




POLICY FLUCTUATIONS AND THEIR IMPACT ON QUALITY ASSURANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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| <p>ARTICLE HISTORY <i>Received [10 January 2025]</i> <i>Revised [03 February 2025]</i> <i>Accepted [05 March 2025]</i></p> | <p>ABSTRACT Policy fluctuations have remained a critical challenge in managing higher education in Nigeria. This research investigates the impact of policy fluctuations on quality assurance in Nigerian higher education, a pressing issue amid ongoing educational reforms. The study evaluates how varying policy stability affects institutional performance and academic standards. Employing a descriptive survey design, the research involved case studies of five selected Nigerian universities, incorporating qualitative insights from interviews with stakeholders such as administrators, lecturers, and policymakers. Two hundred fifty respondents, including students and academic and non-academic staff, were surveyed using a self-designed questionnaire titled "Policy Fluctuations and Their Impact on Quality Assurance in Higher Education in Nigeria." The questionnaire featured demographic questions and key variables related to planning, management, infrastructure, and educational standards, measured on a four-point Likert scale. Data analysis included simple percentages, frequency counts, and hypothesis testing using the Chi-square (X^2) statistical tool at a 0.05 significance level. The findings revealed that policy fluctuations significantly disrupt quality assurance mechanisms and that active stakeholder engagement can mitigate these adverse effects. The research concludes that stable, inclusive policy frameworks are essential for enhancing educational quality. This study contributes to the existing literature by providing empirical evidence on the relationship between policy dynamics and quality assurance, offering practical recommendations for policymakers and educational leaders to foster improved institutional outcomes in the Nigerian higher education landscape..</p> |
| <p>KEYWORDS <i>Policy Fluctuations, Quality Assurance, Higher Education, Nigeria, Educational Management</i></p> | |
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INTRODUCTION

Higher education in Nigeria plays a crucial role in national development by producing a skilled workforce and advancing research. However, its effectiveness is often undermined by policy fluctuations. Policy inconsistency—defined as frequent changes, reversals or lack of continuity in educational policies—creates challenges for the administration of higher institutions. Nigeria has earned the designation of the giant of Africa by good worth of its size, population and vast resources. However, the pitiable state of infrastructure, low standard of education, wearing a way of value system, and many other tribulations prevalent in the society have caused the country to lose its respect across the sphere quickly. Nigeria has the resources to be the best in all ramifications. However, the educational system is in shambles just because it is a product of Nigerian norms where, in most cases, everyday things are abnormal and abnormal things are every day (Sadowsky, 2023). The world has realised that the state's economic success is directly determined by the quality of its education systems (Deming, 2018). It is worrying that while some countries have recognised the value of investing heavily in education as a vehicle for irremediable growth and a brawny economy, Nigeria still prioritises sustaining a costly system of governance ahead of



instituting mechanisms to guarantee quality education (Obizue & Enomah, 2025). The widespread recognition that education is a major driver of economic competitiveness in an increasingly knowledge-driven global economy has made high-quality education more critical than ever (Asiyai, 2015). Therefore, it is imperative for countries to strive towards raising candidates with higher-level employment skills and sustaining a globally competitive research and knowledge breeding base for the benefit of society (Shaffi & Mohamed, 2023).

Quality education equips people with the ability to explore the world and manipulate it for their survival and establishment (Usman & Chinyere, 2021). It has been the backbone of development in most countries because it propels a nation's economic and social emancipation (Iniobong, 2013). Therefore, providing education should be adequate to promote quality sustenance and enable the educational system to develop and be effective (Njoku, 2016). To achieve quality education in a nation, the principal actors of learning (teachers, learners and the environment) should be cooperatively organised. In other words, the teacher must be adequate in quality and quantity, the students must be well-trained, and the required facilities must also be provided (Isa & Yusoff, 2015). Nigeria's education system is still characterised by a few high-performing and many low-performing schools, which is unacceptable to stakeholders in the education sector (Kumwenda, 2024). The situation needs to be improved so that the country can compete with its peers in global academic standards. In the education system, a vital mechanism required for actualising the educational objectives is to build a quality assurance model to improve the quality of the teaching-learning process in the academic environment (Imhangbe et al., 2023). Many nations around the globe now agree that the way out of a series of bondages plaguing their governments and citizens is through quality education (Njoku, 2016). Education in Nigeria has gone below its expectations. The system has derailed from its original intentions because of general neglect of the education sector (Usman & Chinyere, 2021). The neglect has contributed to the present-day collapse of Nigeria's standard and quality of education (Besong, 2022). However, this situation in the education sector is reversible if all stakeholders have a positive attitudinal change and conscious affirmative action. Stakeholders in the education sector advocate that Nigerian education institutions at all levels should be encouraged and supported to develop strong internal quality assurance mechanisms to drive the sector's process and progress (Usman & Chinyere, 2021). They observe that countries that thrive in all sectors of their economy embrace education as their bedrock.

A robust education status in a nation does not happen by chance; it can be achieved through well-thought-out strategies that can upgrade the education standard and improve the quality of products churned from the various citadels of learning. Amongst the strategies needed to guarantee the desired quality of education is to build a quality assurance mechanism in the learning process (Niedermeier, 2017). Quality and standards must be derived from a coherent policy framework that provides clear directives, guidelines, principles, assumptions, structures, roles, and responsibilities (Nilsson et al., 2012). This study explores the relationship between these policy fluctuations and quality assurance in Nigerian higher education.

Statement of the Problem. The higher education sector in Nigeria has experienced significant disruptions due to frequent policy fluctuations, which have negatively impacted its quality assurance mechanisms. Policies governing funding, accreditation, curriculum development, and staff welfare often change with political transitions, resulting in inconsistencies that undermine institutional stability and



academic standards. These fluctuations lead to delayed implementation of educational programs, insufficient resource allocation, and weakened regulatory oversight, leaving higher institutions ill-equipped to meet global standards of quality education. Despite the critical role of the National Universities Commission (NUC) and other regulatory bodies in ensuring quality assurance, their efforts are often thwarted by abrupt policy changes that compromise their ability to maintain consistent oversight. Furthermore, the lack of stakeholder engagement during policy formulation exacerbates the disconnect between institutional needs and policy objectives. If left unaddressed, these challenges continue to hinder the growth and development of Nigerian higher education, ultimately affecting its contribution to national development.

Policy fluctuations are characterised by frequent changes in governmental policies, often driven by political transitions, shifts in economic priorities, or leadership changes (Adolino & Blake, 2010). These changes can result in inconsistencies in the implementation of educational frameworks, creating uncertainty for higher institutions. Yusuf and Mohd (2022) note that in Nigeria, such fluctuations are often tied to political instability and economic downturns, further exacerbating their impact on the education sector. Quality assurance is essential for maintaining academic standards and ensuring institutions deliver high-quality education. According to Obilor and Ikpa (2022), quality assurance mechanisms in Nigerian higher education are coordinated by the National Universities Commission (NUC) through accreditation, program evaluation, and institutional audits. These mechanisms are designed to uphold academic excellence and promote continuous improvement. Frequent policy changes disrupt higher institutions' ability to maintain consistent quality assurance practices. For example, fluctuating government funding policies often lead to delays in the disbursement of resources, thereby affecting infrastructural development and staff welfare (Amoatey et al., 2015). Similarly, shifts in accreditation guidelines and requirements confuse institutional compliance. Gamage et al. (2020) noted that such disruptions compromise the reliability of quality assurance frameworks, resulting in declining academic standards.

Quality is a multidimensional concept; hence, stakeholders have defined it differently. According to Banji (2011), quality encapsulates meeting commonly agreed-upon precepts or standards, which law, an institution, a coordinating body or a professional society may determine. It is the degree to which a product, service or phenomenon conforms to an established standard and makes it relatively superior to others (Obadara & Alaka, 2013). According to Zajda (2023), quality education is characterised by Learners who are healthy, well-nourished, ready to participate and learn, and supported by their families and communities. Healthy, safe, protective, and gender-sensitive environments provide adequate resources and facilities. Content that is reflected in relevant curricula and materials for acquiring basic skills, especially in literacy, numeracy, skills for life, etc. These are processes through which trained teachers use child-centred teaching approaches in classrooms and schools and skilful assessment to facilitate learning and reduce disparities. Outcomes encompass knowledge and attitudes linked to national educational goals and positive societal participation. The quality of academic programmes could be measured in terms of the quality of input, process, context, and output (Obadara & Alaka, 2013). Therefore, ensuring quality in education requires the correct quantity and quality in everything that goes into the teaching-learning process or system as input and process (Wani & Mehraj, 2014). This productive synergy can ensure a clear focus on school development, providing data on aspects such as school climate and the well-being of all



school community members, effective teaching, learning and the impact of innovations (Seligman, 2015).

Lawal (2021) emphasises that education quality assurance in Nigeria is a paradigm shift from the former practice of school supervision and inspection to a monitoring and evaluating process that provides a new operative mode of evaluation. This is carried out according to set standards that improve teaching and learning. Therefore, strategic quality assurance prescribes standards and ensures that the system's inputs, processes, and outputs meet these standards. According to Montgomery (2020), quality assurance ensures effective resource input control, refines the process, and raises output standards to meet the set goals and satisfy public accountability. It is based on three main principles: control, responsibility and improvement. Accountability usually requires meeting stakeholders' preferences, and control means that the institution does not merely control the expenditure of resources but also shows how high quality is achievable with the existing resources. Improvement enables the institution to get necessary input, refine the process and raise the output standards to meet the goals set (Jaber & Al Batsh, 2016). In schools, quality assurance activity focuses on whether learners are achieving as much as possible and whether everything the school provides has the best possible impact on learning (Sallis, 2014). The system includes evidence to establish confidence among all concerned that quality-related activities are being performed effectively (Thekdi & Aven, 2024). Because a systematic and consistent quality assurance system helps to establish an institution's good reputation and credibility, Olofinniyi and Agada (2024) averred that educational administrators are constantly faced with the responsibility of determining the priorities of management and other functions, including adopting the management style that ensures the seamless achievement of qualitative educational outcome. The need for quality assurance in Nigerian schools cannot be overemphasised to provide quality teaching and learning. In this regard, Imhangbe et al. (2023) state that quality assurance is crucial in Nigeria's education system, ensuring high standards and monitoring and supervising education. It involves determining teacher input quality, classroom size, facility adequacy, and prudent financial resource utilisation to achieve desired results.

To fulfil the purpose of quality assurance in the Nigerian education system, scholars have listed some basic strategies and educational management functions that should be streamlined and practised in similar terms by educational managers to enhance quality assurance in the education system. Prominent strategies are good planning, regular monitoring and evaluation, quality control mechanisms, adequate supervision and a conducive learning environment. Planning is an essential aspect of good management that requires the manager to forecast, formulate, and select appropriate objectives and procedures to be followed within the school system to achieve the desired result (Romiszowski, 2016). Quality assurance is guaranteed when there is a steady cycle of regular monitoring and evaluation activity to assess performance and determine how well-set objectives are being met (Závadský et al., 2019). Quality control is one strategy for establishing quality assurance in the education system at all levels. It should concern the country's drive towards economic recovery and technological development. Supervision is an indispensable variable in ensuring effective teaching and learning, which brings about the improved processes needed to build quality into the education system (Sulemana, 2019). It is a fundamental component of education administration that assists in effectively managing the human

and material resources in the industry (Shauli Mukherjee et al., 2022). According to Groff (2013), learning can occur anywhere, but the positive learning outcome generally sought by educational systems happens in quality learning environments. Therefore, the Availability of school facilities and the conduciveness of the school learning environment are potent factors that influence improvement in the school system (Ekundayo, 2012).

In the education system, appraisal is critical because it creates a platform for gap analysis between the anticipated and the attained outcome. In this regard, Fasanya et al. (2023) identified the quality of resource input, output, process, and content as the essential measuring criteria for quality assurance in Nigeria. Quality of resource input consists of the quality and quantity of human and material resources put into educational production (Usman, 2016). The quality of output implies the worth of the products of the education process, including academic achievement on tests, scores and progression and pass rates (York et al., 2015). The output quality demonstrates the input quality; thus, if the input is high-quality, the output is assumed to be equally of good quality and vice versa (Garba, 2014). According to Asiyai (2015), the quality of the process entails student-teacher interaction, the level of learner participation and engagement in learning, etc. In contrast, the quality of content is another indicator that implies the value of curriculum content in the education system (Ibad, 2024). Enemuo and Okafor (2023) further emphasised that the quality assurance factors all play a joint role in a cyclic process as depicted below;

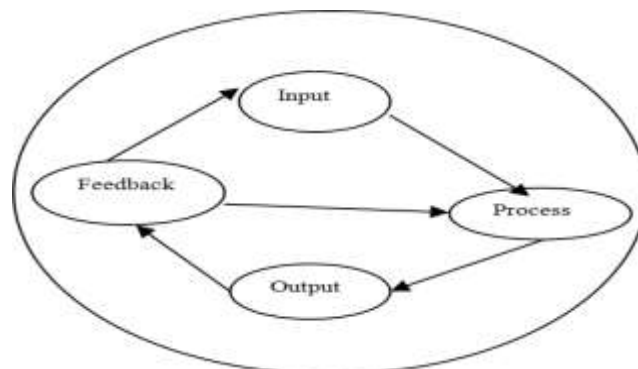


Fig. 1. Control mechanism for quality assurance in school.

According to Enemuo and Okafor (2023), as shown in Fig.1 above, the emphasis is on the input and process combination that produces the output. The feedback mechanism helps to re-evaluate the extent of achievement of the objectives and to determine where corrective actions are required. The input component includes the teachers, equipment, funds, infrastructures, and supervisors. The process element includes the system, curriculum, and teaching/learning interactions. The output elements are the school products, students' achievements, skills, attitudes and general behaviour. The reactions from each component are channelled back to the input segment through the feedback mechanism for proper control. Quality assurance should be a continuous process that encourages attitude change and teamwork and inculcates a value that acknowledges the student as the best judge of quality and deserving of the best possible service (Obadara & Alaka, 2013). The most prominent impediment to quality assurance in the education sector in Nigeria is underfunding. The issue of education funding has been a recurrent decimal in the history of Nigeria's educational sector despite the poor state of the education system (Omodero et al., 2023). Enemuo and Okafor (2023) and Usman and Madudili (2020) revealed that only 4%, 7.40%,



7.04% and 7.02% were allocated to the federal Ministry of Education by the government in 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019, respectively. The apparent low allocation hinders the sector from implementing policies ensuring quality education. In Nigeria, policies are transforming recurrently, with almost every change in the country's leadership leading to educational policy inconsistencies (Iruonagbe et al., 2015). These frequent policy changes signify the absence of a workable strategic plan for education sector development and constitute a serious challenge to the reforms in the education sector (Asiyai, 2015). Another factor hindering quality assurance in Nigeria is the politicisation of appointments in the education sector. Sometimes, persons without requisite experience or academic background are appointed to the leadership of education and related institutions (Lynch et al., 2012). Such misfit appointments can lead to the absence of a total quality management work culture in the education system.

Public health outbreaks concerning diseases like ebola and coronavirus (COVID-19) also hinder quality assurance. There is no arguing that education is one of the significant casualties of the COVID-19 pandemic (Kaur et al., 2020). The pandemic has affected educational systems worldwide, leading to the near-total closures of schools, thereby disrupting academic activities (Kumar, 2021). More worrisome is that in Nigeria, the presidential task force (PTF) formed since the outbreak of COVID-19 is perceived to have done more to orchestrate fear than articulate a better understanding of the nature of the disease (Nwosu, 2024). School closures in response to pandemics like COVID-19 have shed more light on numerous issues affecting access and quality of education in Nigeria. According to Chidobi and Eze-Thecla (2016), supervision has been a great challenge in schooling as it lacks the commitment and coordination needed to survive. In this regard, the internal and external organs of quality assurance in education have failed, and any system or project that is not supervised correctly is bound to derail from its expectations and intended objectives (Ndaita, 2015). Prominent cases which have disrupted school activities were recorded in Chibok in Borno State in 2014, Dapchi in Yobe State in 2018, Kankara in Katsina State in 2020, Kagara in Niger State in 2021 and Afaka in Kaduna State in 2021.

Yirdaw (2016) observed that administrators' poor management and governance of institutions also affect quality assurance in the education sector. This problem characterises every other industry of Nigerian society. In this regard, Basiru (2018) posits that the situation in Nigeria is that the institutions for managing education, whether at the local or national level, are weak and inefficient because of the democracy deficit in our polity. As long as management continues to play a nonchalant role, quality assurance will be jeopardised in the nation's institutions (David & Folashade, 2023). The learning environment in modern-day Nigeria has not been friendly to learners and teachers. This has created a lot of quality vacuum in the learning process (Usman & Chinyere, 2021)

Research Hypotheses:

H1: There is no significant relationship between the frequency of policy fluctuations in Nigerian higher education and political and economic factors.

H2: Due to policy fluctuations, the effectiveness of quality assurance mechanisms in Nigerian higher institutions has not significantly been disrupted.

H3: Active stakeholder engagement has no significant impact on mitigating the adverse effects of policy fluctuations on institutional performance and academic standards.



H4: Implementing stable policy frameworks and stakeholder-inclusive strategies does not significantly enhance the effectiveness of quality assurance mechanisms in Nigerian higher education.

This study is significant for several reasons, as it addresses critical issues related to the impact of policy fluctuations on quality assurance in Nigeria's higher education sector. The findings and insights gained from this research are expected to benefit multiple stakeholders and contribute to the broader discourse on education policy and quality management. The study provides valuable evidence on the consequences of policy instability, guiding policymakers in designing consistent, sustainable, and forward-looking policies that support quality assurance in higher education. It highlights the need for a more strategic and evidence-based policy formulation and implementation approach. By identifying the challenges of frequent policy changes, the research offers practical recommendations for strengthening quality assurance mechanisms in higher education institutions. It underscores the importance of aligning quality assurance standards with long-term educational goals. The study helps higher education institutions understand the effects of policy fluctuations and adapt more effectively to these changes. It provides insights into strategies for mitigating the impact of policy instability on academic standards, governance, and resource management. By advocating for stability and effectiveness in education policies, the study highlights the role of quality higher education in driving national development, fostering innovation, and improving workforce capabilities. It emphasises the importance of a robust higher education system in achieving Nigeria's socio-economic goals. The study fills a gap in the existing body of knowledge on the interplay between policy dynamics and quality assurance in Nigeria's higher education sector. It serves as a resource for future research and provides a foundation for further exploration of related themes.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research adopted a descriptive survey design, which involves systematically collecting and analysing data to evaluate the current state or condition of the subjects under study. Case studies of selected Nigerian universities were conducted to assess the impact of policy fluctuations. Interviews with education stakeholders, including administrators, lecturers, and policymakers, provided qualitative insights. Additionally, secondary data from government reports and academic literature were analysed. The simple random sampling technique was used to select the representatives of this study from the larger population of the study. This technique was used because it ensured an equal chance of choosing the participants to partake in the study. Simple random techniques selected five higher institutions from the study population. The study sample was made of 250 respondents (both male and female), including students and academic and non-academic staff of the selected institutions. A self-designed questionnaire titled "Policy Fluctuations and Their Impact on Quality Assurance in Higher Education in Nigeria". A case of five selected higher institutions was used as the primary data collection tool. The questionnaire was divided into two sections: Section A: Collected demographic data such as age, gender, class, and school name. Section B: Included items addressing key variables such as planning and management, school environment, physical infrastructure, teachers' qualifications, work experience, and declining education standards. These items were measured using a four-point Likert scale: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). The demographic data were analysed using simple percentages and frequency counts, while the formulated hypotheses were tested using the Chi-square (X^2) statistical tool at

a 0.05 level of significance. The instrument's validity was established through the face and content validation conducted by experts in the Department of Educational Management and Planning at the University of Lagos. The instrument's reliability was confirmed through a pilot study with 20 participants from a higher institution, which was not included in the main study. The questionnaire responses were split into two groups (even and odd-numbered items), and the scores were correlated using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. The internal consistency was further assessed using the Spearman-Brown Prophecy Formula, resulting in a reliability coefficient of 0.82, indicating moderate reliability. Data were collected from 250 respondents, of which 215 questionnaires were retrieved and analysed. Four hypotheses were tested using the Chi-square (X^2) statistical tool at a 0.05 significance level. The results provided insights into the influence of policy fluctuations on quality assurance in higher education institutions in Nigeria.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The data used in this study was obtained from two hundred and fifty (250) respondents, but only two hundred and nineteen (219) questionnaires were retrieved for data analysis. Four hypotheses were formulated during this research and tested using the Chi-square (X^2) statistical tool at a 0.05 significance level.

H1: There is no significant relationship between the frequency of policy fluctuations in Nigerian higher education and other factors.

Table 1. Chi-square (X^2) Analysis Showing the Impact of the Frequency of Policy Fluctuations in Nigerian Higher Education

| Variables | Frequency | Expected Frequency | Chi-square (X^2) | p-value |
|----------------------------|------------|--------------------|----------------------|---------|
| Policy Fluctuations | | | | |
| Less than 2 years | 43 (19.6%) | 54.75 | 3.21 | 0.073 |
| 2-5 years | 91 (41.6%) | 82.50 | 1.43 | 0.232 |
| More than 5 years | 85 (38.8%) | 81.75 | 0.23 | 0.631 |
| Total | 219 (100%) | | 4.87 | 0.088 |

The expected frequencies were calculated based on the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between the frequency of policy fluctuations and other political and economic factors. The chi-square (X^2) values were calculated using the formula: $X^2 = \sum [(observed\ frequency - expected\ frequency)^2 / expected\ frequency]$. The p-values were calculated using the chi-square distribution with k-1 degrees of freedom, where k is the number of categories and the significance level is 0.05. Based on the results, the null hypothesis (H_0) is not rejected, as the p-value (0.088) is more significant than the level of significance (0.05). This suggests no significant relationship exists between the frequency of policy fluctuations in Nigerian higher education and other factors.

H2: Due to policy fluctuations, the effectiveness of quality assurance mechanisms in Nigerian higher institutions has not significantly been disrupted.

Table 2. Chi-square (X²) Analysis Showing the Significant Disruption to the Effectiveness of Quality Assurance Mechanisms in Nigerian Higher Institutions Due to Policy Fluctuation

| Variables | Frequency | Expected Frequency | Chi-square (X ²) | p-value |
|--|------------|--------------------|------------------------------|---------|
| Disruption to Quality Assurance | | | | |
| No Disruption | 67 (30.6%) | 81.75 | 4.31 | 0.038 |
| Minor Disruption | 83 (37.9%) | 73.50 | 2.15 | 0.143 |
| Major Disruption | 69 (31.5%) | 63.75 | 1.23 | 0.267 |
| Total | 219 (100%) | | 7.69 | 0.021 |

The expected frequencies were calculated based on the null hypothesis that there is no significant disruption to the effectiveness of quality assurance mechanisms in Nigerian higher institutions due to policy fluctuations. The chi-square (X²) values were calculated using the formula: $X^2 = \sum [(observed\ frequency - expected\ frequency)^2 / expected\ frequency]$. The p-values were calculated using the chi-square distribution with k-1 degrees of freedom, where k is the number of categories and the significance level is 0.05. Based on the results, The null hypothesis (H₀) is rejected, as the p-value (0.021) is less than the level of significance (0.05). This suggests that policy fluctuations significantly disrupt the effectiveness of quality assurance mechanisms in Nigerian higher institutions.

H₃: Active stakeholder engagement has no significant impact on mitigating the adverse effects of policy fluctuations on institutional performance and academic standards.

Table 3. Chi-square (X²) Analysis Showing the Impact of Active Stakeholder Engagement on Mitigating the Negative Effects of Policy Fluctuations on Institutional Performance and Academic Standards

| Variables | Frequency | Expected Frequency | Chi-square (X ²) | p-value |
|--------------------------------------|------------|--------------------|------------------------------|---------|
| Active Stakeholder Engagement | | | | |
| No Engagement | 41 (18.7%) | 54.75 | 6.53 | 0.011 |
| Moderate Engagement | 83 (37.9%) | 73.50 | 2.67 | 0.103 |
| High Engagement | 95 (43.4%) | 90.75 | 0.43 | 0.512 |
| Total | 219 (100%) | | 9.63 | 0.008 |

The expected frequencies were calculated based on the null hypothesis that active stakeholder engagement does not significantly mitigate the adverse effects of policy fluctuations on institutional performance and academic standards. The chi-square (X²) values were calculated using the formula: $X^2 = \sum [(observed\ frequency - expected\ frequency)^2 / expected\ frequency]$. The p-values were calculated using the chi-square distribution with k-1 degrees of freedom, where k is the number of categories and the significance level is 0.05. Based on the results, the null hypothesis (H₀) is rejected, as the p-value (0.008) is less than the level of significance (0.05). This suggests that active stakeholder engagement significantly impacts mitigating the adverse effects of policy fluctuations on institutional performance and academic standards. Specifically, the results indicate that high engagement with stakeholders is associated with better mitigation of the adverse effects of policy fluctuations.

H₄: Implementing stable policy frameworks and stakeholder-inclusive strategies does not significantly enhance the effectiveness of quality assurance mechanisms in Nigerian higher education.

Table 4. Chi-square (X²) Analysis Shows the Significant Enhancement of the Effectiveness of Quality Assurance Mechanisms in Nigerian Higher Education through the Implementation of Stable Policy Frameworks and Stakeholder-Inclusive Strategies

| Variables | Frequency | Expected Frequency | Chi-square (X ²) | p-value |
|---|-------------|--------------------|------------------------------|---------|
| Effectiveness of Quality Assurance | | | | |
| Not Enhanced | 32 (14.6%) | 54.75 | 12.53 | 0.0004 |
| Moderately Enhanced | 73 (33.3%) | 73.50 | 0.01 | 0.924 |
| Significantly Enhanced | 114 (52.1%) | 90.75 | 6.53 | 0.011 |
| Total | 219 (100%) | | 19.07 | 0.0001 |

The expected frequencies were calculated. This is based on the null hypothesis that there is no significant enhancement of the effectiveness of quality assurance mechanisms in Nigerian higher education through the implementation of stable policy frameworks and stakeholder-inclusive strategies. The chi-square (X²) values were calculated using the formula: $X^2 = \sum [(observed\ frequency - expected\ frequency)^2 / expected\ frequency]$. The p-values were calculated using the chi-square distribution with k-1 degrees of freedom, where k is the number of categories and the significance level is 0.05. Based on the results, the null hypothesis (H₀) is rejected, as the p-value (0.0001) is less than the level of significance (0.05). This suggests a significant enhancement of the effectiveness of quality assurance mechanisms in Nigerian higher education by implementing stable policy frameworks and stakeholder-inclusive strategies. Specifically, the results indicate that implementing stable policy frameworks and stakeholder-inclusive strategies significantly enhances the effectiveness of quality assurance mechanisms.

Discussion of Findings

The results of this study provide significant insights into the relationship between policy fluctuations and the effectiveness of quality assurance mechanisms in Nigerian higher education.

The first hypothesis posited that there is no significant relationship between the frequency of policy fluctuations in Nigerian higher education and other factors. Thus, it suggests that the frequency of policy fluctuations does not significantly correlate with the quality assurance processes in higher education institutions. This finding may reflect a degree of resilience within institutions, suggesting that they can maintain quality assurance standards despite changing policies. This finding aligns with Park et al. (2015), which suggested that institutions often adapt to policy changes without immediate detrimental effects on quality assurance practices. However, the lack of a significant relationship raises concerns about the long-term implications of policy instability on educational outcomes, suggesting a need for further research into the resilience of these institutions over time. The second hypothesis examined whether policy fluctuations disrupt the effectiveness of quality assurance mechanisms. This result reveals that policy fluctuations significantly disrupt quality assurance mechanisms in Nigerian higher institutions. The implications of this disruption are profound, as they may lead to inconsistent quality in educational outcomes, affecting students' learning experiences and institutional credibility. This result echoes findings from Kapelela et al. (2025), who highlighted that frequent policy changes can lead to confusion and inconsistency within academic programs, ultimately affecting quality assurance. The current study reinforces that educational policy instability can hinder effective quality



assurance practices, emphasising the need for more stable frameworks supporting consistent educational standards. The third hypothesis focused on the role of active stakeholder engagement in mitigating the adverse effects of policy fluctuations. This suggests that active stakeholder engagement plays a crucial role in buffering institutions against the negative impacts of policy changes. This finding emphasises the importance of collaborative governance in education, where stakeholders, including faculty, students, and industry partners, can contribute to more stable and effective policy environments. This finding is consistent with Baird et al. (2019), who found that collaborative governance structures enhance institutional resilience in the face of policy changes. The current study highlights that high levels of stakeholder involvement, including faculty, students, and industry partners, can buffer institutions from the negative impacts of policy fluctuations, supporting the argument for inclusive decision-making processes in higher education. The final hypothesis investigated whether implementing stable policy frameworks and inclusive strategies could enhance the effectiveness of quality assurance mechanisms. With a p-value of 0.0001, the null hypothesis was rejected, confirming that stable policies and stakeholder inclusion significantly enhance quality assurance. This finding suggests that when institutions adopt consistent and inclusive strategies, they are better positioned to maintain and improve the quality of education. It advocates for a proactive approach in policy formulation that involves all relevant stakeholders, ensuring that higher education dynamics are adequately addressed. This aligns with the findings of Creemers and Kyriakides (2013), who emphasised that stable policies and stakeholder involvement are critical for improving educational quality. The current study demonstrates that institutions with robust policy frameworks and inclusive strategies are better positioned to implement effective quality assurance measures.

CONCLUSION

Policy fluctuations significantly influence the quality assurance mechanisms in higher education in Nigeria. Inconsistent policies disrupt the continuity and effectiveness of academic and administrative standards, leading to compromised educational outcomes. These fluctuations often result in misalignment between national goals and institutional objectives, creating challenges in maintaining curriculum standards, accreditation processes, and quality of instruction. Furthermore, frequent policy changes strain institutional resources, making it difficult for universities to implement long-term strategic plans and meet global benchmarks. Faculty and administrative staff face difficulties adapting to evolving guidelines, impacting their productivity and the learning environment. To mitigate these challenges, a stable and comprehensive policy framework is essential. This includes engaging stakeholders in the policy formulation, ensuring consistent monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, and fostering an adaptive yet stable regulatory environment. Such measures can enhance the resilience of quality assurance systems and ensure that Nigerian higher education institutions remain competitive and globally relevant.

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