

Quality Assurance as a Predictor of Productivity and Efficiency among Academic Staff of State Universities in South East Nigeria.

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ABSTRACT

The study centered on quality assurance as predictor of productivity and efficiency among academic staff in the south eastern universities in Nigeria. Two research questions and two null hypotheses were formulated for the study. The population for this study comprised of 3048 academic staff in the 5 state universities in south east of Nigeria. Available data show that there are 2034 male lecturers and 1014 female lecturers in the 5 state universities of south east geopolitical zones of Nigeria. While sample size for this study comprised 305 respondents (204 male lectures and 101 female lecturers) sample from five State Universities South Eastern States in Nigeria. Questionnaire was designed to elicit appropriate information from the respondents. The reliability co-efficient of the instrument was calculated using cronbach Alpha method. Alpha value was found to be 0.85 indicating high reliability of the instrument. Mean score and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, and t-test statistic was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Some of the major findings of the study indicated that that Adequate funding enhance the productivity and efficiency of academic staff in the south eastern universities in Nigeria. Based on this, it was recommended that Governments – State and Federal should as a matter of urgency, increase the financial allocations to the universities under their jurisdiction.

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

The prime place that education occupies in the developmental effort of nations has never been doubted the world over. Perhaps this is why Odetunde (2004) remarked that - education is the biggest industry that touches on every fabric of our human endeavour. Various nations, including Nigeria, have been making conscientious efforts to harness this important sector for optimal development. Although much has been achieved in this regard, much still needs to be done in order to confront effectively the ever-increasing challenges of our time. University education, which is our focal point, is an important form of

investment in human capital. It can be viewed as a high level or a specialized form of human capital, contribution of which is very significant to economic growth in any society (Grayson, 2002). This is why Ekong (2006) rightly refers to education as the engine of development in the new world economy (Ekong, 2006). Nevertheless, it is by adequate university education that people get to know their basic rights and seek to get them enforced. This is because part of the reasons for the smooth ride of the unscrupulous ruling elite - lies in the fact that they have constantly worked on the emotions of an ignorant population (kamm, 2003). Ignorance and illiteracy limits the



horizons of the masses and therefore restricts the capacity of the oppressed to extract their rights from state. The objective of university education, according to the NPE are: to contribute to national development through high leveled manpower training, to develop and inculcate proper values for the survival of the individual and society, to acquire both physical and intellectual skills, that will enable individuals to be self reliant and useful members of the society among others. However, in spite of the pertinence of university education to nation, Nigeria has been bedeviled by many woes in her university education sector, such as quality and productivity of it product.

Asiyai and Oghuvbu (2009) defined quality as a measure of how good or bad the products of university education in Nigeria are in terms of their academic performance and meeting established standards. Adepoju and Akinola, (2007) defined quality as the totality of features and characteristics of a product or services that bear on its ability to satisfy stated needs. High quality delivery is a prerequisite for effective productivity in education industry and hence quality education is an instrument for effecting national development. According to Ekong (2006), quality builds knowledge, live skills, perspectives, attitudes and values. When quality education is delivered high enough to meet set standards, the products of education should be able to perform well in the world of work in real life situation. When quality is low, performance cannot meet the set standards. Hence one can say that the quality of education has declined below set standard.

It is against this background that efforts are geared towards enhancing the quality of education delivery at the university level. This explains the emergence of N.U.C. which established the BMAS. The aims of BMAS are: to ensure that at least the

minimum academic standard document are attained, maintained and enhanced. To ensure employers and other members of the community that Nigerian graduates of all academic programmes have attained an acceptable level of competency in their areas of specialization. To certify to the international community that the programmes offered in Nigerian universities are of high standard and their graduates are adequate for employment and further studies.

Quality assurance is the process of maintaining standards in products and services through inspection or testing of samples (Majasan 2008). Okebukola, (2010) noted that quality assurance is an umbrella concept for a host of activities that are designed to improve the quality of inputs, process and outputs of higher education system. In line with this, Adepoju and Akinola (2007), contended that quality assurance entails the quality of available instructional materials and other resources for teaching which include equipment, facilities, school environment, pupils, curriculum, quality of instructional delivery and quality of teachers. Quality assurance is designed to prove and improve the quality of an institution's methods, educational products and outcomes (Oyebode, Oladipo and Adetome; 2008).

Peretomode and Chukwuma (2007) in their study revealed that a significant relationship existed between manpower development and lecturers productivity. It is important to note that staff development is the catalyst that propels efficiency and productivity. It makes staff to be abreast with changes in their area of specialization. According to Bamiro, (2012), unfavourable administration in university institutions led to series of strikes resulting to closure of some institutions for up to 177days since 2009 to the present day accounted for low quality in higher education in Nigeria. This

unhealthy situation could lead to strained relations between university staff unions and management, increased hostility and aggression and increased mutual suspicion which are all threats to mutual co-existence for the attainment of good quality in institutions of higher learning. It is against this background that the researcher considered it worthwhile to examine the extent to which quality assurance serves as a predictor of productivity and efficiency among academic staff in the south eastern universities in Nigeria. The quality of academic staff in universities determines the quality of their products. If the quality of the academic staff is below standard, their products will equally be below standard and vice versa. Establishing how quality assurance in Nigerian universities can enhance productivity and efficiency, therefore, constitute the gap that this study intends to fill.

Statement of the Problem

There is seemingly declining quality in university education in recent years, the accolades attached to Nigerian university education seem to be fading away. Flood of criticisms becloud the quality of university product in Nigeria. Observation has show that companies were not recruiting but adopting employment protection strategies due to the very poor quality graduates produced in Nigeria, who do not meet the demands of the industries. Assessment study on the labour market expectations of graduates from Nigerian universities revealed that there were scores of unemployed graduates roaming the streets and more embarrassingly, those who were lucky to secure employment had to undergo remedial training in order to bridge the huge knowledge and skill gaps leftover from university training. This tends to negate the tenets of university which is essentially an institution established to produce quality workforce for national development. It is not yet certain where the problem of poor

quality university education lies. Some have argued that the problem range from funding, teaching staff, policy implementation, and staff development. It is against this background that the researcher considered it worthwhile to examine the extent to which quality assurance could serve as a predictor of productivity and efficiency among academic staff in the south eastern universities in Nigeria.

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of this study is to examine how quality assurance could serve as a predictor of productivity and efficiency among academic staff in the south eastern universities in Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:-

1. ascertain how adequate funding enhances the productivity and efficiency of academic staff in the south eastern universities in Nigeria.
2. determine how adequate staff development programmes enhance the productivity and efficiency of academic staff in the south eastern universities in Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. How would adequate funding enhance the productivity and efficiency of academic staff in the south eastern universities in Nigeria?
2. How would adequate staff development programmes enhance the productivity and efficiency of academic staff in the south eastern universities in Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses which were tested at 0.05 level of significance guided the study:

HO₁:- There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female academic staff regarding how adequate funding enhances the productivity

and efficiency of academic staff in the south eastern universities in Nigeria.

HO₂:- There is no significance difference between the mean ratings of male and female academic staff regarding how adequate staff development programmes enhance the productivity and efficiency of academic staff in the south eastern universities in Nigeria.

Research Method

The design of the study was descriptive survey aimed at examining quality assurance as a predictor of productivity and efficiency among academic staff in the south eastern universities in Nigeria. According to Nworgu (2018), descriptive survey design is a type of study which aims at collecting data on, and describing in a systematic manner the characteristics, features or facts about a given population. Hence, the researcher deems it necessary to use this design because a representative sample of the entire population was used for the study. The study was carried out in south East states of Nigeria. South East state of Nigeria is one of the six geopolitical zones in the country. The region consists of the following states: Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo State. Each of these states has unique and homogenous characteristics, politically and socially that influence the behavioral life style of the people. The population for this study comprised of 3048 academic staff in the 5 state universities in south east of Nigeria. Available data show that there are 2034 male lecturers and 1014 female lecturers in the 5 state universities in

south east geopolitical zones of Nigeria. While sample size for this study comprised 305 respondents (204 male lectures and 101 female lecturers) sample from five State Universities in South Eastern States in Nigeria. Proportionate random sampling technique was used to sample 10% of the respondents from the five state universities. The instrument for data collection is a structured questionnaire titled "Quality Assurance as a Predictor of Productivity and Efficiency Questionnaire (QAPPEQ). The instrument was developed by the researcher and it has two sections, A and B. Section A is about the bio-data of the respondents while section B is on the information on Quality assurance as a predictor of productivity and efficiency among academic staff. The instrument was faced validated while the reliability co-efficient of the instrument was calculated using Cronbach Alpha method. Alpha value was 0.85, indicating high reliability of the entire instrument. Mean score and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, and t-test statistic was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

The results are presented in tables according to the research questions.

Research question one

How would adequate funding enhance the productivity and efficiency of academic staff in the south eastern universities in Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean rating scores of male and female lecturers on how adequate funding enhance the productivity and efficiency of academic staff in the south eastern universities in Nigeria

S/N	Items	Male lecturer			Female lecturer		
		\bar{X}	SD	Decision	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
1.	There are sufficient funds to build lecture halls.	3.01	0.70	A	3.22	0.69	A

2.	There is provision of funds to build students hostels.	3.67	0.65	A	3.18	0.70	A
3.	There is sufficient of science laboratory.	3.56	0.68	A	3.05	0.69	A
4.	There is available of funds to equip different workshop in the institution.	3.06	0.70	A	2.99	0.79	A
5.	There is availability of funds to pay lectures salaries.	2.28	1.02	A	2.48	0.99	A
6.	There is availability of research grants to embark on research projects.	3.11	0.69	A	3.21	0.69	A
7.	Lecturers received their allowances as at when due.	3.09	0.70	A	2.87	0.71	A
8.	There is adequate provision of exam materials.	2.76	0.96	A	3.03	0.69	A
9.	School sponsoring lecturers financially to attend conferences.	2.49	0.99	D	2.40	1.00	D
10.	Lecturers are supported financially for the publications.	2.32	1.01	D	2.46	0.99	D
Cluster mean		2.93	0.81	A	2.89	0.79	A

The data on table 1 show that the respondents agree in all the items except items 7 and 10. While the means of male lecturers ranged from 2.32 to 3.56 with a cluster mean of 2.93 and a standard deviation of 0.81 that of female lecturers ranged from 2.40 to 3.22 with a cluster mean of 2.89 and standard deviation of 0.79. While the cluster means of the two groups of the respondents indicate that adequate funding enhance the productivity and efficiency of academic staff of the south

eastern universities in Nigeria, the standard deviations of the two groups of the respondents indicate that they were homogenous in their responses. In other words, the standard deviations were close.

Research question two

How would adequate staff development programmes enhance the productivity and efficiency of academic staff in the south eastern universities in Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean rating scores of male and female lecturers on how adequate staff development programmes enhance the productivity and efficiency of academic staff in the south eastern universities in Nigeria.

S/N	Items	Male lecturers			Female lecturers		
		\bar{X}	SD	Decision	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
11.	Lecturers are sponsored to attend staff development programme abroad.	2.68	0.82	A	2.77	0.98	A
12.	Lecturers are sent for in service training	2.93	0.98	A	2.78	0.96	A
13.	Universities are always organize workshops for lecturers for professional growth and development	2.85	0.77	A	2.54	0.78	A
14.	The university sponsor lectures financially to attend international conference	2.88	0.96	A	2.60	0.96	A
15.	Lecturers are giving research grant to carryout research projects	2.51	0.94	A	2.55	0.93	A
16.	Lecturers are encouraged to embark on international research projects.	2.46	1.02	D	2.37	1.00	D
17.	Lecturers are giving orientation regarding job and new innovation in the system.	2.97	0.93	A	2.91	0.98	A
Cluster mean		2.35	0.97	A	2.34	0.95	A

Based on the data on table 2, the two groups of respondents independently rated all the items agree except item 16 where lecturers did not agree with. The ratings of the items of this cluster implies that the two groups of respondents share the view that adequate staff development programmes enhance the productivity and efficiency of academic staff in the south eastern universities in Nigeria. The cluster means are 2.87 (for

male lecturers) and 2.85 (for female lecturers) in a four point rating scales with corresponding standard deviation of 0.83 and 0.87 for male and female lecturers respectively.

Test of Hypotheses

Ho₁: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female academic staff regarding how

adequate funding enhances the productivity and efficiency of academic staff in the south eastern universities in Nigeria.

Table 3: t-test of significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female academic staff on how adequate funding enhances the productivity and efficiency of academic staff in the south eastern universities in Nigeria.

Group	N	\bar{X}	SD	Df	t-cal	t-critical	Decision
Male lecturers	204	2.93	0.81	303	0.38	1.96	Not significant
Female lecturers	101	2.89	0.79				

Table 3 above presents the independent t-test analysis of the mean difference in the response opinions of male and female academic staff regarding how adequate funding enhances the productivity and efficiency of academic staff in the south eastern universities in Nigeria. The result in Table 3 showed that the calculated t-value (0.38) was less than the critical value (1.96). The null hypothesis was not rejected. Therefore, there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and

female academic staff regarding how adequate funding enhances the productivity and efficiency of academic staff in the south eastern universities in Nigeria.

H₀: There is no significance difference between the mean ratings of male and female academic staff regarding how adequate staff development programmes enhance the productivity and efficiency of academic staff in the south eastern universities in Nigeria.

Table 4: t-test of significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female academic staff regarding how adequate staff development programmes enhance the productivity and efficiency of academic staff in the south eastern universities in Nigeria.

Group	N	\bar{X}	SD	Df	t-cal	t-critical	Decision
Male lecturers	204	2.35	0.97	303	0.59	1.96	Not significant
Female lecturers	101	2.34	0.95				

Table 4 above presents the independent t-test analysis of the mean difference in the response opinions of male and female academic staff regarding how adequate staff development programmes enhance the productivity and efficiency of academic staff in the south eastern universities in Nigeria.

The result in Table 4 shows that the calculated t-value (0.59) was less than the critical value (1.96). The null hypothesis was not rejected. Therefore, there is no significance difference between the mean ratings of male and female academic staff regarding how adequate staff development programmes enhance the productivity and

efficiency of academic staff in the south eastern universities in Nigeria.

Discussion of findings

The findings of this study show that adequate funding of academic staff in university system enhances their productivity and efficiency. In other words, respondents shared the view that proper funding and timely release of funds will go a long way to enhance efficiency of academic staff of university in south east of Nigeria. The findings showed that there are sufficient funds for provision of teaching and learning facilities for students. This finding agrees with Ekong (2006) who maintained that proper funding will assist in attaining academic excellence in Nigerian universities. Ekong also noted that adequate funding will help institutions of higher learning in Nigeria to be able to build lecture halls, students' hostels, equip laboratories and workshops and payment of staff salaries, research grants, allowances and medical bills at the right time. The finding is also in consonance with the opinion of Okebukola, (2009) who noted that adequate funding in university system will motivate academic staff, thereby increase their productivity and efficiency. The findings also revealed that there was no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female academic staff regarding how adequate funding enhances the productivity and efficiency of academic staff in the south eastern universities in Nigeria.

The findings of the study show that adequate staff development programmes enhance the productivity and efficiency of academic staff in the south eastern universities in Nigeria. In other words, respondents share the view that Lecturers are been highlighted through different national and international conferences on new innovation in the system. The findings are in consonance with the opinion of

Aboyade (2006), who noted that vibrant staff development programmes on a continuous basis will help academics and non-academics to clarify and modify their behaviour, attitude, values, 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. Aboyade further noted that 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 development should be the priority of any nation. The findings also agree with Asiyai and Oghuvbu (2009) who noted that lack of staff development programmes accounted for the decline in quality of tertiary education in Nigeria. The findings are equally in consonance with Adeogun, (2006) who noted that an employee who is not trained and exposed to continuous retraining in the modern methods and new discoveries in his or her field will soon become irrelevant to the organization. The result also showed that there is no significance difference between the mean ratings of male and female academic staff regarding how adequate staff development programmes enhance the productivity and efficiency of academic staff in the south eastern universities in Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were proffered.

1. Governments – State and Federal should as a matter of urgency, increase the financial allocations to the universities under their jurisdiction.
2. The National University Commission should enforce the compliance with the Minimum Academic Standard (MAS) specifying the quantity and quality of staff, students and facilities.
3. Different universities should strive to explore other internally Generated

Revenue (IGR) options to boost their revenue base, because there is correlation between the quality of education delivery and the level of funding of education.

4. Different education agencies should try to implement institutional policies that enhance quality education delivery.
5. University management should always release funds to train and re-train academic staff of the institution. Training and retraining have become imperative in the field of education because of constant changes that always occur with the advent of modern technology.

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