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Assessment of The Impact of NUC Accreditation Exercise on Personnel in Business Education Programmes of Universities

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Abstract

This is a survey research aimed at determining the impact of National Universities Commission's accreditation exercise on personnel in the business education programmes of the universities in the South-east Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria. One research question and one null hypothesis guided the study. The population comprised 66 respondents made up of 6 directors of academic planning and 60 academic staff of the departments of Business Education of the six universities in the zone. A researcher-developed instrument duly validated by three experts was used for data collection. Test re-test method was used for testing the reliability of the instrument. With the use of the Pearson Product Moment, the reliability co-efficient correlation was found to be 0.86 which was considered adequate for the study. The mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research question while t-test was used to test the null hypothesis.

The findings of the study indicated that NUC accreditation exercise had impacted in some aspects of minimum standards for quality of personnel in Business Education programmes to a high extent. However, the exercise had a low extent of impact on staff/student ratio of 1:30, on students understanding of departmental mission and on competent technical officers manning the computer laboratory in business education programmes. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that NUC should continue to insist on on-line registration for lecturers in business education departments to ensure that all the claims made on personnel during accreditation were actually in existence.

Key words: NUC, Accreditation and Personnel

Introduction

The National Universities Commission (NUC) is the agency vested with the responsibility for quality control in university programmes throughout the Nigerian federation. The agency is responsible for setting up the minimum academic standards for the universities otherwise known as NUC benchmark. According to Okojie (2010), the NUC duties include to ensure that quality is maintained in the academic programmes of the universities, to lay down minimum academic standards for the universities, to carry out the accreditation of the degree and other academic awards of the universities and as well as carrying out higher education-related investigation. The minimum standards are criteria used to evaluate or assess the university programmes and Business Education is one of the programmes. Business education has remained an invaluable academic programme in tertiary institutions. The programme is geared at empowering its products with the educational and business competencies needed to effectively cope with the challenges in the world of work. According to Okpuzor (2012), the goal of business education is primarily to produce competent, skillful and dynamic business teachers, office administrators and businessmen and women that will effectively compete in the world of work.

Accreditation

Accreditation can be broadly defined as a process leading to the granting of approval or authority to a programme or institution after meeting set minimum standards or criteria (Okebukola, 2010). According to Ediagbonya, Agbaje and Suberu (2012), accreditation is an evaluation of whether an institution or a programme meets the threshold standards and qualifies for a certain status. It could also mean the process by which the quality and standard of educational institutions are assessed. Ukoha and Ahia (2004) asserted that programme accreditation is the process whereby a professional group judges its educational programme against a set of consensually derived norms, usually referred to as standards. Professionals are involved in programme accreditation. There must be generally accepted and previously set

standards which are criteria for evaluation. Dill (2000) opined that accreditation exercise strengthened institutions to put in place the necessary human and material resources on ground. The NBTE (1992) explained that programme accreditation involves the evaluation of the quality of a programme offered in an institution by the Board to confirm that the competence and number of teaching and administrative staff and the necessary physical and other facilities are available. This is necessary to ensure that the curriculum is adequately preparing students to be able to perform satisfactorily in their chosen field. Ademiluyi (2009) contended that properly conducted accreditation should be the one which compels currency in academic curricula, thoroughness in instruction, integrity in assessment, sufficiency in infrastructures and equipment; and adequacy in the level of funding. Improved programme quality is the most significant gain of programme accreditation (NCCE, 1996). Okwuanaso and Ademiluyi (2010), stated that in the course of accreditation exercise, the NUC adjudges the adequacy or otherwise of the programmes' personnel, administration, physical facilities and equipment.

The above statement is in line with Okebukola's assertion that for educational system to meet up with its expectations both in input, process and output, there is need for the institutions to meet up with the laid down minimum academic standards for the universities and that includes personnel, physical facilities, library and information, academic content and leadership. According to Abiola (2005) Nigerian universities generally had done everything they could to satisfy NUC minimum standards.

Personnel

The Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary defined personnel as the people who work for an organization. In the university system, the personnel are the academic and non-academic staff. According to NUC Minimum Academic Standards (2007), the following categories of academic staff with the minimum qualifications are earmarked for Department of Business Education: Graduate assistant - a person with a good bachelor's degree; assistant lecturer - a person with a masters' degree in relevant field; lecturer II - a person with a doctoral degree in relevant field and promotional prospectus for assistant lecturer with at least three years' experience subject to availability of necessary publications; lecturer I - a person with a doctoral degree in relevant field with at least three (3) years' experience on the job; senior lecturer a person with at least three (3) years in lecturer I with adequate publications, associate professor or professor with at least three (3) years as reader/associate professor. Also, the academic staff structure should be rank mixes and ratios in the department shall be such that admits 20% in the professional grade, 35% in the senior lecturer grade and 45% in the lecturer I grade and below. For non-academic staff one secretary- a person that is computer literate, one clerical officer, two office attendants, two typists, one laboratory attendant and one technician. Staff: student ratio shall be 1:30. In the views of Ile (2000) the employment

of qualified technicians would be of immense help to any institution willing to procure instructional facilities and equipment as his expertise would be utilized in the selection of the right items.

Ukoha and Ahia in Ademiluyi (2007) asserted that the observations about the quality of staff in the accreditation process are often contrived. In their opinion, staff are often hired or borrowed ahead of accreditation only to be fired immediately after accreditation and heads of department are appointed only for the duration of the accreditation period.

Effective communication between staff and students is very necessary to ensure accomplishment/achievement of departmental objectives (Oladose, 2011).

Purpose of the Study

The major purpose of the study was to assess the extent to which the NUC accreditation exercise has impacted on providing quality personnel in business education programmes of universities.

Research Question

The following research question guided the study: To what extent has the NUC accreditation exercise impacted on provision of quality personnel in business education programmes of universities?

Hypothesis

One null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance, thus: male respondents do not differ significantly from their female counterparts in their mean rating of the impact of NUC accreditation exercise on provision of quality business education personnel in universities.

Method

The study adopted descriptive survey design. The study was carried out in universities in south-east geopolitical zone. The population of the study comprised 66 respondents made up of 6 directors of academic planning and 60 academic staff of the Departments of Business Education of the six universities in the zone. The instrument for data collection was structured on a 4- point rating scale of very high extent (VHE) 4, high extent (HE) 3, low extent (LE) 2 and low high extent (VLE) 1. The questionnaire was validated by three experts in Business Education department, Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka. A total of 61 copies of the questionnaire were produced and administered by the researcher with the help of two research assistants.

Mean and standard deviation were used to analyse the research question while t-test statistic was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. Items with

mean ratings of 3.50 to 4.00 were regarded as very high extent, those that ranged between 2.50 to 3.49 were regarded as high extent, and those that ranged between 1.50 to 2.49 were regarded as low extent while those that ranged between 0.50 to 1.49 were regarded as very low extent. The null hypothesis was rejected where the calculated t-value was equal to or greater than the critical t-value otherwise the null hypothesis was not rejected.

Results

The data collected in respect of the research question for this study are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Respondents' Mean Rating on the Impact of the NUC Accreditation on Provision of Quality Personnel in Universities in South-East Geopolitical Zone (N=61)

S/N	Minimum Standards for Personnel	X	SD	Remarks
1	Adequate number of academic staff	3.00	0.67	High Extent
2	Adequate rank mix (20% professional grade, 35% in the senior lecturer grade and 45% in the lecturer 1 grade and below) of academic staff.	2.50	0.92	High Extent
3	Availability of qualified academic staff	3.33	0.21	High Extent
4	Adequate experienced academic staff	3.33	0.21	High Extent
5.	Appropriate staff student ratio of 1:30	2.33	0.95	Low extent
6.	Democratic choice of head of department	3.16	0.48	High extent
7.	Assignment of staff advisers for students	3.00	0.33	High Extent
8.	Appropriate teaching work load	3.00	0.33	High Extent
9.	Existence of clearly defined departmental mission	3.16	0.48	High Extent
10.	Adequate understanding of departmental mission by staff.	4.00	1.00	Very H. Extent

11.	Adequate understanding of departmental mission by students.	2.33	0.95	Low extent
12.	Clear departmental policies aimed at attaining business education objectives	3.16	0.48	High extent
13.	Effective delegation of departmental responsibilities	2.83	0.81	High Extent
14.	Involvement of staff in departmental programme planning.	2.83	0.81	High Extent
15.	Involvement of students in departmental programme planning.	2.66	0.56	High Extent
16.	Effective communication channels between HOD and staff	3.16	0.48	High Extent
17	Effective communication channels between HOD and students	3.00	0.67	High Extent
18	Regular holding of departmental meetings	3.16	0.48	High Extent
19	Competent representation at the Academic Board.	3.16	0.48	High Extent
20.	Staff development programme for all staff	2.66	0.56	High Extent
21	Adequate non-academic staff number	2.50	0.92	High Extent
22	Competent technical officers.	2.33	0.95	Low Extent
23.	Competent technical officers manning the Computer Laboratory	2.33	0.95	Low Extent
Grand Mean		2.91	High Extent	

The data in Table 1 showed that out of 23 items on the minimum standards for personnel, only item 10 had a mean of 4.00 which indicates very high extent of impact, 18 items with mean ratings ranging between 2.50-3.49 were rated high extent. The other 4 items including items 5, 11, 22 and 23 had a mean of 2.33 regarded as low extent of impact. The grand mean for this category was 2.91. This was regarded as high extent showing that over all, the NUC accreditation exercise had impacted on the quality of business education personnel. The SD in Table 3 revealed that only item 10 had SD of 1.00 which indicated that the respondents had different opinions. The

remaining 22 items had SD that ranged from 0.21 to 0.95 indicating that the respondents had common opinion in all the items.

Table 2: t-test Analysis of the Mean Ratings of Male and Female Respondents on the Impact of NUC Accreditation Exercise on the Quality of Personnel in Business Education Programmes.

Variable	N	X	S ²	Df	α	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Male Respondents	23	3.43	0.33	59	0.05	0.90	1.960	Not Rejected
Female Respondents	38	3.34	0.49					

Analysis of data in Table 2 showed that the calculated t-value is 0.90 at 59 degree of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated t-value (0.90) was less than the critical value of 1.960, the null hypothesis was not rejected. This indicated that male and female respondents did not differ significantly in their mean rating on the impact of NUC accreditation exercise on the quality of business education personnel.

Discussion of Findings

The results in Table 1 showed how the respondents rated the impact of NUC accreditation exercise on the quality of business education personnel. It was found that NUC accreditation exercise had impacted on the following minimum standards for personnel: adequate number of academic staff; adequate rank mix of academic staff; availability of qualified academic staff and adequate experienced academic staff. The respondents' ratings also showed that the impact of NUC accreditation exercise had ensured assignment of staff advisers for students; appropriate teaching work load; existence of clearly defined departmental and adequate understanding of departmental mission by staff. This finding was not in agreement with the assertion of Ukoha and Ahia (2004) that the observation about the quality of staff in the accreditation process was often contrived. In their opinion, staff are often hired or borrowed ahead of accreditation only to be fired immediately after accreditation. According to Abiola (2005) Nigerian universities generally had done everything they could to satisfy NUC minimum standards.

Okebukola (2010) advocated that for the educational system to meet up with its expectations both in input, process and output, there was need for the institutions to meet up with the laid down minimum academic standards for the universities. Also, it was found out that NUC accreditation had impacted on the following: clear departmental policies aimed at attaining business education objectives; effective

delegation of departmental responsibilities and involvement of staff and students in departmental programme planning. The NUC accreditation had impacted on effective communication channels between HOD and staff/HOD and students; competent representation at the Academic Board, staff development programme for all staff and adequate non-academic staff number. This was in line with Oladose's (2011) assertion that effective communication channels between staff and students led to accomplishment/achievement of departmental objectives.

The result also showed that NUC accreditation exercise had no impact on these minimum standards for personnel: appropriate staff/student ratio of 1:30; adequate understanding of departmental mission by students; competent technical officers and competent technical officers manning computer laboratory. This was in line with Okwuanaso and Ademiluyi's (2010) suggestion that university authorities should, as a matter of urgency, employ more academic staff to help man the programme. In the views of Ile (2000) the employment of qualified technicians would be of immense help to any institution willing to procure instructional facilities and equipment as his expertise would be utilized in the selection of the right items. The expert advice of the technician would assist the schools to avoid dangers of destroying the equipment.

The study also found that male and female respondents did not differ significantly in their mean rating of the impact of NUC accreditation exercise on quality of business education personnel.

Conclusion

From the findings of the study, it was concluded that NUC accreditation exercise had impacted on provision of quality personnel in business education programmes except that it had low extent of impact on staff student ratio of 1:30, on students understanding of departmental mission and on competent technical officers manning the computer laboratory in business education programmes.

Recommendations

In view of the findings and conclusion of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. NUC should continue to insist on on-line registration for lecturers in business education departments to ensure that all the claims made on personnel during accreditation were actually in existence.
2. NUC should continue to put in place effective mechanism for verifying claims made by business education programmes during accreditation. Accreditation visitation should always be accompanied by follow-up or verification visitations.

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