quality assurance practices (QAP) therefore

as envisaged within the context of this paper has to do with all internal and external mechanisms, activities or measures including frameworks established or laid down to ensure that quality is assured in an educational institution. They include good or best practices that will enable an organization or institution like the COEs attain their goals and objectives. These can also encompass a wide range of internal and external mechanisms (tools, processes and actors) in order to monitor an overall system performance, policy implementation, school and staff effectiveness, and individual student outcomes. The school systems include various layers, operate in diverse contexts, and employ staff with a range of experience and competences. External mechanisms provide data important for policy-level decisions and resource allocation, while internal evaluations provide more detailed and timely data important for the school-level development and to support teaching and learning. Schools and external institutions and actors may work together in order to define strategies and alternatives for school improvement (European Commission, 2018). Joseph and Agih (2007) observed that QAP are credible frameworks built on preventive management theory which works on its own towards the realization of productivity and excellence in the system. As regards, quality must be assured in various practices in the COEs involving the general administration of the institution, students-personnel management and assessment, teaching and learning activities, among others. In the same light, the European Commission (2018) viewed quality assurance practice are part of reforms, mechanisms, processes, policies or approaches undertaken or established in order to attain quality assurance in the education system.
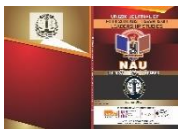
The European Commission (2018) further noted that many countries are engaged in continuing or recent reforms, ranging from a general introduction of quality assurance mechanisms, the introduction of specific measures, and the adoption of national frameworks in order to maintain quality education system. Many countries as incorporate evaluations that are external and internal to schools, which can complement and reinforce each other. It is therefore believed that school education systems that support the synergy of external and internal quality assurance mechanisms will have more resilience for the complex process of change. Most countries are also increasingly allowing schools greater autonomy so they may better respond to local contexts and individual learner needs. Internal quality assurance mechanisms support evidence-based decision-making for internal accountability (that is, peer professional accountability) and school development. Most European countries have created frameworks that integrate some combination of internal and external quality assurance mechanisms, which may include: use of Inspectorates, National student assessments, School self-evaluation and Teacher appraisal, just to ensure that quality assurance is enhanced in the education system. In general, these mechanisms generate data on the overall performance of systems as well as the quality of schools and of the teacher workforce, as measured against learning outcomes and standards defined in National Qualification Frameworks (European Commission, 2018). Machumu and Kisanga (2014) observed that to assure what HEIs like the COEs are maintaining standards; quality should dominate many forums in higher education. Window is open for every HEIs to practice QA strategies for its survival. HEIs are encouraged to conduct window-shop before buy-in. The truth is that QA is walking with us; live with us; we practice it whether knowingly or unknowingly. If QA strategies cannot be appropriately practiced HEIs cannot survive any competition around everywhere. Therefore, QA practices in higher education institutions is responsible for safeguarding the public interest in sound academic standards of higher education qualifications (taught and research). It also informs and encourages continuous improvement and control in the management of quality of education offered in higher education institutions. But a great deal is known about QA in HEIs but unfortunately not much is known about its practices (systems, policy, implementation strategies or interpretation and procedures) employed to assure quality especially in Nigerian higher education system which includes the COEs. To support the above statement, Machumu and Kisanga (2014) further attested that it is well known that there

are internal and external QA practices. HEIs conduct internal QA practices by means of students' assessment, peer-reviews of publications, and reflective practices. Also, HEIs try to improve and enhance students' welfare and support system; monitor staff teaching and students learning; as well as promote quality research and publication. External QA practices are enhanced, maintained and monitored by QA agency of respective countries or regional, for example the NCCE for COEs. Given all these practices, it is a public concern that QA practices employed in most of HEIs especially COEs do not work properly and that its procedures and practices are not well known and conceptualized to the majority of education stakeholders. This has been evident openly due to lack of competencies and employability skills to most of graduates; difficult to compete in competitive labour market and difficult to invent new business venture for self-employed (Machumu & Kisanga, 2014). Hence, experience has shown that low quality of graduates has been reported in several countries both developed and developing. However, in most of African countries, there is an open and wide link between low quality of graduates and QA practices since without well-coordinated, controlling, and maintaining appropriate QA practices; no HEIs can prove to produce high quality graduates (World Bank, 2003 cited in Machumu & Kisanga, 2014). Nevertheless, it is important to note that quality assurance practices which includes processes of setting up or establishment of institutional quality assurance units (IQAU) infused in the higher education system like those of the COEs in Delta State will certainly ensure that quality is assured on the long run in the management of this system.
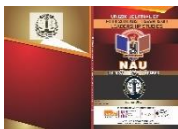
Nigerian Colleges of Education (COEs)

The Nigerian colleges of education are NCE awarding higher education or tertiary institutions. They are teacher education institutions responsible for training of NCE teachers especially for the Nigerian basic education programme whose scope covers early childhood care and development education (ECCDE), pre-primary education, primary education and junior secondary school. The origin of Colleges of Education in Nigeria according to Oga and Okpaga (n.d.) is traceable to the Ashby Report (1960:16) called, 'Investment in Education'. Besides, from inception as noted in the works of Jibril (2007) it was accounted that with the intervention of Christian Missionaries whose activities metamorphosed into western education calling for the need of teachers, the Church Missionary Society (CMS) established the first Teacher Training Institution in Abeokuta, western Nigeria, in 1859. The Baptist Mission also founded the Baptist Training College Ogbomoso in 1897, with the Wesleyan Mission establishing the Wesley College in Ibadan in 1918. In the Eastern part of Nigeria, the Hope Waddell Institute was founded in Calabar in 1892. Later in 1909, the then Colonial Government established the Nasarawa Schools in Northern Nigeria. Katsina and Toro Colleges were later established in 1927 and 1929 respectively. The Church Missionary Society (CMS) also set up Teacher Training Institutions. The Grade III Teachers certificate was the qualification most of these Institutions award. Later on Teachers Colleges awarding the Grade II sprang up. The Grade I Teachers Training was later introduced and aspired by ambitious teachers willing to enhance their status to qualify for teaching in Secondary Schools. The earliest curriculum for the early teacher training consisted of subjects like; English, Arithmetic, Writing, Geography, Hygiene, General Studies, Geometry, Agriculture, Nature Study, Local Languages. The Ashby commission report however observed a lot of anomalies in the then colonial education in Nigeria, including Teacher Training that was seen to be highly in adequate. Many teachers were un-certificated and improperly trained (Ashby, 1960). This resulted in the recommendation for massive expansion of intermediate education for teachers aimed at upgrading the existing teaching force. This brought about the existence and emergence of Advanced Teachers Colleges, and which later metamorphosed into Colleges of Education (Jibril, 2007). The Ashby Commission recommended the establishment of Teachers' Grade One Colleges, which would

offer a two-year teacher programme based on a school certificate. As a result of the modification of the Report, five Advanced Teachers' Training Colleges were established in 1962 by the Federal and Regional governments with the aid of UNESCO. The programme is a three-year course open to candidates who had completed a Grade II Teachers' course or secondary education with required credit passes. The five Advanced Teachers' Training Colleges were established at Lagos. Ibadan and Zaria in 1962. That of Ibadan was later transferred to Ondo in 1964.The College is now known as Adeyemi College of Education. Other Advanced Teachers Training Colleges were established at Owerri in 1963, Kano in 1964 and Abraka in 1968 (Oga & Okpaga, n.d.). All the Advanced Teachers' Training Colleges as further added by Oga and Okpaga (n.d.) were co-educational with sponsorship from either the Federal or Regional governments. Some of the Advanced Teachers' Training Colleges were elevated to the status of Colleges of Education because of their high standards and the reputation of their products. In 1973, the number of the Advanced Teachers' Training Colleges and Colleges of Education in Nigeria rose to 13. Until the establishment of the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) in Nigeria in 1989, all the Advanced Teachers' Training Colleges and Colleges of Education in Nigeria numbering about 43, were affiliates of institutes/faculties of education in Nigerian Universities. Today, there are 152 Colleges of Education (both public/federal or state government-owned and private COEs) in Nigerian with uniform minimum standards as provided by the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE). The setting up of the uniform minimum standards by the commission was necessitated, among other things, by the discriminatory admission policies of the universities in favour of the candidates from ATTCs/Colleges of Education that were affiliated to them. Since the establishment of the National Commission for Colleges of Education in Nigeria, the Academic Programmes of all the Colleges of Education in Nigeria have been accredited from time to time as stipulated in section 5 (c) and (d) of Decree 3 of 1989 that set up the Commission. The Decree states that; the Commission shall: (c) Lay down minimum standards for all programmes of teacher education and accredit their certificates and other academic awards, (d) Approve guidelines setting out criteria for accreditation of all Colleges of Education in Nigeria. The purpose of accreditation and re-accreditation exercise is to ensure the maintenance of minimum standards and quality assurance in all the Colleges of Education in Nigeria. This has recently called for the establishment of institutional quality assurance units in the COEs in order compliment the activities of external accreditation.

Additionally, COEs including those in Delta have their roles, tasks, responsibilities and mandates. Oga and Okpaga (n.d.) opined that among other tasks and responsibilities, the COEs have produced a large number of non-graduate professional (NCE) teachers that teach in our primary and junior secondary schools, thus alleviating the manpower problems of the nation at those levels. They have waded into the task area of producing professionally trained teachers for our vocational and technical secondary schools in order to meet the nation's requirements for technological take-off as provided in the National Policy on Education. Another contribution of Colleges of Education is in the structural integration of Nigeria. Through public lectures, seminars, workshops, conference, inter-collegiate sports competition and the implementation of their curriculum, especially in General Studies Courses like Citizenship Education, they have raised the level of national unity, and national consciousness, sense of oneness, common citizenship and common purpose amongst Nigerians, thus enhancing the development of the nation. In addition, they provide in-service courses, extra-mural classes and sandwich programmes to raise the literacy level of the members of the communities around them. Another vital area of the COEs task and contributions is in the area of research. Their research results enable the educational planners to formulate appropriate education policies for the nation's development. The performance of these onerous tasks by Colleges of Education depends upon the quantity, quality, and calibre of the staff the Colleges' systems

are able to employ, train, develop and maintain. Without adequate, skilled and well-motivated workforce operating within a sound human resource management program, development is not possible. Any organization that underrates the critical role of people in goal achievement can neither be effective nor efficient (Onah, 2008). Hence, of all the organizational resources which are made up of men, materials, money, machines and methods (the 5-m of organizational management), the human resources (men) stand out as most crucial for quality control and quality management. The COEs has certain mandates in which they should certainly fulfill and they have been outlined below.

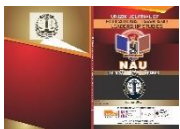**Mandates of the Nigerian Colleges of Education (COEs)**
The mandate of the Nigerian Colleges of Education in Delta State as teacher education institution has been drawn from its goals which was accordingly stated by FRN (2013: 43) in the National Policy on Education as follows:
i.   producing highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of the educational system;
ii. encouraging further, the spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers;
iii. helping teachers to fit into the social life of the community and the society at large and enhance their commitment to national goals;
iv. providing teachers with intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment and to make them adaptable to changing situations; and
v.   enhancing teachers' commitment to the teaching profession.
For the COEs to achieve their mandate, they need to ensure that quality is assured in the system through the establishment of internal or institutional quality assurance units (IQAU). Just as observed by Storey, Briggs, Jones and Russell (2000), in order to maintain a QA system especially in the management of the COEs in Delta State, it is necessary to check periodically through the establishment of Institutional Quality Assurance Unit (IQAU) each area of the system for compliance, that is general management effectiveness, students' assessments, teaching and learning, academic programmes, accreditation, auditing, academic and nonacademic staff efficiency, among others. This involves auditing the component parts to assess whether they continue to meet the original criteria. This procedure should be formerly documented. Reports on all audits should be made available to management and to the persons responsible for the work concerned. Deviations from required standards must be corrected as soon as possible. The audit must be independent, and should be thorough and unannounced.

Institutional Quality Assurance Units (IQAU)
Quality assurance practices which led to establishment of institutional quality assurance units and department in the higher education institutions as previously indicated in this paper by Machumu and Kisanga (2014) is responsible for safeguarding the public interest in sound academic standards of higher education qualifications (taught/teaching and research). It also informs and encourages continuous improvement and control in the management of quality of education offered in higher education institutions. HEIs are encouraged to take a nuts-and-bolts approach in developing, finding and implementing appropriate QA practices (policies, systems, strategies, and procedures) to improve quality of education in HEIs for community services, education management system, good governance and clients' satisfaction is a key role to boost higher education provision and economic profitability in developing countries. One way in achieving this mission is through establishment Institutional Quality Assurance Units (IQAU) as proposed and highlighted by the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2013) in the National Policy on Education (NPE). The evolution of quality and its journey in education as indicated
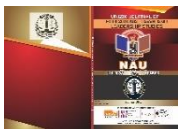
by Machumu and Kisanga (2014) goes beyond the time of medieval ages whereby the notion of universities came into being. So, neither quality nor QA is new. In Africa for instance, where most HEIs have their roots in university colleges created during colonial period. After independence, most of them transformed in full-fledged university and obtained support from respective government. The fundamental structure, governance and organization are the same, and the historic commitment to maintain standards of institutional quality and accountability, particularly with regard to program review, evaluation and assessment, is unbroken. In that time, professors and individuals of high rank were responsible for safeguarding institutional quality. Princes and Popes were used to control the institutional standards of mediaeval universities by granting charters (Machumu & Kisanga, 2014).

As time went on around 18th century, the German contribution of the conception of a university as a research institution, which redefined their quality, and accountability of universities was witnessed. By then German Universities such as University of Berlin innovated new things such as laboratory and seminar mode of teaching and learning whereby the majority of students worldwide were attracted to learn the tone of German excellence, which made Germany the intellectual capital of the world, the place to which scholars and scientist looked first for light and leading (Charles, 2007). During the year1950s the US accreditation system was leading among other system of higher education. The system is undergoing modification and changing time to time and now is as quality assurance. It goes beyond 1950s whereby a system that increased close government oversight of colleges and universities by adherence to carefully crafted process of self-study and peer reviewed (evaluation) (Machumu & Kisanga, 2014). Sequel to the developments of QA other parts of the world, quality assurance has become an internationalized concept in Nigeria. According to Omebe (2015), the NUC reported that the first attempt at universalization of quality assurance in higher education across the globe was in 2004. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2013) in a bid to ensure that minimum standards and quality assurance of instructional activities in schools also gave directives concerning this course, that is establishment of IQAUs. The history of Institutional Quality Assurance Units (IQAU) for COEs as stated by National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE, 2012) could be traced down to the year 2012 whereby the high rate of poor performance in the products of the Nigerian COEs was worrisome and this led to a pilot survey looking inward at the system operations. Discovering that there were certain problems affecting the system, this led to sending some officials abroad to train on quality assurance in the United Kingdom, sponsored by three agencies of Commonwealth of Learning, ESSPIN and NCCE. The training was based on five focal areas of the system which includes the different aspects of the administration, that is leadership management and organization of institutions, curriculum implementation, infrastructure, assessment and evaluation procedures, and students support and progression. These officials were supposed to return and train the trainees. Coupled with the issues surrounding accreditation of institutions, this equally led to establishment of QA units and departments in the COEs. Besides, as part of effective administration of higher education, the federal government (FRN, 2013) also indicated in the NPE the establishment of QA agencies at the Federal, State/FCT and Local government levels for monitoring and maintaining set standards at all levels of education.

Quality Assurance Agencies and Units for Higher Education Institutions: Nigerian Federal Government Policy Directives and Statements

Generally, the federal government of Nigeria gave directives on establishment of QA agencies in which every level of education system must pursue and follow suit. According to the FRN (2013:67), QA agencies in State Ministries of Education/FCT Education Secretariat and Local Government Education Authorities in collaboration with the Federal QA Agency would be responsible for the organization of

supervision and inspection of all educational institutions under their jurisdiction. Given this directive, the goals of QA Agencies are to;

a. Set, maintain and improve standards in all aspects of the school system;

b. Ensure Minimum Standards and quality assurance of instructional activities in schools through regular inspection and continuous supervision;

c. Disseminate on a regular basis, information on problems and difficulties of teachers and institutions and offer practical solutions to them; and

d. Encourage dissemination of information on innovative and progressive educational principles and practices in the school system through publications, workshops, meetings, seminars, conferences, among others.

In furtherance, to ensure that educational institutions maintain equitable quality minimum standards and overall quality of education in higher education institutions that will guarantee quality assurance in the system, a QA unit or department shall be established in education institutions to supersede internal affairs and educational activities. The institutional quality assurance unit in various higher education institutions including the COEs in Delta State have their own modus operandi, that is, certain roles, functions and responsibilities which they perform. This has been discussed in the next section.

Institutional Quality Assurance Units (IQAUs) in the Nigerian Colleges of Education (COEs) in Delta State: Modus Operandi

The roles, responsibilities and functions of IQAUs in the Nigerian COEs including those in Delta State as pointed out by the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE, 2012: 41) are as follows:
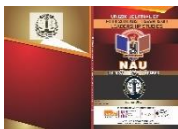
i. Provide guidance and support to other units in QA activities in the institution

ii. Support and promote the attainment of NCCE Minimum Standards

iii. Periodically organize internal mock accreditation

iv. Ensure quality of internal institutional data collection, analysis, dissemination, for management purposes

v. Ensure institution conducts regular self-assessment of programmes (in order to monitor strengthens and weaknesses)

vi. Ensuring that the College regularly update self-assessment document

vii. Act as liaison with NCCE on quality assurance issues in the institution

viii. Serve as the coordinating organ of the institution in matters of logistics during external assessments

ix. Monitoring teaching

x. Report to Management on a monthly basis or as need arises

xi. Provide information to the public and others interested partners about quality and standards

xii. Review external examiners reports and advise relevant action/implementation by Management, Deans and HODs

xiii. Coordinate tracer studies on the graduates of the institution

xiv. Organize meetings with and workshops for teachers, when necessary, with the view to improving their professional competence

xv. Obtain information in respect of challenges experienced by teachers in schools and institutions as well as provide advisory solutions through appropriate authorities

xvi. Perform any other function as may be required.

In view of the above roles, functions and responsibilities of the IQAU, QA officials especially the head of the QA unit must fulfill certain criteria which includes that he or she must have undergone QA
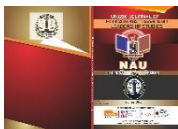
training organized or recognized by NCCE; have track record of quality enhancement in the college; possess a higher degree in any area of study of the institution; generally acknowledge as a successful/accomplished lecturer in the institution; have good working knowledge of college of education system; conversant with the NCCE Minimum Standards and accreditation procedures and instruments; and be prepared to serve a single term of four years. However, certain practices or activities take place in the COEs which requires that IQAU oversee. Omebe (2015) asserted that IQAUs in the COEs just as they exist in the Universities in order to establish and maintain high quality standards in the COEs, have a shared responsibility with NCCE in addressing the following key areas of Minimum academic standard, Accreditation, Carrying capacity and admission quota, Visitation, Impact assessment, Research and development, Publications and research assessment, Structures, infrastructures and utilities, Students assessments and Examinations. Describing these areas further, Omebe (2015) expressed that the minimum academic standards form the baseline for entrenching quality higher education system, since it prescribes a profile of curriculum, human resources, structures, infrastructures, equipment and associated facilities required for establishing, governing and managing the COEs. Accreditation on the other hand is the process by which programmes are evaluated against set minimum academic standard. Institutions comprehensive academic research and development activities are evaluated against prescribed criteria (including self-visioned and self-produced strategic plan). In this case, it is the responsibility of the IQAUs in the COEs to prepare for the external accreditation. They should conduct an internal assessment beforehand, before the external accreditation comes up.

Carrying capacity of any higher education institution is the maximum number of students that the institution can sustain for qualitative education based on available human and material resources; and it is the duty of IQAUs in the COEs to see that this is maintained by the management and college leadership. Visitation to COEs is a statutory requirement that empowers the proprietor to ascertain the well-being of the COEs. Impact assessment is a specialized form of evaluation aimed at finding out if the core expectations of the establishment of a particular COE are being met. This is the responsibility of IQAUs in the COEs to organize such. Research however is the driving force for human development as globally determined; such research should be evidenced by publications. Therefore, IQAUs in the COEs should ensure that quality researches are provided in the institutions. Structures, infrastructures and utilities are essential driving force for qualitative productivity in any organization, particularly in the college of education system. Facilities are important in promoting quality teaching and learning environment in the COEs, therefore, IQAU should encourage the college management to make adequate provisions of facilities in the institution. They should also ensure that the existing facilities are highly sustainable through the adoption of effective maintenance procedures. Baldwin cited in Omebe (2015) in his own view highlighted the following as quality assurance checklist which enables the IQAUs to foster quality control, practices and processes are enshrined in the COEs, as they include: institution/faculty mission and objectives, teaching programmes, students selection, course structure and documentation, teaching arrangement, postgraduate supervision, students support, assessment/evaluation, grievance procedures, monitoring of outcomes, research and development, community service, staffing issues, infrastructure /resources and governance. Other target areas as further identified by Omebe (2015) to be considered to ensure quality assurance by the IQAUs in the COEs are as follows: mode of admission, teaching practice, motivation, staff recruitment, and raising the status of teachers. Under the mode of admission in the COEs, it has been observed that education courses are the least preferred by candidates seeking admission into tertiary institutions especially in the COEs. Majority of the students who studied courses in education did so not because they desired such but because they were not able to get the cut off marks on their preferred choice courses. The provision of quality teachers demands that the mode of admission of candidates into
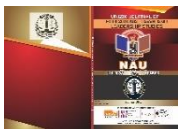
the teaching profession be changed. Superior brains should be attracted to the teaching profession through the use of incentive packages like scholarships, bursaries, wavers and allowances be given to education students to induce and attract good brains into the profession. Teaching practice or Field experience is one of the core courses in teacher education programme that helps to prepare and equip teachers for the task they are captured to perform. It aims to build up student teachers real classroom experiences and competencies as they practicalize what they have learnt theoretically. Supervisors must ensure that real supervision is done. The practice of not completing the supervision time of student teachers should be seriously frowned at. Omebe (2013) suggest that teaching practice should be done in two contacts for efficiency and effectiveness. In addition, there should be a one-year internship system similar to that of Medical Doctors and Pharmacists. This will make NCE a four-year course and B. Ed a five-year course and at the end of training, NCE holders will be employed on Grade Level 08 and degree holder on 09. The one-year internship should be regarded as national service and students should be paid stipulated allowances. Motivation which by Omede (2015) is defined as the totality of financial and union financial rewards given to an employee in return for his services to an organization, promotes staff efficiency and effectiveness. People are motivated when they expect that a course of action is likely to be rewarded. By implication, the level of rewards provided for staff largely influence their commitment and performance. Teachers in COEs need adequate motivation because they are mandated to translate educational programmes into practical experiences. Without motivation, teachers' willingness to perform will be low hence poor achievement of educational goals and objectives. Teachers are motivated through payment of salaries, promotions, leave allowances, staff development, etcetera. Motivation helps to increase effectiveness and efficiency which makes for quality. Improved conditions of service, should be used to motivate teachers already in the profession and to attract qualified ones into the teaching profession.

The issues surrounding staff recruitment according to Omebe (2015) is the responsibility of IQAUs. It is a process of enlistment of new members into a group and through which they become part and parcel of administration of an organization. The main purpose of recruitment exercises is to attract qualified and sufficient number of potential teachers to apply for job vacancies in educational institutions. With the belief that no educational system can rise above the quality of its teachers, IQAUs in the COEs must ensure that the following method of teacher recruitment must be seriously considered. Advertisement of the job and application forms, Employment interviews, Selection tests, Investigation of applicant's background medical examination and Selection decisions. Whereby these strategies are strictly and transparently followed, qualified and dedicated teachers will be recruited into the teaching profession for quality assurance in education. Again, with IQAUs in the COEs, this will enhance raising the status of teachers. Teaching is one of the professions in Nigeria that is looked down on. People look at a Nigerian teacher as an unambitious fellow who cannot fit into the society's highly valued professions like medicine, law, engineering, pharmacy, accountancy, among others. The poor uncomplimentary perception of teachers has made them to lose self-confidence and interest in professional responsibilities. The poor self-image of the teacher has serious consequences for the teaching profession in Nigeria. When a teacher's self-image is raised, self- confidence, courage, dedication, and commitment will come into the teachers and this will help in improving efficiency and effectiveness. Raising the status of teachers should have prime consideration by IQAUs (Omebe, 2015). Given all the modus operandi of IQAUs in COEs, especially those in Delta State, there have been some successful quality assurance practices reported in the COEs as a result of establishing IQAUs and departments.

Successful Quality Assurance Practices Instituted in the Nigerian Colleges of Education (COEs) in Delta State through the Establishment of Institutional Quality Assurance Units

The inception or institution of Institutional Quality Assurance Units (IQAU) in Colleges of Education (COEs) in Delta State, Nigeria, have brought in a lot of practices in which there have been recorded successful practices. Speaking and judging from experience, Institutional Quality Assurance Units (IQAU) in the COEs in Delta State have enable colleges to identify their strengthens and weaknesses before accreditation through their self-assessment exercise. It has led to both lecturers and students' punctuality to lectures, where lecturers become aware that they are monitored, then this will boost their attendance to lectures. Institutional Quality Assurance Units (IQAU) have assisted to strengthen administration in schools. They help to checkmate the activities of the college management and leadership as watchdogs which will assist to curtail or curb corruption and corrupt practices in the COEs. Institutional Quality Assurance Units (IQAU) have helped to curb corruption and exploitations by lecturers in the colleges. Institutional Quality Assurance Units (IQAUs) assisted in promoting improvement in students' assessment and curriculum improvement. Assisted to change most lecturers' attitude towards their students' by building good and healthy lecturer-student relationships, especially when lecturers know that they will be judged and assessed by their students, among others. With the introduction of Institutional Quality Assurance Units (IQAUs) in the COEs, students are now involved in lecturers' assessment procedures which significantly encouraged constant use of student-centred teaching and learning, lecturers' preparation of lesson plans and lesson notes, commitment to lectures, among others. Adegbesan (2011) opined that successful practices have been recorded in many tertiary institutions as a result of establishment of IQAU and includes the following; they serve as indispensable component of quality control strategy in education; they ensure and maintain high standard of education at all levels; assist in monitoring and supervision of educational activities; helps to determine the quality of the teacher input; determine the number of classrooms needed based on the average class size to ensure quality control of education, and determine the level of adequacy of the facilities available for quality control system in the COEs; and they ensure how the financial resources available could be prudently and judiciously utilized. Similarly, Ajayi and Adegbesan (2007) previously argued that, institutional quality assurance units are related to accountability both of which are concerned with maximizing the effectiveness and efficiency of educational systems and services in relation to their contexts, of their missions and their stated objectives. Ehindero (2004) says quality assurance units focused on the: (i) Learners entry behaviours, characteristics and attributes including some demographic factors that can inhibit or facilitate their learning, (ii) The teacher entry qualification, values pedagogic stalls, professional preparedness, subject background, philosophical orientation, among others, (iii) The teaching / learning processes including the structure of the curriculum and learning environment, (iv) The outcomes, which are defined for different levels in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes including appropriate and relevant instruments to assess these objectives. Fadokun (2005) sums the definition of quality assurance in education as a programmed, an institution or a whole education system. In such case, units of quality assurance in the COEs describes all the attitudes, objectives, actions and procedures that through their existence and use, and together with quality control activities, in order to ensure that appropriate academic standards are being maintained and enhanced in and by each academic programme. IQAU in the COEs however have successfully created means of measurement and standardization of academic attainments through evaluation of quality of work during supervision and institutional self-assessment. Even with the successful practices discussed in this section, yet there are some challenges inhibiting the effectiveness or quality performance of IQAUs in most COEs. This have been discussed in the next section.
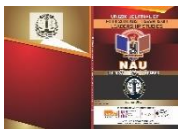
Challenges of Institutional Quality Assurance Units in the Nigerian Colleges of Education (COEs) in Delta State

Notwithstanding, the successful practices recorded, there are some challenges which constraint the operations of many of the institutional quality assurance units, as they include: inadequate funding, lack of support and cooperation from college management, other staff and students, problem of unionism which prevents lecturers from subjecting to the activities of QA, example is the use of lesson plan and note objected by lecturers through their union. Other challenges include inadequate facilities or resources to work with, most institutions are not interested in QA matters until accreditation, problem of implementation of QA objectives, lack of both leadership and staff training on QA matters, corruption, among others. These challenges have been further discussed below.

Inadequate Funding: The issue of inadequate funding has been one of the important matters of discourse in the Nigerian education system. Due to poor funding of COEs, this have made it impossible to foster quality in the management of the system therefore affecting quality assurance in these institutions. Inadequate funding has created difficulties for the provision of facilities and resources for quality assurance officials in the COEs to work with. Ebisine (2013) opined that a well-structured funding arrangement is imperative for meeting the cost of providing adequate educational service in colleges of education. However, inadequate funding affects the provision of facilities and the recruitment of the desired manpower to implement the programmes that have been developed. This in turn affects the academic delivery in the colleges of education resulting in what Yaqub cited in Ebisine (2013) called "a dull intellectual atmosphere". Anavberokhai (2007) averred the poor funding affects proper planning and implementation of policies and programmes, as well as, lower productivity. The reduced spending has impacted negatively on the system as basic necessities for teaching and research are lacking in both federal and state colleges of education. Jaiyeoba and Atanda cited in Ebisine (2013) remarked that fund is crucial in facilities acquisition, staff development (to cater for the enrolment increase) and for policy implementation. In the face of acute shortage of funds, other inputs suffer setback, which in turn influence the level of quality obtainable. To this end, poor funding has the following implication for academic quality assurance: inability of the IQAU to organize quality self-assessment; set, maintain and improve standards in all aspects of the academic programmes; constantly monitor academic programmes and periodically organize internal mock accreditation; maintain appropriate documentation; among others. In effect, poor facilities, and other learning materials, due to poor funding impede not only academic quality assurance but also hinders IQAUs to carry out their responsibilities and task effectively.

Lack of Support and Cooperation from College Management, Other Staff and Students: For successful quality assurance practices in the COEs, there is need for support and cooperation from various stakeholders such as the college management, staff and students to be actively involved in the issues concerning QA. But in most COEs this is difficult to achieve because of lack of support and cooperation from stakeholders. With this, Matei and Iwinska (2016) opined that in Europe, various stakeholders in the school are important for the success of QA practices. School leadership, teachers and students, all are very important stakeholders in both the design and implementation of quality assurance systems. The best example is the crucial role of the European Students' Union in development and later revisions of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance. The students' voice is important for both internal quality assurance and external quality assurance. In many countries in Europe, it is required that external review panels/groups involve students as members. In the UK, the students' opinions are also highly valued at the national level. There is still room for improvement when it comes to involvement of employers in quality assurance processes (Matei & Iwinska, 2016). Omebe (2015) noted that one challenge of quality
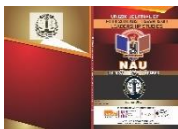
assurance reviews is faculty members and other stakeholders' concerns about the QA process. Faculty beliefs and their plans to participate in the peer quality assurance reviews using the Quality Matters Rubric is very discouraging. In a study conducted by Altman, Schwegler, and Bunkowski in 2014, cited by Omebe (2015), the researchers use a qualitative approach to examine faculty members' perceptions of completing the QA peer review. Although faculty were skeptical before participating in the QA process, the results indicate that many of the concerns and criticisms of the peer review process did not validate earlier assumptions.

Problem of Unionism: Problem of unionism has prevented lecturers from subjecting to the activities of QA in the institutions. Most times the unions object to the practices instituted in order to promote QA in the COEs. For instance, some of the practices recommended to foster QA in the COEs like lecturers' preparation of lesson plans and students' assessment of their lecturers, among other practices, have been heavily objected by their union and most times they can embark on strike action just to prevent this course (Edukugho, 2003). Supporting the above statements, Ajayi and Ekundayo (n.d.) asserted that one of the banes of effective management of higher education in Nigeria in recent times is the unbridled unions violent reaction to national issues and internal problems. According to Akindutire (2004), the result of some unions militancy or violent unionism has been the cause of disruption to successful management of academic programmes and other managerial activities in some tertiary institutions, among others. Where there are no concrete rapport or cordial relationship between the unions and IQAUs, then, it becomes impossible for the quality assurance unit to perform their task effectively because there will always be some interference by the unions.

Inadequate Facilities or Resources: Most of the IQAUs have no or limited resources to work with creating difficulties for them to execute their functions effectively. Facilities and resources such as well-furnished offices with equipment like computers, stationaries, electricity, experienced manpower on QA matters, among others, are needed by quality assurance units to effectively work with; but in most situations and given the issue of inadequate funding, the requisite facilities and resources are mostly not available. With the situation of inadequate resources promoting QA practices becomes difficult to accomplish. Ebisine (2013) observed that inadequate facilities are manifested in inadequate and poor state of classroom, offices, laboratories, hostels and libraries in the tertiary institutions. The provision of the relevant educational facilities and equipment is vital in the provision of quality educational services in the colleges of education. However, the poor state of facilities and equipment has been a major challenge to academic quality assurance likewise the operations of IQAUs in the college of education.

Lack of Interest in QA Matters: Most institutions are not interested in QA matters until accreditation. Most leadership always pay attention to other problems, as a matter of fact, neglecting matters related to QA; but wait until external accreditation is around the corner before they put interest in QA matters. The challenge of lack of most of the institutional leadership interest in QA matters generally and directly affects the activities of all QA units and departments in the COEs including Delta State. Ekpiken and Ifere (2015) opined that the success and achievement of the organizational activities such QA and equally the goals of the higher education depend on the leadership and governance by the management. To perform effectively and achieve success, leaders must depend on the situation they find themselves as well as the nature of the organization, as different situations require different leadership abilities and skills and styles. But most leadership pay less attention to QA units activities in their institutions focusing their attention on other issues which they consider most trivial. However, leadership is indispensable in any organization.
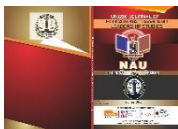
It is all about social influence which one person is accorded support by other group members to achieve laid down objectives. Aguba cited in Ekpiken and Ifere (2015) stressed that leadership being both the adhesive that binds the group together and the catalyst that triggers employee motivation can have a major influence on organizational performance for it is one of the crucial factors that lead to success. Therefore, the administrative functions like planning, staffing, organizing, coordinating, directing, controlling, among others would be ineffective without good institutional leadership interest (Ekpiken & Ifere, 2015).

Problem of Implementation of QA Objectives: The Federal Government's failure in the implementation of the objectives of QA is one of the problems hindering the operations of IQAUs. Arikawei and Torubeli (2015) identified the problem of poor implementation of QA objectives as one of the challenges inhibiting institutional QA as the gap in policies is however on the process of implementation. It is thereby important to note that most of the QA policy objectives are yet to be effectively implemented. Asiyai (2013) observed that poor policy implementation is a challenge to quality delivery in education. The poor-quality delivery is responsible for the abysmal low performance of graduates of institutions of higher learning in Nigeria in their world of work and the alarming incidence of examination malpractice. Obebe, cited in Asiyai (2013) argued that our policies are written by knowledgeable writers who have foresight and believe strongly in what they write for the future but the problem comes when it comes to translating theory into practice by implementers. However, several factors could be adduced as inhibitors to smooth implementation of educational policies and thereby resulting to poor quality delivery. Such factors as government underfunding of education and injudicious utilization of available funds by implementation agencies - when funds meant to deliver quality education is misappropriated or embezzled, the education which learners receive becomes worthless. Asiyai and Oghuvbu cited in Asiyai (2013) reported that lack of staff development and training programmes accounted for the decline in quality of tertiary education in Nigeria.

Poor Staff Training and Retraining on QA Matters: Lack of leadership and staff training and retraining on QA matters is one of the challenges affecting the operations of IQAUs in the COEs. Most leadership and staff do not understand the modus operandi of QA units in the COEs. They feel that IQAUs is watchdog of the government set up to witch hunt staff and leadership. With this wrong notion or conception, they tend to act as obstacles to any QA practices in the COEs. Due to poor continuous staff training and retraining through seminars, workshops and conferences on QA matters, it becomes difficult for them to understand the operations of IQAUs in the COEs, as such jeopardizing their activities. Asiyai (2013) opined that most institutions of higher learning in Nigeria lack staff development programme for training and re-training of staff. Vibrant staff development programme on a continuous basis will help academics and non-academics to clarify and modify their behaviour, attitude, value, skills and competencies. In this way, they grow and develop in their knowledge and thus become more effective and efficient in the performance of tasks. Staff development is paramount because knowledge of today is only sufficient for today. In this era of knowledge explosion and emergent knowledge-based economy, staff training, retraining and development should be the priority in the management of COEs for effective QA practices.

Corruption: Corruption in the education system is also one problem affecting the smooth operations and practices of IQAUs in the COEs. Ebisine (2013) asserted that embezzlement, misappropriation and diversion of the scarce funds meant for educational purposes further impoverish the sector. The implication is that there can hardly be any meaningful implementation of policy and acquisition of

facilities which are vital to effective teaching and research in the COEs (Anavberokhai, 2007). Given the challenges affecting the operations of IQAU in the colleges of education in Delta State, certain future directions of QA practices have been discussed in the subsequent section.

Future Directions of Quality Assurance Practices in Colleges of Education (COEs) in Delta State, Nigeria

Since the establishment of institutional QA units in the COEs, there have been some remarkable successes which have been discussed previously in this chapter. However, notwithstanding various odds and challenges, there is need for future direction of QA practices for the QA units in the COEs in Delta State, as they include the following:
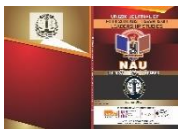
1. **Awareness Creation through Continuous Staff Training and Retraining Programmes QA Matters:** Full QA enlightenment programmes should be constantly organized for leadership, management officials, lecturers, non-teaching staff, unions and students in the colleges in order to promote QA activities, practices and process by the unit in the COEs. By creating awareness to the college leadership, staff and students, this will aid in building cooperation for all the parties and trust for the quality assurance units, thereby, leading to the realization of goals. Landerville (2015) attested that quality assurance unit through staff training and retraining would be capable of involving all the stakeholders in the QA process and by this, they will be clear to know what needs to be achieved in the COEs and correct their negative reactions as far as attaining QA issues are concerned.

2. **Training of Trainees:** Training of trainees should be universally reinstituted in the COEs including Delta State likewise extended to the universities and polytechnics as a way of training members of the institutional QA unit staff who will train and educate all the staff on QA matters in the COEs.

3. **Free Autonomy to Operate:** Institutional quality assurance units should have full autonomy to operate in the COEs either as a directorate or agency on its own. By so doing this will reduce leadership interferences and obnoxious control over QA practices, process and activities in the COEs.

4. **High Concentration on Academic Programmes:** Institutional QA units in the COEs especially in Delta State should look into certain areas like mounting of courses by staff, guidance for minimum standards for mounting of new programmes, academic staff peer review, evaluation and implementation of moderators reports and assessment, among others. It has been indicated by the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013), that tertiary institutions shall pursue its goals through quality teaching and learning, quality students' intake and admission processes, high standards in the quality of facilities, services and resources, and staff welfare and development programmes. Quality assurance units should redirect their focus on monitoring these areas in the COEs including Delta State.

5. **Adequate Funding of IQAUs:** There is need for adequate funding of quality assurance units or department in the COEs by the federal and state governments. This will assist to facilitate QA processes and activities in the COEs in Delta State.

6. **Full Policy Implementation on QA Processes:** Full policy implementation of quality assurance processes by the QA unit should be highly encouraged. Omede (2015) opined that strategic policy implementation framework is vital to the success of quality assurance efforts. The policy framework should begin with a quality policy statement for managing and encouraging students' participation in academics. This has been found to be effective in resolving problems such as low student morale, low student performance, truancy and student failure.

7. **Constant Self-Assessment:** There should be constant and consistency of institutional self-assessment which is highly encouraged in the COEs before external accreditation. This will enable QA units' advice

the management on how to go about addressing the internal problems of their institutions before accreditation.

8. **Auditing and Assessment of Lecturers and other Facilities:** institutional quality assurance units should always supervise lecturers' classroom activities to address issues affecting teaching and learning in the institutions. They should also frequently conduct constant auditing of the physical facilities in the COEs, give their recommendations where necessary for effective management of the institution for QA.

9. **Research Boosting:** Another important area is boosting research in the COEs which should be totally monitored and controlled by the quality assurance units. It has further been directed by the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013), that tertiary institutions shall pursue their goals through quality research and development, therefore, quality assurance units in the COEs should focus on research matters and activities in the COEs.

10. **Creating a Systematic or Standard Operation Procedure (SOP) of Work for QA Process:** Institutional quality assurance units should create a systematic or standard operation procedure (SOP) of work for QA processes in the COEs in order to achieve their aims, objectives, target and goals by adopting their own techniques. In support of this statement, Landerville (2015) opined that quality assurance units must have procedures in place, also called SOP's (standard operation procedures), especially if the QA process is critical for the finished product in which the institutions need to have or must have an SOP or procedure. If the IQAUs need and require (How to) do a job or QA process, they needing a procedure or SOP. Landerville (2015) further highlighted several steps that can aid institutional quality assurance units create a standard operation procedure as follows: i. identification of organizational goals starting the QA process by defining how employees' jobs are tied to the organizations goals; ii. identification of critical success factors that make an organization's quality assurance system successful through factors such as well-designed production process, great product, technical support, customer/clientele support, financial security, or employee satisfaction; iii. identification of the key groups of customers that make quality assurance system work in the institution. Knowing these customers and their needs can help you develop programmes and services for these people; iv. providing constant feedback to customers including other stakeholders which enables organizations to detect and solve quality problems before it become a serious issue. This could be attained through survey and by encouraging constant students' assessment, lecturers' assessment, monitoring students' satisfaction and dissatisfaction to review their complaints and academic programmes and checkmating other matters; v. implementation of continuous improvements from the results or information gleamed from an organization's survey or other customer feedback tools used to make the necessary changes to the quality assurance process; and vi. select quality assurance software that not only helps institutions to implement a quality assurance process, but also helps them to maintain and improve the process; vii. measure results and achievements.

Omede (2015) suggested that Total Quality Management (TQM) models could be applied by the units in higher education institutions in assuring quality. These models should be appropriately linked to the selection of contents/learning experiences, lesson presentation and evaluation of the students. Thus, they should ensure that what they give the students are up to standard. Again, The QA unit should ensure that students can progress in academic programmes by examining lecturers scheduling, academic calendars, academic programmes in order to promote quality practices and processes in the COEs. Also, Omede (2015) opined that involving students in QA processes is important in the QA systems. Student involvement in evaluating and enhancing the quality of their higher education institution bring about improvement in academic programmes. The quality of educational services provided by a COE is a crucial aspect of strategic plans in the student-centered education context. Students' evaluation of the academic

programmes is a significant assessment instrument used for stimulating quality enhancement in higher education institutions. Introducing students to quality assurance processes and allowing them to participate in external evaluation panels provide good experiences for students. In the role of student representative, the student has the ability to see the situation from the learner's perspective, which others may not be able to take into account.
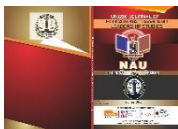
Conclusion

Institutional Quality Assurance Units (IQAUs) have made significant input and impacts in the general administration of the colleges of education especially in management of teaching and learning, research, accreditation and teacher development in Delta State, Nigeria. Yet there have been some challenges affecting the operations of this unit. Failure to address these challenges will bring a halt to QA practices in the COEs, therefore, this paper extensively discussed issues in connection with institutional quality assurance units in colleges of education in Delta State, Nigeria: successful practices, challenges and future directions.

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