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Comparative Assessment of the Implementation of Quality Assurance Mechanisms in Educational Management Programme of Universities in South-East Nigeria.

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Abstract: *This study focused on comparative assessment of the implementation of quality assurance mechanisms in educational management programme of federal and state universities in south-east, Nigeria. Four research questions and four null hypotheses guided the study. The study was carried out in the eight government-owned (3 federal and 5 state) universities in south-east that run educational management programme. The study adopted a survey research design on a population of eight heads of department. A 44-item researcher constructed questionnaire was used to rate the implementation of quality assurance mechanisms as it relates to; moderation of examination, in-service professional development programmes, mock accreditation exercise, and infrastructural facilities. The instrument was validated by three experts, while a grand reliability index of 0.84 was obtained using crombach alpha reliability coefficient. Mean scores were used to answer the four research questions while t-test was used to test the four null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The major findings of the study indicated that both federal and state universities in south-east implement the four mechanisms for quality assurance in educational management programme to a little extent. Though they both have implemented it to a little extent, the federal universities seem to record better implementation of these mechanisms compared to the state universities. This is supported by the outcome of research questions 3 & 4 as well as hypotheses 3 & 4. It was recommended among others that the National Universities Commission (NUC) should lay more emphasis on the state universities during the usual general/main accreditation exercise of institutions. This will reduce the differences that may exist in standard. Conclusions, implications and limitations of the study were made as well as suggestions for further studies.*

Keywords: Assessment, Quality Assurance Mechanisms, Educational Management Programme

1. INTRODUCTION

The university is a complex learning organization occupying a strategic position and the highest level in the education ladder. The university is made up of people with different backgrounds in terms of needs, skills, talents, status, competencies, knowledge, behavioral styles, interest and perceptions (Nakpodia, 2003). In fact, the skills and high level manpower needed for the growth and development of any nation are produced by the universities. Universities as learning organizations are centers of excellence, teaching, research and store houses of knowledge. According to the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN, 2004:36), University Education shall make optimum contribution to national development by:

1. Intensifying and diversifying its programme for the development of higher level manpower within the context of the needs of the nation;
2. Making professional course contents to reflect the national requirements;
3. Making all students, as part of a general programme of all-round improvement in university education, to offer general study courses such as history of ideas, philosophy of knowledge and nationalism;
4. University research shall be relevant to the nation's developmental goals. In this regard, universities shall be encouraged to disseminate their research to both government and industries;
5. University teaching shall seek to inculcate community spirit in the students through project and action research.

The university runs so many programmes at various levels. Educational management programme which is a sub-set of the university education and like other programmes of the university is specifically for the training of education managers, teachers, administrators, supervisors and policy makers in education. It encompasses the training of individuals for the management of all levels of educational system in the nation. Thus, educational management is that aspect of educational training which an individual receives with the primary motive of enabling him/her to acquire adequate attitudes, concepts, knowledge, understanding and skills in school management activities for usage in careers as an administrator, manager or teacher wherever he/she may find himself/herself in the society.

The objectives of educational management programme include the following:

a) Provide highly motivated, conscientious and efficient education mangers for all levels of the education system
b) Encourage further the spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers
c) Help Educational managers to fit into the social life of the Community and society at large and enhance commitment to National objectives
d) Provide educational managers with the intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment and to make them adaptable to any changing situation, not only in the life of their country but also in the wider world.
e) Enhance teachers' commitment to the teaching profession to make them adequate for their assignments and to make them adaptable to any changing situation.
f) Produce highly efficient and conscientious classroom teachers who would manage classrooms in a way that will motivate and enhance learning.
g) Develop skills and knowledge of those who will manage the educational system and
h) Prepare various categories of workers in the education industry for further studies in management. (Unizik Edu. Mgt. & Policy Handbook, 2014:24)

For the aforementioned objectives of educational management programme and other inherent benefits of education to be realized, there is need therefore, to ensure quality and sustainable standards in the education system. Hence, it becomes imperative to check and assess the mechanisms for quality assurance in educational management programme.

Quality assurance in the education system implies the ability of the institution to meet the expectations of the user of manpower in relation to quality of skills acquired by their output (Ajayi & Akindutire, 2007). Oladipo, Adeosun and Oni (2009) posited that quality of educational programme could be measured in terms of quality of input, quality of process, quality of content and quality of output. Therefore, ensuring quality in educational management requires the right quantity and quality in everything that goes into the teaching/learning process or system as input and process. For education and educational management programme in particular to be accorded its respect in our society, Okebukola (2011) noted that it must provide graduates with minimum skills that will enable them to be self-reliant and useful to the society. It is on record that Nigerian universities have been producing high quality graduates in far past. As evidenced by Daisi in Oladipo et al (2009), many graduates from Nigerian universities have distinguished themselves in their areas of specialization so much that some of them are now professors in the best universities across the globe. One cannot doubt the fact that the university education system has enhanced social, cultural, economic, political, scientific and technological progress in Nigeria. The country is more blessed now with specialists at various fields of endeavor: medicine, law, engineering, philosophy, education, etc. Due to this development, the nation is becoming more and more dynamic and self-reliant as the days go by. With the establishment of at least a federal university in every state, in recent time, without proper care and monitoring, a lot of failures have been witnessed.

Okebukola (2011) decried the quality of graduates produced in Nigerian tertiary institutions especially in the last four years and thumbed down the quality of those that would graduate in three years time. Similarly, Ekumayo (2012) submitted that the non-inclusion of any of the nation's universities in the world best 1500 universities is unsavory and worse still, Nigeria ranked number 22 after South Africa, Egypt, Ghana, and Kenya in the ranking of African universities.

The NUC (2014) 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 embarrassing, 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.

The researcher had also observed, during the recent accreditation exercise (2014) of the department of Educational Management and Policy, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, where he belongs, that only 16 reports, after all enquiries were documented in the self-study form, as employers rating of graduates of the department, for the past 4 years. The fact that only 16 reports were obtained does not necessarily mean that only 16 out of about 160 past graduates of the department for the past 4 years are employed, it shows that only few are known to be working, even-though about 8% of them usually enroll for Masters programme each year, with the intention of acquiring higher certificate for better chance of employment. This tends to negate the tenets of university education which is essentially an institution established to produce quality workforce for national development.

The recent developments in the Nigerian university system and its poor rankings in Africa and the world in general shows that all is not well as expected with ensuring quality in the Nigeria university system. Educational Management programme is not left out of this deplorable state. The major objective of educational management is to produce education managers for all levels of education. Most managers at the top levels of various educational systems are not experts in educational management, as some of them climb the ladder of leadership either by promotion on the basis of years of experience or by appointment (Adegbesan, 2011). According to Anioke (2010) until expertise positions are reserved for only qualified personnel, the system will continue to suffer degradation.

Due to the declining quality in recent years, the accolade attached to Nigerian universities seems to be fading away fast. This is informed by the flood of criticisms that

beclouded the quality of graduates produced. Parents now seek alternative for their children's education in South African and Ghanaian universities and even beyond. This ugly situation in Nigeria tends to negate the tenet of quality university education which is essentially an industry established to produce high quality workforce for national development.

It is against this background that National University Commission (2012) identified the following mechanisms for quality assurance in Nigeria educational system to salvage the deplorable situation. They are: moderation of examination, in-service professional development given to career academics, proper funding of education, supervision and inspection, infrastructural evaluation, mentoring and monitoring, mock accreditation exercise, regular evaluation of the system among others. However, this study will evaluate four of these mechanisms which include; moderation of examinations, in-service professional development programme, mock accreditation exercise, and adequate infrastructural facilities.

These mechanisms, already existing in schools, are contained under the criteria for accrediting a degree programme, as a policy, in relevant areas of section 8.0 of the National University Commission (NUC, 2012)'s manual of accreditation procedures for academic programmes in Nigerian. It is believed that when these mechanisms are properly implemented in the institutions, it will bring about quality and thereby lead to high standard of university education in the country.

Although, all universities in Nigeria are regulated by National Universities commission (NUC), implementation procedure of these mechanisms seems to differ with respect to public and private universities as well as federal and state owned universities; which the study seeks to identify.

It is based on these that this study seeks to access the extent of the implementation of quality assurance mechanisms in educational management programme of Federal and State Universities in south-east Nigeria.

2. Research Questions

1. To what extent is moderation of examinations as a mechanism for quality assurance in educational management programme being implemented in federal and state universities in south-east?

2. To what extent is in-service professional development programme as a mechanism for quality assurance in educational management programme being implemented in federal and state universities in south-east?

3. To what extent is mock accreditation exercise as a mechanism for quality assurance in educational management programme being implemented in federal and state universities in south-east?

4. To what level of adequacy is infrastructural facilities as a mechanism for quality assurance in educational management programme being provided in federal and state universities in south-east?

3. Null Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of federal and state universities on the extent of implementation of moderation of examinations as a mechanism for quality assurance in educational management programme of universities.
2. Federal universities and State universities do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the extent of implementation of in-service professional development programme as a mechanism for quality assurance in educational management programme of universities.
3. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of federal and state universities on the extent of implementation of mock accreditation exercise as a mechanism for quality assurance in educational management programme of universities.
4. Federal universities and State universities do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the level of adequacy of infrastructural facilities provided as a mechanism for quality assurance in educational management programme of universities.

4. Method

This study utilized ex-post factor research design which focused on comparative assessment of the implementation of quality assurance mechanisms in educational management programme of federal and state universities in south-east, Nigeria. Four research questions and four null hypotheses guided the study. The study was carried out in the eight government-owned (3 federal and 5 state) universities in south-east that run educational management programme. The population of the study stood at eight heads of department who responded to the questionnaire, while other documents of the department were presented and observed by the researcher. A 44-item researcher constructed questionnaire was used to rate the implementation of quality assurance mechanisms as it relates to; moderation of examination, in-service professional development programmes, mock accreditation exercise, and adequacy of infrastructural facilities provided. The instrument was validated by three experts, while a grand reliability index of 0.84 was obtained using crombach alpha reliability coefficient. Mean scores were used to answer the four research questions while t-test was used to test the four null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

5. RESULTS

The result of the study is presentation sequentially in a table starting from answering the research questions to testing the null hypotheses.

Table 1: Mean scores of HODs' responses on extent of implementation of moderation of examinations as a mechanism for quality assurance in educational management programme of federal and state universities in South East.

		Federal Universities		State Universities	
S/N	**Moderation of Examinations**	**Mean**	**Decision**	**Mean**	**Decision**
1	Moderation of examination questions	4.3	VHE	4.0	HE
2	Moderation of marking scheme	2.3	LE	1.8	LE
3	Moderation of answer scripts	2.7	M	1.6	LE
4	Moderation of continuous assessment scores	3.7	HE	2.8	M
5	Moderation of examination results	4.7	VHE	3.8	HE
6	Moderation of students' research project	4.3	VHE	2.0	LE
7	Moderation of course content/scheme of work	1.3	VLE	1.4	VLE
8	Moderation of lesson notes in-line with course content	1.0	VLE	1.0	VLE
	Grand Mean	**3.0**	**M**	**2.3**	**LE**

Table 2: Mean scores of HODs' responses on extent of implementation of in-service professional development programme as a mechanism for quality assurance in educational management programme of federal and state universities in south-east.

		Federal Universities		State Universities	
S/N	**In-service Professional Development Programme**	**Mean**	**Decision**	**Mean**	**Decision**
9	Mentoring of newly recruited staff by old staff	3.3	M	2.0	LE
10	Attendance to conferences	3.6	HE	3.0	M
11	Organizing coaching classes	1.3	VLE	2.4	LE
12	Promoting consultation for staff	1.7	LE	1.4	VLE
13	Technical assistance given to new/young staff	1.3	VLE	1.8	LE
14	Organizing and attending seminars	2.0	LE	2.4	LE
15	Participating in workshops	3.0	M	3.0	M
16	Organizing summit for staff	1.7	LE	1.6	LE
17	Attendance to train-the-trainer programme	1.3	VLE	1.6	LE
18	Organizing demonstration lessons	2.3	LE	2.0	LE
19	Teaching of part-Time/Sandwich courses	5.0	VHE	3.0	M
20	Engaging in intellectual debates	1.0	VLE	1.2	VLE
21	Attending academic events (Inaugural lecture)	3.0	M	1.6	LE
	Grand Mean	**2.3**	**LE**	**2.1**	**LE**

Table 3: Mean scores of HODs' responses on extent of implementation of mock accreditation exercise as a mechanism for quality assurance in educational management programme of federal and state universities in south-east.

		Federal Universities		State Universities	
S/N	**Mock Accreditation Exercise**	**Mean**	**Decision**	**Mean**	**Decision**
22	Specification of admission requirement	5.0	VHE	4.0	HE
23	Philosophy and Objectives clearly stated	4.7	VHE	4.2	HE
24	Supervision of guidelines for mounting the programme	3.6	HE	3.0	M
25	Compulsory exposure of students to teaching practice	5.0	VHE	4.2	HE
26	Compulsory exposure of students to practicum	4.7	VHE	2.0	LE
27	Establishing and maintaining minimum academic staff requirement	3.6	HE	2.0	LE
28	Collaborative efforts in curriculum review	3.3	M	1.6	LE
	Grand Mean	**4.3**	**VHE**	**3.0**	**M**

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Table 4: Mean scores of HODs' responses on level of adequacy of infrastructural facilities provided as a mechanism for quality assurance in educational management programme of federal and state universities in south-east.

		Federal Universities		State Universities	
S/N	**Infrastructural Facilities**	**Mean**	**Decision**	**Mean**	**Decision**
29	Conducive classroom	2.7	A	2.6	A
30	Well equipped computer laboratory	3.7	HA	3.0	A
31	State of the art model office	2.3	LA	2.6	A
32	Well equipped library	5.0	VHA	3.0	A
33	Well furnished staff office	3.0	A	1.8	LA
34	Research laboratory	2.3	LA	2.4	LA
35	Auditorium	3.7	HA	3.2	A
36	Multimedia support gadget	3.3	A	1.2	VLA
37	Lecture/examination halls	3.3	A	1.8	LA
38	Students' hostel	3.7	HA	3.2	A
39	Canteen/cafeteria	4.0	HA	3.2	A
40	Free online communication	3.7	HA	2.2	LA
41	Air conditioning in classrooms/lecture halls	1.3	VLA	1.2	VLA
42	Sport complex	2.3	LA	1.4	VLA
43	Recreational facilities	1.7	LA	1.2	VLA
44	Toilet facilities for students	2.7	A	1.8	LA
	Grand Mean	**3.0**	**A**	**2.2**	**LA**

Table 5: t-test comparison of mean ratings of federal and state universities

University Type	**N**	$\overline{X}$	**SD**	**Df**	**t-cal.**	**t-crit**	**α**	**Decision**
Federal Universities	3	3.1	1.32					Ho
State Universities	5	2.3	1.04	6	1.3445	2.145	0.05	Not Rejected

Table 6: t-test comparison of mean ratings of federal and state universities

University Type	**N**	$\overline{X}$	**SD**	**Df**	**t-cal.**	**t-crit**	**α**	**Decision**
Federal Universities	3	2.3	1.13					Ho
State Universities	5	2.1	0.61	6	0.5643	2.064	0.05	Not Rejected

Table 7: t-test comparison of mean ratings of federal and state universities

University Type	**N**	$\overline{X}$	**SD**	**Df**	**t-cal.**	**t-crit**	**α**	**Decision**
Federal Universities	3	4.3	0.63					
State Universities	5	3.1	1.05	6	2.5929	2.179	0.05	Reject Ho

Table 8: t-test comparison of mean ratings of federal and state universities

University Type	N	$\overline{X}$	SD	Df	t-cal.	t-crit	$\dot{\alpha}$	Decision
Federal Universities	3	2.9	0.91	6	2.3997	2.042	0.05	Reject Ho
State Universities	5	2.2	0.73					

6. Summary of Major Findings

The major findings that emerged from this study are presented as follows:

1. Both federal and state universities had little extent implementation in; moderation of marking scheme, moderation of course content/scheme of work and moderation of lesson notes in-line with the course content. Meanwhile, only state universities implement the moderation of answer scripts and moderation of students' research project to a low extent.
2. Both federal and state universities recorded weakness in; organizing coaching classes, promoting consultation for staff, technical assistance given to new/young staff, organizing and attending seminars, organizing summit for staff, attending train the trainer programmes, organizing demonstration lesson and engaging in intellectual debate. On the other hand, only state universities had difficulty on mentoring of newly recruited staff and attending academic event (inaugural lectures).
3. Federal universities portrayed high extent implementation in mock accreditation exercise as they recorded very high scores on all the items on this section. Meanwhile, state universities had low extent implementation on some items which include; compulsory exposure of students to practicum, establishment and maintaining minimum academic staff requirement, as well as collaborative effort in curriculum review.
4. Both federal and state universities had little adequacy in; research laboratory, air conditioning of classroom/lecturer room, sports complex and recreational facilities. Meanwhile state universities failed in adequate provision of well fashioned staff offices, multiply-media support gadget, lecture/examination halls, free online communication & toilet facilities for students. Although federal universities recorded little adequacy on state of art model, the state universities recorded adequacy on it (state of art model).
5. Even though both federal and state universities recorded adequacy in the implementation of some items, there seems to be some variations on the extent of implementation of these mechanisms, although these variations are minimal.
6. Two null hypotheses (1 & 2) on; moderation of examination and in-service professional development programme were not rejected (accepted), showing the existence of no significant difference in the mean ratings of federal and state universities on the subject matter, while hypothesis 3 & 4 on mock accreditation exercise as well as adequate infrastructural facilities were rejected (not accepted) which indicates that there is significant difference in the mean ratings of federal and state, universities on the subject matter.

7. Discussion and Conclusion

The result of the study shows that both federal and state universities in south east have negative attitude towards; moderation of marking scheme, moderation of course content/scheme of work and moderation of lesson note in-line with course content, by rating them to a low extent. This is in conformity with the idea of Ezeani and Eze (2013) that even-though the school management sees these measures as veritable in ensuring quality of the school system, in most cases, they tend to continue with those they find easy and abandon others. This means that both federal and state universities in south east do not implement; moderation of marking scheme, moderation of course content/scheme of work and moderation of lesson note in-line with course contents, even where they do, they do it to a low extent.

The result also indicates that state universities implement in-service professional development programme to a low extent. In support of this Akamobi (2005) in his study, observed that most university programmes during the period of accreditation exercise, engage in various measures like; moderation of examinations, provision of infrastructure, adequate fund for expenditure, and so on. Immediately after accreditation exercise, some abandon these mechanisms which in turn lead to fallen standard of the entire system. It is glaring that both federal and state universities in south east are found wanting with respect to implementation of in-service professional development programmes as a

mechanism for quality assurance in educational management programme of universities.

Qiang and Shiyan, (2007) lamented that it is a well known fact that most of the higher institutions that offers educational management programme suffer from shortage of teachers. Also the excessive workload of teaching and supervision of students' projects that rest on the few teachers available reduce their effectiveness in teaching. Qiang and Shiyan (2007) observed that teachers in educational management are always too busy because they have many students to evaluate and supervise; more than ten students. This inevitably affects the quality of teaching in educational management (Amoor 2010).

Findings from the study comparatively shows that in federal universities, infrastructures are adequate while in state universities, infrastructures are little adequate. This agrees with the view of Omeje (2008) who noted that, the facilities and resources in our colleges of education and universities are in poor state, grossly inadequate to meet and sustain the required standard. He maintained that among such facilities are laboratories, sports complex and recreational facilities.

The result of the hypotheses shows that implementation of mock accreditation exercise and infrastructural facilities are better in the federal universities compared to the state universities. This may be as a result of better financed policy the federal universities enjoy compared by the state universities, just as Akamobi (2005) points out that implementation of accreditation procedures are often successful in federal universities compared to the state universities due to the huge fund allocation from the general government. Knowing that accreditation exercise has a very high financial consequence on the institution, only institutions with financial stability will succeed from it.

Finally, on the general findings, the research concludes that even though both federal and state universities had moderate implementation of the identified mechanisms, the federal universities seem to record better implementation of these mechanisms compared to the state universities in south-east. This is supported by the outcome of hypotheses 3 and 4.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made;

1. University management in south-east universities especially state universities should embark on monitoring scheme to ensure that departments implement moderation of examination to a very high extent, especially moderation of marking scheme, moderation of course content/scheme of work, and moderation of lesson note in-line with course content which were rated very low extent.
2. The annual appraisal of lecturers should dwell not just on few but all the items of in-service professional development programme. This will improve lecturers' performance and in-turn improves the standard of the school, knowing that no education system can grow beyond the skills and knowledge of the teachers.
3. University management especially for state universities should ensure that; the required academic staff are employed, students are exposed to practicum, and that collaborative curriculum review be promoted. This will go a long way in improving the academic content of the programme.
4. Government should ensure that the process of accessing Tetfund be made easy for universities especially state universities, so as to acquire infrastructural facilities. Due to high cost of these infrastructures, the institutions should also improve on their Internal Generated Revenue (IGR) in order to complement the effort of the government.
5. Just as it was observed that quality assurance mechanisms seems to have been implemented more in federal universities than in state universities, the National University Commission (NUC) should as a matter of urgency pay more emphasis on the state universities during the institutional accreditation exercise. This will improve the performance of state universities to meet up with the federal universities, so as to reduce the differences that seem to exist in standard.

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