

National Universities Commission Accredited Programmes and the Efficiency of the Programmes in Selected Universities, Nigeria

EVUARHERHE VERONICA ABOLO
University of Lagos, Nigeria

Abstract. The university education has been given grander focus as it is the major institution for developing skilled manpower for a developing country like Nigeria. In order to fully acquire the desired development, several programmes are offered by the universities. Emphasis are on the universities to yield maximum productivity in output through National Universities Commission (NUC) accreditation exercise. This study therefore sought to examine the efficiency of the accredited programmes in the universities in terms of their students' enrollment (input) and the turn out graduation rate (output). The participants of the study consist Heads of departments and cohort advisers from the faculty of Education in three South West federal universities. The multi stage sampling technique was used from which five departments based on homogeneity across the universities were selected. The records of students enrolment for five sessions 7735 students was used for the analysis Heads of departments and 60 cohort advisers formed the sample for the interview schedule. A researcher designed result checklist was used to collect data of students from the departments while an interview schedule "Accredited Courses in the Universities and the Efficiency of the Programmes Interview" was constructed to solicit responses from Heads of Departments and cohort advisers. The research questions were analysed in frequency and percentages, the hypothesis was tested with chi square and the interview responses through content analysis. The results of the study showed

that the dropout rate of students is low while the repeaters rate is high. Also the accredited programmes are adjudged to be efficient as the graduation rate is above the set benchmark of 60%.while the hypothesis showed that the accredited programmes relate to the efficiency rate of the programmes. Recommendations such as the government having as its policy remedial distance learning for dropout students and the universities developing intensive coaching for repeaters were proffered to ensure quality of programmes.

Keywords: NUC, accredited programmes, efficiency, graduation rate, dropout, repeaters

1. Introduction

The leading role of education in the development of a nation can never be overemphasised hence the premium attachment to its development and growth. Several nations including Nigeria have made frantic efforts towards overhauling the educational sector for maximum development. Thus in an effort to optimised the national development the university education has been given outstanding attention in order to produce highly skilled human capital that will contribute significantly to the economy growth. The prominence placed on the university education is such that it called for adequate supervision to obtain the desired objectives of churning out high qualified manpower (Blaike, 2002). For effective and efficient service delivery, no organisation can

survive without stringent monitoring, this necessitated the creation of the National Universities Commission (NUC) as the regulatory body mandated by the Federal government in Nigeria to act as a moderator for licensing universities while periodically reviewing and accrediting their programmes and courses offered. The functions and responsibilities of NUC include among others : Granting approval for the establishment of all higher educational institutions offering degree programmes in Nigerian universities; Granting approval for all academic programmes run in Nigerian universities; Ensuring quality assurance of all academic programmes offered in Nigerian universities; Channeling for all external support to the Nigerian universities and coordinating and controlling the administrative and financial matters of the Nigerian publicly owned universities (Akpan, 2018).

Foremost among the functions of the NUC, the principal responsibility of accreditation of programmes ranks the highest in terms of ensuring efficient and quality university education in Nigeria. Accreditation is a process of self-study and external quality review used in higher education to scrutinise an institution and/or its programmes for quality standards and need for quality improvement (Obadare and Alaka, 2013). It is designed to determine whether or not an institution has met or exceeded the set standard by an external body such as a government, national quality assurance agency, or a professional association (Okebukola, 2010). In Nigerian universities, accreditation standard and process are set and carried out by NUC. The process of accreditation usually includes a self-evaluation, peer review and a site visit.

Accreditation standards and guidelines in Nigerian university system is aimed at strengthening programme for quality assurance and quality improvement Accreditation in the Nigerian university system according to Fadokun (2006) has three stated objectives: to ensure that the provision of the Minimum Academic Standard (MAS) documents are attained, maintained and enhanced; to assure employers of labour and other members of the

community that Nigerian graduates of all academic programmes have attained an acceptable level of competence in their areas of specialisation and to certify to the international community that the programmes offered in Nigerian Universities are of high standards and their graduates are adequate for employment and for further studies.

The NUC has been involved in accreditation of universities programme in Nigeria as part of ensuring standard and quality of programmes since inception. During the accreditation process, certain criteria in the department are ascertained in terms of availability and utilisation to establish compliance to set NUC standards. The NUC accreditation assessment form for all faculties in the universities differ in terms of programme. A typical form of assessment in most departments in the faculty of education contains indices in certain aspects of academic and non-academic attainments. In most departments in education the academic matters comprising philosophy/ objectives of programme; the curriculum; admission requirements; academic requirements; course evaluation; students' course evaluation and external examination system. Other aspects of programme scrutinised against the required standard bothered on number and qualification of academic and non-academic staff; the student/ teacher ratio; physical facilities (classrooms, laboratory, library, available space per student). Also the environment, security, books, journals and financing of the programme by the university are assessed (Okojie,2008).

The accreditation exercise is usually carried out in the university to monitor programmes in various departments. The duration for each accreditation exercise depends on the verdict it scored during the previous exercise. For each accreditation exercise, the department is granted after thorough scrutiny of all the indices in the department, Full, Interim or Denied verdict. The extent to which the department fared in the criteria evaluated during the process will determine the type of verdict scored. More often than not departments in the universities especially in the faculty of education, strive to secure full accreditation. This is so much desired

as the viability and continuation of the programme depends on the accreditation status, according to Okojie (2008) in its objectives of accreditation. In an attempt to secure favourable verdict in the accreditation exercise, frantic efforts are made by the university to make sure departments meet NUC criteria. In terms of personnel, shortfalls are usually made up through part-time and adjunct lecturers while facilities needed are boosted in whatever capacity that is necessary. The paper work, students records are properly documented to avoid lapses in terms of students results, Continuous Assessment (CA) and teacher/ students ratio.

Universities do not participate in accreditation exercise for the sheer fanfare, it sufficed that the outcome of the exercise should yield the objective for which it was designed by the NUC; ensuring quality of the accredited programmes (Obadara and Alaka, 2013). More often than not programmes are given full accreditation status as the universities prepare assiduously for forthcoming accreditation exercise. Most faculties especially in education being a teacher training centre have endeavored to attain success in their accredited programmes but the crux is the extent to which the accredited programmes have thrived to achieve efficiency to the university. Efficiency according to Banton (2019) indicates a level of performance that enable the utilisation of the least amount of input to achieve the highest amount of output or outcomes. It is the education that provides maximum performance within well-defined activities. The efficiency of the accredited faculty of education programme in the universities therefore is the degree to which the accredited courses yielded high performance in the students with little or no wastages in failure, repeaters and dropout using high quality teachers and facilities.

Consequently, being a viable exercise aimed at achieving quality and efficiency, accredited courses in the faculty of education in the South West public universities seemed not to be faring well in efficiency indices. A thorough scrutiny of the faculty of education accredited courses as experienced by the researcher showed that most

courses in the faculties of education are with large class size as against the NUC stipulated 1:30 teacher/students ratio for all programmes (Belo-Osagie (2012)). These large classes are filled with repeaters/ carry over students in the courses spanning up to three sessions of repeated failed attempt. This pose a herculean task for stake holder in the university considering the fact that these failed carry over students are taught with quality teachers having the requisite qualification. Universities with quality teachers with P.hd degrees of varied status such as Professors, Associate Professors and Senior lecturers should by efficiency rating turn out higher grade scoring students not those with failed scores or carry over.

Courses that have scaled through in accreditation have passed some supervisory checks like inbuilt facilities and well equipped laboratories and thus must not parade drop outs students. Cases of drop- outs in the first two years after admission abound in most department of the faculties. Dropouts are students that terminated their education in the universities before graduation. These dropouts occurred for several reasons spanning from inability to cope with the rigours of studies, lackadaisical attitude, quest to get money outside school, exam malpractice or ignorance of the importance placed on education. The faculty of education being the spring board for teacher education in the universities has and not limited to about an average of ten dropouts of student for each admission year as revealed by the cohort advisers who tried to ensure full completion of programmes. This become worrisome as efficiency of the accredited courses demands that input resource such as favourable teaching and learning environment with good facilities expended to educate a particular set of students should yield next to zero percent dropout rate.

In order for the accredited courses in the South West public faculties of education to be efficient, there should be a considerable balance between the inputs into training the students such as personnel, school facilities, the number of students that started the programmed and the students graduation rate. There exist a sharp

dichotomy from the number of students admitted into each department and those that graduated. The broadsheets of students from most departments at result consideration for an academic session reveal almost near to 20% spill over students that could not meet up the graduating list (Akinyemi, Ofem & Ikuenomore, 2012). When input rate in terms of resources and number of students admitted is not less or equal to the number graduated as desired for a high efficient programme, then the efficiency rate of the accredited course by NUC in the faculty of education, South West public university is questionable. Efficiency of any educational programme amount to producing a maximum output in terms of number and student high scores.

Accreditation ensures strict adherence to procedures in the university to enable quality education at a high level of excellence involving required human, material and financial resources. Most faculties of education have struggled to earned favourable verdict in accreditation, giving a signal of better performance of the students (Akpan & Etor, 2016) This lay credence to the fact that the programmes should be standard and efficient. Be that as it may, the wastage rate in terms of dropouts of students from the departments is alarming coupled with failure and carry over. These has resulted in low graduate turn out as the rate of graduating students cannot be proportionate with the admission rate, as revealed in every graduation year. When accredited courses results in measures such as failure, drop out and low graduation rate, then the efficiency of the accredited programmes in the faculty of education by NUC in the universities should be examined.

2. Statement of the Problem

The Nigerian Universities Commission accreditation exercise carried out on universities mostly aimed at establishing quality of programme and better teaching learning procedures to yield high academic performance of students. Accreditation is a vital exercise that determines the viability of the university programmes, as not having full accreditation

amounts to diminishing programme. Most departments especially in the faculty of education thrived to attain good standing in the accreditation exercise. In the faculty of education South West public universities, full accreditation is often accorded to the programmes as reported by Akomolafe & Adesua (2016) that accredited programmes are 63.8%. The favourable accredited courses seemed not to often result in high efficiency in the programme (Okojie, 2013). Efficiency of education programme is the degree to which the inputs such as the teaching / learning process and the students taught yield maximum output through their turn out at graduation. There exist in the departments, education wastages such as dropouts, carry over, failure, repeaters and at times low graduate turn out with extra years.

The wastages in education experienced in the departments results in student spending close to 10 years on a programme meant for four years, while those that scale through to the end are reduced as compared to the initial admission number. If the accredited courses in the faculty of education have fulfilled all the requirements in terms of facilities, personnel and students teaching/ learning processes, how then are these wastages experienced? Are the monitoring, supervisory and quality assurance roles of NUC during accreditation not yielding enough maximum output? It is against this background that the study sought to examine the relationship between accredited courses in the faculty of education, South West public universities and the efficiency of those programmes.

3. Research Questions

- What is the dropout rate of students in accredited programmes in faculty of education, South West federal universities?
- To what extent do the accredited programmes in the faculty produce repeaters?
- What is the graduation rate of students in accredited programmes in faculty of education, South West federal universities?

4. Research Hypothesis

- There is no significant relationship between accredited programmes and efficiency rate in programmes of the faculty of education, South West federal universities.

5. Methodology

The study employed the survey research design. The participants are Heads of department and cohort advisers from the faculty of education in three South West federal universities. The faculty of education was chosen for its unique quality of training teachers and had been involved in accreditation process since the inception of NUC. A multi stage sampling technique was used for the study. The departments in the faculty of education formed the strata form which five departments were chosen based on uniformity as they exist in the three universities. The records of students enrolled for the five sessions 7735 students was used for the analysis. Also 15 Heads of

departments and 60 cohort advisers formed the sample for the interview. A researcher designed result checklist was used to collect data of students' records from the different departments for five sets of graduating students. The checklist contained columns for number of students admitted, number of dropouts, number of repeaters and graduation output number for each academic session. An interview schedule titled "Accredited courses in the Universities and efficiency of the programme interview" was constructed to solicit answers on accreditation and its efficiency from the Heads of department and cohort advisers. The data were analysed in tables of frequency and percentages to show the level of dropouts, repeaters (wastages) hypothesis was tested with chi square. The dropout and repeaters rates were considered to be high if the percentage in relation to the enrollment is above 20%.,The efficiency level of the programme was determined with the deficit number in terms of the percentage of students that graduated, the programmes were termed efficient when the total output at graduation is 60% and above. The responses to the interview schedule were treated in content analysis.

6. Analysis of Data

Research Question 1: What is the dropout rate of students in accredited programmes in faculty of education, South West federal universities?

Table 1: Dropout Rate of Students in Accredited Programmes

Session	Enrolment	dropouts	Percentage
2013/2014	1570	178	11.3
2014/2015	1545	204	13.2
2015/2016	1305	120	9.1
2016/2017	1635	90	5.3
2017/2018	1680	210	12.5

Table 1 presents the dropout rate of students in the accredited programmes. The total dropout rate at the end of the five sessions were 11.3%, 13.2%, 9.1%, 5.3% and 12.5% respectively. As set, the dropout rate is considered high if the percentage in relation to the enrollment is above 20%, since the highest rate is 12.5%, then the dropout rate of students of the accredited programme is adjudged to be low.

Research Question 2: To what extent do the accredited programmes in the faculty produce repeaters?

Table 2: Repeaters Rate of Students in Accredited Programme

Session	Enrolment	Repeaters	Percentage
2013/2014	1570	345	21.9
2014/2015	1545	390	25.2
2015/2016	1305	299	22.9
2016/2017	1635	406	24.8
2017/2018	1680	319	18.9

Table 2 presents the repeaters rate of students in the accredited programmes. The total repeaters rate for the five sessions were 21.9%, 25.2%, 22.9%, 24.8% and 18.9% respectively. As the benchmark, the repeaters rate is considered high if the percentage in relation to the enrollment is above 20%. For the five sessions only 2017/2018 has below 20% (18.9%). Since four out of the five sessions are above 20%, then the repeaters rate of students in the accredited programmes is considered to be high.

Research Question 3: What is the graduation rate of students in accredited programmes in Faculty of Education, South West Federal Universities?

Table3: Graduation Rate of Students in Accredited Programme

Session	Enrolment	Graduates	Percentage
2013/2014	1570	1047	66.6
2014/2015	1545	951	61.5
2015/2016	1305	886	67.8
2016/2017	1635	1139	69.6
2017/2018	1680	1151	68.5

Table 3 presents the graduation rate of students in the accredited programmes. The percentage graduates for the five sessions were 66.6%, 61.5%, 67.8%, 69.6% and 68.5% respectively. As defined, the graduation rate is considered high if the percentage in relation to the enrollment is 60% and above. The graduation rates for the five sessions is above 60% as shown in the table. Therefore the graduation rate of students in the accredited programmes is measured to be high, making the programmes to be efficient.

Hypothesis1: There is no significant relationship between accredited programmes and efficiency rate in programmes of the faculty of education, South West federal universities.

Table 4: Accredited Programmes and Efficiency Rate of the Programmes

Variable	Observed Frequency	Expected Frequency	df	X- cal	X-crit	Remark
	71.6	60				
Programme graduation frequency	65.5	60	4	12.141	9.49	reject Ho accepted
	72.8	60				
	74.8	60				
	73.5	60				

Table 4 presents the relationship between the accredited programmes and the efficiency rate of the programmes. The cal-X 12.141 is greater than the crit-X 9.49 at 0.05. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected and the alternative accepted, which means the accredited programmes significantly relate to the efficiency of the programmes.

7. Discussion of Findings

Results of the finding bothering on dropout rate of students in the accredited programmes in the universities showed that the rate at which students drop out of the courses is below 20% which is low as compared to the number that continued with the programmes. Dropout of students occurs for academic reasons such as failure or personal reasons which might lead to the abrupt end of the students stay in the course. Dropout of students in whatever form is wastage to the education system considering the financial and human resources spent on the students. For the accredited courses to result in low dropout rate suffices that the resources (lecturers, facilities, teaching) yielding the accreditation have been maximally utilised. This result is corroborated by Ibijola (2014) that accreditation leads to the moderate quality of educational inputs but is in contrast with (Amaka, 2012) that accreditation of programmes do not yield the necessary dividends in the universities and could be fraudulent. Responding to the impact of accreditation on students’ dropout, the Heads of Departments (HOD) emphasised that the universities tried after accreditation to device measures aimed at reducing students dropout through intensive cohort advisers mentoring and counselling .

The study findings relating to the rate of students repeaters in the accredited programmes showed that the number of students who failed and carry over courses were high. This findings is logical considering the fact that students no longer possess the competitive spirit of high achievement but would rather succumb to ordinary pass that more often land them in repeating most courses. That there are more repeaters than dropout as pointed out by some cohort advisers during the interview, do not negate the NUC quality at accreditation but could be traced to the students factors. One of them sharply said “students repeat not because lecturers are not impacting but that students want the easy way without hard work amounting to failure.” Repeating courses already taught with human and financial resources is regarded as inefficiency and wastage when so much resources have been expended on the programme to secure accreditation. According to Obadara & Alaka (2013) repetition and dropout rates are signs of inefficiency in the educational system.

The findings regarding the output of the students which is their graduation rate for the five sessions was termed to be high since the rate was above 60%. This finding is understandable considering the fact that a lot of managerial knack go into the accredited programmes to attain high output in order to prevent future failed accreditation. On the rate of students’ graduation, some HOD were of the opinion that though some students’ dropout and repeat, the institutions are on their toes to turn out reasonable number of graduates to avoid inefficiency of their programmes. The

universities striving to attain high graduation rate is plausible in order to defend the programme full accreditation mark of success with the efforts aimed at training the students. This is in line with (Ibijola, (2014) & Belo-Osagie (2012) that the accredited programmes have moderate high level of input and graduates but negated Okwuofu and Aminu (2013) study that the NUC has failed to reposition the Nigerian universities.

The result to the hypothesis showed that there is a significant relationship between accreditation programmes and the efficiency rate of the programmes. This findings is explicable as the preparation for accreditation in the universities required getting the right number and qualification of lecturers, acquiring relevant infrastructure and getting the right books and stationery. These resources when put to efficient use after the accreditation process should transmit to efficiency as found in the high graduation rate of students. Responding to the effects of accreditation on the faculty programmes, the HODs were of the opinion that being a teacher training institute, the programmes must surely be efficient since teachers owe the ace to students mentoring, effective teaching, high performance, and corresponding high graduation turn out. This findings is in line with the NUC objectives that accreditation brings in high programme performance (Okojie, 2008).

8. Conclusion

Universities programmes are given approval at licensing and establishing the institutions. The sustainability of the approved programmes are subject to accreditation measures, by the NUC to monitor, ensure compliance, standard and quality of the programmes. The universities especially faculty of education strive to secure full accreditation through several resources and efforts. With the huge efforts at securing full accreditation by the universities there still seemed to be recorded dropout, repeaters and low graduation rate. The results of the findings established the fact that though there are dropout of students in the accredited programmes such number are negligible as they did not exceed

20% of the admission rate during the five sessions examined.

In another vein, the study established through the findings that the number of students with carryover courses as repeaters are on the high side due to students' lack of tenacity at hard work. On how efficient the accredited programmes are with its turnover, the study established through the findings that the programmes are efficient as the graduation rate for the period studied is high being on the average of 60% and above. This was attributed to the diverse human and material resources put in place during accreditation.

Consequently the study established that there is a relationship between accredited programmes and the efficiency of the programmes, which suffices that NUC accredited programmes positively lead to the efficiency of the programmes with high graduation rate.

Thus from the findings of the study we can arrive at the conclusion that though there are low dropout and high repeaters rate of students in the NUC accredited programmes in the faculty of education, the programmes are efficient as the turn out and graduation rate of the students admitted for the five sessions are high and above 60%.

9. Recommendations

The following are recommended to improve on the accredited programmes of the universities:

- The universities management should include as policy for practice intensive coaching for weak students to reduce high rate of students' repeaters.
- The government should implement the policy of aiding dropout students through remedial distance learning to avoid educational wastage.
- The Nigeria Universities Commission should add to its monitory function, incentives to universities with high graduation rate of students to serve as motivation to the weak ones.

- The universities management should establish relationship with the immediate community for opportunities that will sensitize the citizens on the importance of graduating in their university programmes.

References

- Akinyemi, S., Ofem, I.B.&Ikuenomore, S.O. (2012). Graduate Turnout and Graduate Employment in Nigeria. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 2(14),257-265.
- Akomolafe, C.O.& Adesua, V.O. (2019). An Evaluative Study on the Accreditation of Academic Programmes and Quality Assurance in Public Universities in Nigeria. *European Scientific Journal*,15(4),40-52
- Akpan, G.(2018). The Function of National Universities Commission. Retrieved from <https://bestschoolnews.com/function-of-national-universities>
- Akpan,C.P.& Etor, C.R.(2016). Accreditation of Academic Programmes and QualityUniversity Education in South-South Nigeria. *International Journal of Educational Studies*, 13(2), 47-53.
- Amaka, A.(2012). Education Budget and its Implications (Analysis). Retrieved from <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2012/04/2012-education-budget-and-its-implications- analysis>
- Banton, C. (2019).Efficiency definition. Retrieved from<https://www.investopedia.com/terms/e/efficiency.asp>
- Belo-osagie, K. (2012). Varsity without teacher, tools. *The Nation*25-27
- Blaike, A., (2002) *.Recurrent Lessons in Nigerian Education*. Zaria: Tamaza Publishing Company Ltd. Retrieved from <https://www.ajol.info/index.php/afrev/article/viewFile/41069/8494> impact
- Fadokun, O (2006). On external quality Assurance in Higher Education: The Need for a paradigm shift. Retrieve from www.merit.unu.edu/MEIDE/papers/2011/1299015629_JF.pdf
- Ibijola, E.Y. (2014). Accreditation Role of the National Universities Commission and the Quality of the Educational Inputs into Nigerian University System. *Universal Journal of Educational Research* 2(9),648-654.
- Obadara,O.E. & Alaka, A.A.(2013). Accreditation and Quality Assurance in Nigerian Universities. Accreditation and Quality Assurance in Nigerian Universities *Journal of Education and Practice*,4(8), 34-41.
- Okebukola, P.A.O. (2010). Fifty years of Higher Education in Nigeria: Trends in Quality Assurance. Presented at the International Conference on the contribution of Nigerian Universities to the 50th Independence Anniversary of Nigeria.
- Okojie, J. (2008). Licensing, accreditation and quality assurance in Nigerian Universities: Achievements and Challenges. Retrieved from http://www.chea.org/pdf/2008_SW_Julius_Okojie_paper.pdf
- Okojie, J. (2013). Quality Assurance and the Challenges of Mandate Delivery in Nigerian Universities. Lecture delivered at the 18th Convocation Ceremony of Lagos State
- Okwuofu, O. and Aminu, Y. (2013). ASUU insists NUC should be scrapped. Retrieved from The Nation