

Impact Assessment of Accreditation on Quality in Higher Education in Nigeria: The Study of North-East Geo Political Zone.

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Abstract. First generation universities in Nigeria were established between 1948 and 1962, subsequently; the National Universities Commission was established in 1962 and made a statutory body in 1974, to ensure academic standards and quality in Nigerian universities. Before now, the products of these first generation universities were comparable to world-class standard in quality, but today, the song is that Nigerian universities are producing half-baked graduates. This paper examined the impact of accreditation on quality in Higher Education in Nigeria; vis-à-vis the five thematic areas covered by accreditation which are: academic content, staffing, physical facilities, funding and library. The descriptive survey research design was adopted. The population of the study consists of the 6 Federal Universities located in the North-East geo political zone of Nigeria. Simple stratified random sampling technique was used to select 30 respondents from each university and 60 respondents from the National Universities Commission (NUC). In all 240 respondents were used in the study. A 25-item researcher-developed Questionnaire titled “Impact of Accreditation on Quality in Higher Education Questionnaire (IAQHEQ)” served as major instrument for data collection. The instrument was validated by experts from the Faculty of Education, Taraba State University. The reliability test conducted using Cronbach Alfa yielded a co-efficient index of 0.89. Five (5) research questions and one null hypothesis guided the study. Frequency counts, mean and standard deviation were used to answer research questions, while the t-test statistic was used to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of

significance. Results of the finding reveal that accreditation has significant impact on quality in Higher Education in Nigeria, it also reveal that some universities resort to falsehood, borrowing of staff and equipment from other schools, to attract high score during accreditation which are not sustained; it reveal that facilities and library holdings improved tremendously through accreditation visits; It was concluded that periodic accreditation visit by the NUC is very important to maintain quality and standards in Nigerian universities. The paper therefore recommended among others, that universities in Nigeria must ensure a functional quality assurance directorate that will maintain the accreditation indices in relation to academic content, staffing, facilities, funding and library, in order to sustain quality and standards in Nigerian Universities.

Keywords: Impact Assessment, Accreditation, Quality, Higher Education.

1. Background to the Study

Higher Education or Tertiary Education is defined as education given after secondary education in universities, colleges of education, polytechnics, monotronics including those institutions offering correspondence courses. Its goals include: to contribute to national development through high level relevant manpower training; develop and inculcate proper values for the survival of the individual and society; develop the intellectual capability for individuals to understand and appreciate their local

and external environments; etc. (FRN, 2013). To achieve these goals, the concept of quality and standards sets in. The concepts of quality and standards are closely related and often used interchangeably. In higher education, there is considerable overlap between the two concepts. However, quality and standards are not the same. Standards are specified and usually have measurable outcome indicators, which are used for comparative purposes. According to Harvey cited in Amaechi (2018), standards in higher education have been categorized into three areas: academic standard, standards of competence and service standards. Academic standards are concerned with measurement of ability to meet specified levels of academic attainment. They measure the ability of students to fulfill requirements of the programme of study through whatever mode of assessment is required. Standards of competence measure specified levels of ability on a range of competence related to the transferable skills of students. Service standards attempt to specify the level of service provided to students, such as turn-around times for assessing student work, maximum class sizes, frequency of personal tutorials, availability of information on complaints procedures, and the lag on introducing recommended reading into the library, and so on. All three categories of standards are present in the Nigerian Benchmark for Minimum Academic Standards (BMAS). However, the idea of academic standards and service standards are emphasized.

In the words of Harvey and Green cited in Evard, Mike and Teun (2008), the concept of quality could be identified through five major approaches, which are: exceptionality, consistency, fitness for purpose, value for money and transformation. Exceptional quality is further conceptualized in three ways. These are, distinctiveness, excellence (exceeding high standards) and passing a set of (minimum) standards. Quality as distinctiveness confers the idea of high class status to the possessor of the product. The idea of exceeding high standards implies excellence in input and output. In higher education, it means that the best students are admitted into the institution and efforts are made to produce excellent students. Also, the institution possesses the best in terms of human and physical resources. The third idea in this approach is to make sure that the product passes a set of standards. In higher education this presumes that the institution or programme fulfills the minimum standards set by the accrediting agency. The agency determines and sets criteria for testing the quality of similar programmes. Harvey and Green cited in Amaechi (2018) further state that quality as perfection or consistency is associated with zero defects. Quality is seen as conforming to a particular

specification. Specifications are set which are to be met. The emphasis in this approach is the inter-related ideas of 'zero defects' and 'getting things right first time'. It encourages a quality culture and 'involves a devolution of responsibility for quality'. In the words of Harvey, Green and Burrows cited in Kim (2005), the fitness-for-purpose approach to quality is judged in terms of the extent to which a product or service meets a stated purpose. In other words, quality is associated with the purpose of the product or service. The institution is judged in terms of the extent to which it fits its purpose. The purpose of the institution, therefore, must be determined. Harvey et al cited in Kim (2005) further state that the value for money approach to quality is associated with the idea of accountability. Public institutions, including universities are expected to be accountable to their stake-holders. Quality as transformation approach, education is seen as an ongoing process of transforming, enhancing and empowering the students. Transformation addresses the extent to which the educational experience enhances the knowledge, abilities and skill of the student during the learning process. Empowerment involves giving power to the students to influence their own transformation (Harvey et al, cited in Kim, 2005). It is important to note that most elements of the above discussed approaches are present in most higher education systems in Nigeria.

Okebukola (2006) described accreditation as a process of examining the availability and adequacy of resources, merit rating of resources and programmes in order to enhance quality of output. This means that accreditation involves the process of ensuring that curricula, physical facilities, personnel, funds and so on meet the needs of the university to achieve its stated philosophy and objectives. Hence, it is a measure of quality of academic programmes and it is aimed at strengthening academic programmes for quality assurance and quality improvement. According to Obadara and Alaka (2013), accreditation is a process that aids institutions in developing and sustaining effective educational programmes and assuring the educational community, the general public and other organizations that the accredited institution has met high standard of quality and effectiveness. It is a measure of the quality of academic programmes on acceptable minimum standard provided by the accrediting agency.

Uvah (2005) submitted that the quality of university education could be measured on how well the students have been prepared for life and for service to the society in various spheres of human endeavour. This means that the quality of university education can be viewed in terms of quality of lecturers,

adequacy and accessibility of facilities and materials required for teaching and learning, and preparation of students to meet life challenges and solve societal problems. Kis (2005) points out that the key indicator of quality higher education is the success of graduates in joining the labour market. However, the quality of university education in Nigeria seems to continue to deteriorate as the years passed by, despite the effort of government to improve the university learning environment and the effort of the NUC in monitoring and accrediting academic programmes. Tunde and Issa (2013) in their study attributed this to poor funding of education in Nigeria which makes university administrators unable to provide adequate and quality infrastructural facilities and equipment for effective teaching and learning. They further stated that the non-commensurate of funding with other growing indices in Nigerian universities have negative impact on the quality of education as the universities are constantly being shut down as a result of staff unions agitating for one form of demand or the other.

Otokunefor (2015) reported that the poor quality of our university graduates is due to the interwoven nature of the infrastructural deficiencies of the universities. According to him, magic facilities spring up overnight before accreditation exercises and disappear soon after. Sometimes, spaces allocated to and used by other departments are simply relabeled for the sake of accreditation. After the exercise, the facilities revert to the original owners and the struggle for survival continues. Akomolafe and Ibijola (2014) in their study reported low status of infrastructure in our universities and they attributed this to funding challenges despite the monitoring and compliance driven mechanism. This finding was in line with an earlier report by Alechenu (2012) that low status of infrastructural facilities has led to a sharp decline in scholarship. In support of this, Mufuyai cited in Akpan and Etor (2016) noted that Nigerian universities are characterized by lack of basic technology, poor funding and operating environment.

Accreditation of undergraduate programmes in Nigerian universities could be traced back to Decree No. 16 of 1985 as incorporated in NUC amendment Decree No. 49 of 1988. These laws empower the NUC to lay down minimum academic standards for all the academic programmes taught in Nigerian universities and also to accredit them, hence the development of the Benchmark for Minimum Academic Standards (BMAS). The first accreditation of programmes in Nigerian universities took place in 1990 and 1991 respectively. In the words of

Kirkwood, Miller & Boswell, Thrash and Adelman cited in Udom (1996), accreditation purpose is to ensure and maintain education standards, and institutional integrity. They further defined accreditation as the process of assessment or inspection that ensures an institution or its programmes are recognized as meeting minimum acceptable standards. It provides an assurance of the educational standards and integrity of university education to the educational community, the general public, and other agencies or organizations, and makes the process and standards known to the educational community and public at large. According to NUC (1989a), the objectives of accreditation are as follows:

- Ensuring that minimum level of academic standards and competence are attained, maintained and enhanced;
- Assuring employers and other members of the community that Nigerian graduates of all academic programmes have attained an acceptable level of competence in their areas of specialization;
- Certifying to the international community that the programmes offered in Nigerian universities are of high standards and the graduates are adequate and have gained comparable standards for employment, and for further studies;
- Serving as an avenue for advising proprietors of institutions to revitalize them where they are failing to meet their objectives;
- Providing universities with avenues for self-evaluation especially where the accrediting panel's report coincides with the institution's appraisal of what it is doing;
- Giving both the staff and students pride in associating with a programme that has achieved full accreditation status.

To achieve the above objectives, the NUC adopted the peer review mechanism which has been considered as one major feature of accreditation. The ad hoc accreditation panels are made up of experts (peers) from other universities in the programmes to be accredited; they usually consist of senior academics (senior lecturers and above). The panel usually consists of five to ten members. They are specialists in the programme(s) to be accredited. They are selected by the NUC from the list, sent to the accrediting body prior to the commencement of the exercise, of senior academics (Udom, 1996). The panel uses the following criteria to evaluate programmes in the universities.

Figure 1: *Summary of scores for each evaluation criterion*

| Criterion | Maximum Scores | Actual Scores | Full accreditation |
|---|----------------|---------------|--------------------|
| Academic Content | | | |
| Philosophy and objectives | 2 | | 1 |
| Curriculum of the programme | 5 | | 4 |
| Admission into the programme | 5 | | 4 |
| Academic regulations | 2 | | 1 |
| Standards of test and examinations | 5 | | 4 |
| Evaluation of students' work | 4 | | 3 |
| Practical/project work | 10 | | 7 |
| Student's course evaluation | 3 | | 2 |
| External examination system | 3 | | 2 |
| Sub-total | 39 | | 28 |
| Staffing | | | |
| Teaching staff (quality and quantity) | 10 | | 7 |
| Administration of department/college | 3 | | 2 |
| Non-teaching staff (quality and quantity) | 3 | | 2 |
| Staff development programme | 3 | | 2 |
| Sub-total | 19 | | 13 |
| Physical facilities | | | |
| Laboratories/clinics/studios | 10 | | 7 |
| Classroom/lecture theatres | 10 | | 7 |
| Office accommodation | 3 | | 2 |
| Safety and environment | 3 | | 2 |
| Sub-total | 26 | | 18 |
| Funding | 10 | | 7 |
| Library | 3 | | 2 |
| Employer's rating of graduates | 3 | | 2 |
| Total score | 100 | | 70 |

Source: National Universities Commission: Accreditation Panel Report Form.

Figure 1 shows the total scores on the Accreditation Panel Report Form (APRF), which determines the accreditation status of the programme evaluated. Each criterion has a given weighting point as can be seen in table 1. Also each component has a subtotal. For a programme to obtain 'full' accreditation status, it must obtain a minimum of 70 points. It must also obtain minimum points in the three major components of academic content, staffing and physical facilities. For an 'interim' accreditation status, a programme must obtain a minimum score in at least one major components and obtain a score of between 60 and 69 points. A programme which fails in all the major areas and scores less than 59 points has 'denied' accreditation status. The accreditation is cyclical and continuous in nature, those programmes that have 'full' accreditation status are revisited after five years, while those with 'interim' status are revisited after two years. The initiative for accreditation re-visitation for those with 'denied' accreditation status will be from the university, after it has rectified the deficiencies identified during the initial visit.

This paper therefore sought to assess the impact of accreditation on quality in higher education in Nigeria in relation to the five thematic areas of academic content, staffing, physical facilities, funding and library; using the federal universities in

the North-East geo political zone of Nigeria, which comprise the following States: Taraba, Adamawa, Borno, Bauchi, Yobe and Gombe.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

In recent times, there is an increasing public outcry about the quality of university education in Nigeria by stakeholders and the general public. The first generation universities in Nigeria such as University of Ibadan, University of Nigeria Nsukka, Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, Obafemi Awolowo University Ile-Ife and University of Lagos were established between 1948 and 1962, subsequently, the National Universities Commission was established in 1962 and made a statutory body in 1974, to ensure academic standards and quality in Nigerian universities. Before now, the products of these first generation universities were comparable to world-class standard in quality, but today, observation has shown that some Nigerian graduates are deficient in communication skill and the ability to apply technical and professional knowledge in solving personal and work-related problems. Some of them are poor in oral and written expression in English language. They lack leadership competence and good sense of judgment. Some of them are deficient in the proficiency for time management and

self-control. This shows that the quality of university education and/or graduates is deteriorating. This has been blamed on the politics and poor manner in which accreditation of academic programmes are carried out in Nigerian universities. In some universities, management does not release money, so facilities and equipment are borrowed and used for accreditation, some academic programme contents are inadequate and not relevant to the needs of the students and the labour market. On the other hand, the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) has been on steady face-off with the federal government due to poor funding and inadequate physical facilities in universities, yet most of the programmes in these universities have full accreditation through peer review mechanisms by these senior academics. The big question therefore is where did we get it wrong? The thrust of this paper is to assess the impact of accreditation on quality in higher education in North-East, Nigeria.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

Specifically, the purpose of the study is:

- To examine the extent to which accreditation has improved academic content in Nigerian universities.
- To identify how accreditation influenced the quality and quantity of staffing in Nigerian universities.
- To determine how accreditation has actually influenced the provision of physical facilities in Nigerian universities.
- To investigate how accreditation leads to improved funding of universities in Nigeria.
- To determine the extent to which accreditation facilitates acquisition of more books by the Library of Nigerian universities.

1.3 Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study.

- To what extent has accreditation improved academic content in Nigerian universities?
- How has accreditation improved quality and quantity of staffing in Nigerian Universities?
- To what extent has accreditation influenced the provision of physical facilities in Nigerian Universities?
- In what ways has accreditation improved funding of Nigerian Universities?
- To what extent has accreditation improved Library holdings in Nigerian Universities?

1.4 Hypothesis

The following null hypothesis guided the study and was tested at 0.05 level of significance:

H₀ “Accreditation has no significant impact on quality in Higher education in Nigeria”.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is associated with the fact that it seeks to assess the impact of accreditation on quality in Higher education in Nigeria; using the federal universities in the North-East geo political zone. It is hoped that the results so obtained from this empirical process will provide tangible evidence to key stakeholders so as to address quality issues in higher education system in a collective and collaborative manner. It is also envisaged that the results might help the federal government through NUC to strategize on how best to conduct accreditation in higher education sector so as to ensure that quality is not compromised.

1.6 Limitations of the Study

The decisions about the use of Lecturers from the federal universities in the North-East geo political zone of Nigeria limit the feasibility of this study. Though, it is quite possible for the perceptions of lecturers from this zone to be representative of many of their colleagues' perceptions in other geo-political zones of Nigeria. The same cannot be said with any great confidence with regard to the perceptions of all lecturers in private and state-owned universities across the six geo-political zones of Nigeria.

1.7 Delimitations of the Study

The research confined itself to impact assessment of accreditation on quality in higher education in Nigeria. Views from Heads of Department, Deans, Professors and Senior Lecturers from federal universities in the North-East geo political zone; and senior staff of the Directorates of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance of the National Universities Commission (NUC) were solicited. Views from other key stakeholders like federal ministry of education, State-owned and private universities, Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) and students of these universities were not sought by the study.

2. Methodology

The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. According to Miles and Huberman (1984) “... a survey is a method for collecting information from a sample of people by the administration of a questionnaire. The population consists of 6 federal universities from the following States: Taraba, Adamawa, Borno, Bauchi, Gombe and Yobe which are referred to as the North-East Geo-Political zone of Nigeria. Simple stratified random selection

procedure was used to get a sample of 240 respondents in the following order: from each of the 6 federal universities, 30 respondents were sampled, stratified along Professors, Head of Departments, Deans of faculties Senior lecturers, Directors, Deputy Directors, Chief and Senior Academic planning officers of the Academic planning units; while from the National Universities Commission (NUC), 60 respondents were sampled from the Directorates of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance. The instrument for data collection was a 25-item researcher-developed questionnaire titled “Impact of Accreditation on Quality in Higher Education Questionnaire (IAQHEQ)”. It comprised two sections, A and B; Section A sought biographic data of respondents such as name of school, rank of respondent, and Sex; while section B comprised 25 items on the impact of accreditation on quality in higher education in Nigeria. The instrument rating was based on a four-point numeric scale of Very High (VH, 4 points), High (H, 3 points), Low (L, 2 points), Very Low (VL, 1point).

The researchers administered the questionnaire directly to respondents through six research assistants. Out of the two hundred and forty (240) questionnaire distributed, two hundred and thirteen (213) copies were retrieved (Lecturers returned 157 which is 87.2% while NUC staff returned 56 which is 93.3%) from the sampled schools, which is 88.8% return rate, and adjudged by the researcher as significant for analysis. Mean, Standard deviation and percentages were used to answer the five (5) research questions. A Mean of 2.50 was adopted as the scale mean (agreement level) for the items. The t-test statistic was used to test the Null hypothesis at

0.05 level of significance. All tests were done using the latest version of SPSS.

3. Theoretical Framework

The theory upon which the study was anchored is Charles Lindblom incremental theory of public policy. Charles Lindblom has been identified as the chief proponent of the incremental model. This is manifested in his “Decision Making in Taxation and expenditure in his description of budgetary process (Ngu, 2006:36). He and his disciple contended that policy making involves a continuation of past policies with very little and simple modification to suit new situation or changing circumstance, and posited further, that policy does not require radical and drastic changes, but rather design to meet new challenges very slowly and progressively. This theory is relevant to this study because evaluation and accreditation are policy issues and quality is incremental in nature, hence the adoption of the incremental model.

The accreditation policy is a deliberate action by government to empower the National Universities Commission (NUC) to manage the establishment of new faculties, departments and courses offered therein in Nigerian Universities. In 1985, the NUC was saddled with additional responsibilities to set minimum academic standards and inspect and vet courses offered in Nigerian universities. This purposeful cause of action can thus, be understood within the context of distributive public policy, which have experienced changes and modifications to suit new situation, and meet up present challenges.

4. Results / Findings

Research Question 1: To what extent has accreditation improved academic content in Nigerian universities?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Lecturers and NUC staff on the impact of accreditation on academic content in Nigerian universities.

| S/N | ITEM | NUC Staff | | | Lecturers | | |
|---------------------|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|-------------|-------------|
| | | \bar{x} | SD | Decision | \bar{x} | SD | Decision |
| 1. | To what extent do students admitted into the university meet admission requirements as set by NUC | 3.3 | 0.85 | High | 3.2 | 0.68 | High |
| 2. | To what extent do your university enforce rules and regulations governing conduct of examinations as stipulated by NUC | 3.1 | 0.78 | High | 3.3 | 0.92 | High |
| 3. | To what extent do your university enforce grading system and use of external examiners as stipulated by NUC | 3.0 | 0.88 | High | 3.2 | 0.93 | High |
| 4. | To what extent do the university ensure that syllabus is covered for all courses per semester. | 2.9 | 0.88 | High | 2.7 | 1.02 | High |
| 5. | To what extent do the university ensure that marking scheme exists for students' evaluation. | 2.9 | 1.02 | High | 2.9 | 0.97 | High |
| Cluster Mean | | 3.04 | 4.41 | High | 3.7 | 4.52 | High |

Scale Mean = 2.5

Table 1 show that respondents agree that students admitted into universities in Nigeria meet admission requirements to a high extent; with a mean of 3.3 and 3.2 and standard deviation of 0.85 and 0.68 for NUC staff and lecturers respectively. They also agree that the extent to which universities enforce rules and regulations governing conduct of examinations as stipulated by NUC is very high; with a mean of 3.1 and 3.3; and standard deviation of 0.78 and 0.92 for NUC staff and lecturers respectively. They further agree that to a high extent, universities enforce grading system and use external examiners as stipulated by NUC; with a mean of 3.0 and 3.2, and standard deviation of 0.88 and 0.93 for NUC staff and lecturers respectively. They also agree that universities to a high extent, ensure that syllabus is covered for all courses per semester, with a mean of 2.9 and 2.7; and standard deviation of 0.88 and 1.02 for NUC staff and Lecturers respectively. They agree to a high extent, that universities ensure that marking scheme exist for students' evaluation; with a mean of 2.9 and 2.9; and standard deviation of 1.02 and 0.97 for NUC staff and Lecturers respectively. With a cluster mean of 3.04 and 3.7 for NUC staff and Lecturers respectively, which is greater than the scale mean of 2.5, it could be concluded that accreditation has significant impact on academic content in Nigerian universities.

Research Question 2: How has accreditation improved quality and quantity of staffing in Nigerian Universities?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Lecturers and NUC staff on the impact of accreditation on quality and quantity of staff in Nigerian universities.

| S/N | ITEM | NUC Staff | | | Lecturers | | |
|---------------------|---|------------|-------------|----------|------------|-------------|-------------|
| | | \bar{x} | SD | Decision | \bar{x} | SD | Decision |
| 6. | To what extent are teaching staff adequate in quality in the university | 3.0 | 0.80 | High | 2.5 | 0.80 | High |
| 7. | To what extent are teaching staff adequate in quantity in the university | 2.8 | 0.96 | High | 2.2 | 0.91 | Low |
| 8. | To what extent do government through universities sponsor teaching staff for conferences and further studies | 3.0 | 1.01 | High | 2.9 | 0.88 | High |
| 9. | To what extent do the university adhere to adequate/ minimum teaching load for lecturers as stipulated by NUC. | 2.9 | 0.94 | High | 2.7 | 0.92 | High |
| 10. | To what extent do the university adhere to lecturer-student ratio as stipulated by NUC according to discipline. | 2.7 | 1.07 | High | 2.1 | 0.92 | Low |
| Cluster Mean | | 2.9 | 4.78 | | 2.5 | 4.43 | High |

Scale Mean = 2.5

Table 2 show that respondents agree that to a high extent, the quality of teaching staff in Nigerian universities are adequate; with a mean of 3.0 and 2.5; and standard deviation of 0.80 and 0.80 for NUC staff and Lecturers respectively. The NUC staff also agree that the quantity of staff in Nigerian universities is adequate to a high extent; with a mean of 2.8 and standard deviation of 0.96; whereas Lecturers disagree with them on this item, with a mean of 2.2 and standard deviation of 0.91. Respondents however agree that to a high extent, government through universities sponsor teaching staff for conferences and further studies; with a mean of 3.0 and 2.9, and standard deviation of 1.01 and 0.88 for NUC staff and Lecturers respectively. They also agree to a high extent, that universities adhere to adequate/minimum teaching load for lecturers as stipulated by NUC; with a mean of 2.9 and 2.7; and standard deviation of 0.94 and 0.92 for NUC staff and Lecturers respectively. NUC staff further agree that to a high extent, universities adhere to lecturer-student ratio as stipulated by NUC; with a mean of 2.7 and standard deviation of 1.07; Lecturers disagree with them on this item; with a mean of 2.1 and standard deviation of 0.91. With a cluster mean of 2.9 and 2.5 for NUC staff and Lecturers respectively, which is greater than and equal to the scale mean, it could be concluded that accreditation has significant impact on the quality and quantity of staff in Nigerian universities.

Research Question 3: To what extent has accreditation influenced the provision of physical facilities in Nigerian Universities?

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of Lecturers and NUC staff on the impact of accreditation on the provision of physical facilities in Nigerian universities.

| S/N | ITEM | NUC Staff | | | Lecturers | | |
|-----|--|-----------|------|----------|-----------|------|----------|
| | | \bar{x} | SD | Decision | \bar{x} | SD | Decision |
| 11. | To what extent are laboratories, clinics and studios for academic purpose adequate and well equipped. | 2.9 | 0.88 | High | 2.6 | 0.75 | High |
| 12. | To what extent are classrooms and lecture theatres in the university adequate in size for teaching and learning. | 2.9 | 0.85 | High | 2.4 | 0.93 | Low |
| 13. | To what extent are classrooms and lecture theatres in the university | 2.6 | 1.01 | High | 2.4 | 0.91 | Low |

| | | | | | | | |
|-----|--|------------|-------------|------|------------|-------------|-----|
| | furnished with basic facilities for teaching and learning. | | | | | | |
| 14. | To what extent is the adequacy of office accommodation provided for teaching staff in the university. | 2.9 | 0.87 | High | 2.1 | 0.87 | Low |
| 15. | To what extent is the adequacy of research laboratories provided for teaching staff in the university. | 2.6 | 0.96 | High | 1.9 | 0.92 | Low |
| | Cluster Mean | 2.8 | 4.57 | | 2.3 | 4.38 | |

Scale Mean = 2.5

Table 3 shows that respondents agree that to a high extent, laboratories, clinics and studios for academic purpose are adequate and well equipped in Nigerian universities; with a mean of 2.9 and 2.6; and standard deviation of 0.88 and 0.75 for NUC staff and Lecturers respectively. NUC staff also agrees that classrooms and lecture theatres in universities are adequate in size for teaching and learning, with a mean of 2.9 and standard deviation of 0.85. Lecturers disagree with this item, with a mean of 2.4 and standard of 0.93. Also the NUC staff agree that to a high extent, classroom and lecture theatres in universities are furnished with basic facilities for teaching and learning; with a mean of 2.6 and standard deviation of 1.01; Lecturers disagree with them on this item, with a mean of 2.4 and standard deviation of 0.91. NUC staff further agree that to a high extent, office accommodation provided for teaching staff are adequate in Nigerian universities; with a mean of 2.9 and standard deviation of 0.87; Lecturers disagree with the item, with a mean of 2.1 and standard deviation of 0.87. NUC staff further agrees that to a high extent, research laboratories provided for teaching staff in Nigerian universities are adequate; with a mean of 2.6 and standard deviation of 0.96; Lecturers further disagree with this item, with a mean of 1.9 and standard deviation of 0.92. With a cluster mean of 2.8 and 2.3 for NUC staff and Lecturers respectively, which is greater than and less than the scale mean, it could be concluded that NUC staff are of the opinion that accreditation has significant impact on the provision of physical facilities in Nigerian universities, while Lecturers are of the opinion that it has not. However, going by the average of the cluster mean which is $2.8+2.3/2 = 2.6$, which is greater than the scale mean, it could be concluded that accreditation has significant impact on the provision of physical facilities in Nigerian universities.

Research Question 4: In what ways has accreditation improved funding of Nigerian Universities?

Table 4: Mean and Standard Deviation of Lecturers and NUC staff on the impact of accreditation on funding in Nigerian Universities.

| S/N | ITEM | NUC Staff | | | Lecturers | | |
|-----|---|------------|-------------|----------|------------|-------------|----------|
| | | \bar{x} | SD | Decision | \bar{x} | SD | Decision |
| 16. | To what extent are funds adequately provided to run programmes in the university? | 2.3 | 1.02 | Low | 2.8 | 0.85 | High |
| 17. | To what extent are staff salaries and allowances paid in full and regularly. | 2.8 | 1.02 | High | 3.0 | 0.87 | High |
| 18. | To what extent are funds provided for the purchase of consumables in the university. | 2.6 | 0.98 | high | 2.6 | 0.97 | High |
| 19. | To what extent are funds provided for maintenance of facilities in the university. | 2.4 | 1.02 | Low | 2.8 | 1.01 | High |
| 20. | To what extent is your university providing overhead costs to academic departments for smooth operations. | 2.7 | 1.02 | High | 2.3 | 1.01 | Low |
| | Cluster Mean | 2.6 | 5.06 | | 2.7 | 4.71 | |

Scale Mean = 2.5

Table 4 show that NUC staff agree that to a low extent, funds provide to run programmes in Nigerian universities are adequate; with a mean of 2.3 and standard deviation of 1.02; Lecturers on their part are of the opinion that it is to a high extent, with a mean of 2.8 and standard deviation of 0.85. Respondents also agree that to a high extent, staff salaries and allowances are paid in full and regularly; with a mean of 2.8 and 3.0 and standard deviation of 1.02 and 0.87 for NUC staff and Lecturers respectively. They further agree that to a high extent, funds are provided for the purchase of consumables in the university; with a mean of 2.6 and 2.6 and standard deviation of 0.98 and 0.97 for NUC staff and Lecturers respectively. NUC staff also agrees that to a low extent, funds provided for maintenance of facilities in the universities; with a mean of 2.4 and standard deviation of 1.02; Lecturers are of the view that it is to a high extent, with a mean of 2.8 and standard deviation of 1.01. NUC staff further agrees that to a high extent, universities are providing overhead cost to their academic departments for smooth operations; with a mean of 2.7 and standard deviation of 1.02; while Lecturers are of the opinion that it is to a low extent, with a mean of 2.3 and standard of deviation of 1.01. With a cluster mean of 2.6 and 2.7 for NUC staff and Lecturers respectively which is greater than the scale mean, it could be concluded that accreditation has significant impact on funding of Nigerian universities.

Research Question 5: To what extent has accreditation improved Library holdings in Nigerian Universities?

Table 5: Mean and Standard Deviation of Lecturers and NUC staff on the impact of accreditation on library holdings in Nigerian universities.

| S/N | ITEM | NUC Staff | | | Lecturers | | |
|-----|---|------------|-------------|----------|------------|-------------|----------|
| | | \bar{x} | SD | Decision | \bar{x} | SD | Decision |
| 21. | To what extent do the Library space in the university meet NUC standard. | 2.7 | 1.00 | High | 2.8 | 0.69 | High |
| 22. | To what extent are the quantity of books and journals in the Library adequate to meet students' population. | 2.7 | 0.88 | High | 2.4 | 0.69 | Low |
| 23. | To what extent are the books and journals in the Library current. | 2.6 | 0.93 | High | 2.1 | 1.09 | Low |
| 24. | To what extent do Nigerian universities make use of e-library or e-resource centres for teaching and learning | 2.4 | 1.05 | Low | 2.3 | 1.13 | Low |
| 25. | To what extent are Departmental libraries functional in your university. | 2.4 | 1.09 | Low | 2.1 | 0.93 | Low |
| | Cluster Mean | 2.6 | 4.95 | | 2.4 | 4.53 | |

Scale Mean = 2.5

Table 5 show that respondents agree that to a high extent, library spaces in Nigerian universities meet NUC standard, with a mean of 2.7 and 2.8; and standard deviation of 1.00 and 0.69 for NUC staff and Lecturers respectively. NUC staff also agrees that to a high extent, the quantity of books and journals in libraries are adequate to meet students' population; with a mean of 2.7 and standard deviation of 0.88; Lecturers are of the opinion that it is to a low extent, with a mean of 2.4 and standard deviation of 0.69. NUC staff further agrees that to a high extent, the books and journal in the libraries are current; with a mean of 2.6 and standard of 0.93; Lecturers are of the opinion that it is to a low extent, with a mean of 2.1 and standard deviation of 1.09. Respondents also agree that to a low extent, Nigerian universities make use of E-Libraries or E-Resource centres for teaching and learning; with a mean of 2.4 and 2.3, and standard deviation of 1.05 and 1.13 for NUC staff and Lecturers respectively. They further agree that to a low extent, Departmental libraries are functional in universities; with a mean of 2.4 and 2.1; and standard deviation of 1.09 and 0.93 for NUC staff and Lecturers respectively. With a cluster mean of 2.6 and 2.4 for NUC staff and Lecturers respectively, which is above and below the scale mean, it could be concluded that NUC staff are of the opinion that accreditation has significant impact on library holdings in Nigerian universities while Lecturers are of the opinion that it is to a low extent. However, going by the average of the cluster mean which is $2.6+2.4/2 = 2.5$, which is equal to the scale mean, it could therefore be concluded that accreditation has significant impact on library holdings in Nigerian universities.

Testing of Hypothesis

H₀: Accreditation has no significant impact on quality in Higher education in Nigeria

Table 6: t-test of respondents on the impact of accreditation on quality in higher education in Nigeria.

| Variables | N | SD | \bar{x} | DF | t-cal. | t-crit. | Decision |
|-----------|-----|-------|-----------|-----|--------|---------|------------|
| Lecturers | 157 | 22.57 | 13.6 | | | | Reject |
| NUC Staff | 56 | 23.77 | 13.94 | 211 | 0.46 | 1.96 | Null |
| Total | 213 | | | | | | Hypothesis |

P=0.05

Table 6 show that, the two groups of respondents (NUC staff and Lecturers) did not differ significantly in their opinions; with a t-calculated value of 0.46 and t-critical value of 1.96. Since the t-critical value at 0.05 level of significance and degree of freedom 211 is 1.96, which is greater than the t-calculated value of 0.46, the null hypothesis which states that accreditation has no significant impact on quality in higher education in Nigeria is rejected. This means the alternative hypothesis is upheld.

5. Discussions

The finding of this study revealed that accreditation has significant impact on academic content in Nigerian universities. This finding is in agreement with Akpan and Etor (2016), whose study revealed

that the level of adequacy of requirements for accreditation of academic programmes in the universities under study was adequate or good, although the quality of teaching personnel and financial support were found to be moderately adequate. Their finding shows that the level of adequacy of programme philosophy and objectives, curriculum contents and relevance, physical facilities, students' admission and graduation requirements, standard of degree examinations and administration of departments were adequate or good. However, this finding disagreed with the research finding of Akomolafe and Ibijola (2014) who observed that infrastructure; curriculum, learning environment and quality of academic personnel in Nigerian universities were not adequate to bring out the best in students to meet the yearning of Nigeria as a nation.

The finding also revealed that accreditation has significant impact on the quality and quantity of staffing in Nigerian universities. However, it is important to note that NUC staff and Lecturers had disagreement on items 7 and 10 on table 2, which may not be unconnected with the university management borrowing staff from other universities for the purpose of accreditation, thereby convincing the accreditation panel that the quantity of staff and lecturer-student ratio are adequate, so as to earn high marks. This finding however, is in agreement with Akomolafe and Ibijola (2014) who reported a moderately adequate teaching staff in universities in south-west Nigeria.

The finding further revealed that accreditation has significant impact on the provision of physical facilities in Nigerian universities. It is important to state that NUC staff and Lecturers had disagreement on items 12, 13, 14 and 15 on table 3, which is an indication of the actual provision of physical facilities and artificial provision of facilities for accreditation purpose. This finding is in agreement with Otokunfer (2015) who reported that in universities, magic facilities spring up overnight before accreditation exercises and disappear soon after. Sometimes, spaces allocated to and used by other departments are simply relabeled for the sake of accreditation. After the exercise, the facilities revert to the original owners and the struggle for survival continues.

The finding also revealed that accreditation has significant impact on funding in Nigerian universities. Though the NUC staff and Lecturers had disagreement on items 16 and 20 in table 4, this finding is in disagreement with Tunde and Issa (2013) who in their study, attributed poor funding of education in Nigeria as the reason which makes university administrators unable to provide adequate and quality infrastructural facilities and equipment for effective teaching and learning.

The finding revealed that accreditation has significant impact on Library holdings in Nigerian universities. It is however important to note that NUC staff and Lecturers had disagreement on items 22, 23, 24 and 25 in table 5; this means that universities may have been borrowing books at institutional and departmental levels to satisfy NUC requirements for accreditation. This finding is in agreement with Agbetuyi, Iwari and Subair (2017), who discovered that during accreditation programmes, the university management stocks the library with adequate, relevant and up-to-date collections and the librarians ensures that they are organized and made accessible to users. The library staff ensures that the library

meet up with the expected criteria from the library (as an integral part of the whole institution); working tirelessly to provide the needed records about the library collections and other relevant information as may be required. The finding also agrees with Bello (2014), who opined that academic library played an inspiring role in the accreditation process of any undergraduate program as they guarantee provision of up-to-date information resources needed for learning and teaching with assurance of easy access.

The findings also revealed that accreditation has significant impact on quality in higher education in Nigeria. This could be explained on the ground that accreditation exercise stimulates university authorities to provide adequate quantity and quality resources to meet the requirements for accreditation because no university wants to be denied accreditation. The provision of these resources enhanced quality teaching that gave rise to quality graduates. The finding could also be attributed to the effort of NUC in ensuring that academic programmes were accredited and that they must meet the NUC benchmark. Suffice this to say that the more accreditation of academic programmes was carried out, the higher the quality of university education in Nigeria.

6. Implications for Theory and Practice

The findings of this study have implications for the management of universities in North-east geopolitical zone and Nigeria at large. University administrators can get an understanding from the findings of this study that quality university education can be improved through adherence to the benchmarks for accreditation of academic programmes by ensuring that curriculum contents are adequate and relevant to the needs of the students and the labour market. Academic programmes offered in the universities should meet the NUC criteria by providing adequate quantity and quality teaching staff, physical facilities and other resources. Accreditation is an important quality assurance strategy that greatly impact on quality education in relation to quality resource inputs, processes and outputs.

7. Conclusion

Sequel to the findings of this study, it could be concluded that accreditation has significant impact on quality in higher education in Nigeria. This means that, accreditation of academic programmes improves quality university graduates as rated by employers of labour. Also there is a significant impact of

accreditation on the quality of human resources, infrastructural facilities, adequacy and relevance of library holdings, curricula contents and programme philosophy and objectives. This portrays that accreditation greatly improves the provision of these resources for quality teaching and learning and performance effectiveness. Therefore, accreditation as a quality assurance exercise is vital for the sustenance of academic programmes and enhancement of quality university education.

8. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following are recommended:

- Quality Assurance Units of Higher education institutions alongside their faculty and departmental desk officers should be strengthened to monitor the operation of academic programmes and to assess periodically the extent to which academic programmes are in conformity with NUC benchmark.
- The NUC must ensure that senior academics used for accreditation are not compromised; they should intensify effort in ensuring that accreditation of academic programmes is carried out regularly in order to assure improvement in quality of higher education in Nigeria.
- Higher education administrators should ensure that adequate qualified teaching personnel are employed, quality infrastructural facilities, and adequate library holdings are provided in universities; this will enhance quality instructional delivery.
- Government should adequately fund higher education to enable institutional administrators to provide the necessary physical, human and material resources, not just for accreditation purposes, but for the enhancement of quality in higher education in Nigeria.

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