



**PERCEIVED IMPACT OF PROGRAMME ACCREDITATION ON PROMOTING
STAFF DEVELOPMENT FOR ACADEMIC EFFECTIVENESS IN FEDERAL
UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTH EAST**

Obiakor Mariagoretti Ijeoma

Postgraduate Student of Educational Administration and Planning
Ebonyi State University Abakaliki, Ebonyi State

&

Prof. Paul Nwakpa

Department of Educational Administration and Planning
Ebonyi State University Abakaliki, Ebonyi State

ABSTRACT

The perceived impact of programme accreditation on staff development for academic effectiveness in federal universities in South East was investigated in this study. Two specific objectives guided this study and they sought to: determine the extent to which Nigeria University Commission (NUC)'s accreditation influence qualification of recruited staff; and to ascertain the extent to which NUC's programme accreditation affect in-service training of staff in federal universities in South East, Nigeria. The study adopted descriptive survey design. The population of the study comprised 5,201 academic staff in the five federal universities in south-east, Nigeria while the sample size was 374 academic staff selected from two federal universities. Simple random sampling technique was used. A 10-item questionnaire was used for data collection and mean rating was used for data analysis. The study revealed, to a great extent, NUC's programme accreditation compels universities to adhere to minimum qualification requirement for staff recruitment and to provide staff or require them to engage in in-service training for improved job performance. It was further revealed that setting a minimum qualification for recruitment as an accreditation requirement compels prospective lecturers to upgrade their educational status, guarantees that only academically sound people deliver lessons in these universities, enhances the acceptability of degree from Nigerian universities internationally, and commands good quality graduates from universities. Also, that, requiring in-service training for staff as a measure for retaining accreditation in universities makes staff to take refresher courses, which help rekindle their interest in teaching; it encourages lecturers get update on best tutoring practices and other specialized training from seminar, conferences and workshops – all of which culminate into improved job performance. The study recommended that university management should always make sure NUC accreditation requirements are met and sustained in their schools.

Keywords: Federal Universities, Programme Accreditation, Staff Development,



Introduction

Staff development programme, is a process designed to improve job understanding, promote more effective job performance and establish future goals for career growth. It helps staff in understanding their responsibilities. It is the opportunity available to new and experienced teachers and teaching assistants. These activities are designed to improve the quality of classroom and enable individual to grow professionally. Education is often seen as a pre-requisite for quality manpower development and creation of wealth, a sure path to success in life and service to humanity. Teachers have important role to play to adequately prepare the young for their roles in the society in order to achieve the set national objectives. Teachers' influence is always felt in every aspect of the society. All other professionals and workers within the society have at one time or the other passed through a teacher and thus whatever, they now become is a direct outcome of what teachers have passed onto them (Dada, Oladapo and Olayiwola, 2018).

A successful teacher – be it at the primary, secondary or university level – is required to be equipped with the characteristics like mastering the subject matter, professional training, sound physical and mental health, devotion and dedication to his profession (Amaechi & Obiweluzor, 2021). The teacher of today is an individual who is not only interested in children's acquired knowledge and skills but also equally involved in his total development. Considering the crucial role of teachers in the

academic achievement and overall development of his studies it is necessary that a teacher should possess qualities like command on the subject, moral and mental fitness, devotion to the profession and appropriate skills to perform his duties for the achievement of the objectives. This is even more so in tertiary institutions. Hence, the need of staff development programmes (especially for academic staff) which should aim at improving the effectiveness of individuals at work and for the greater responsibilities (Ndibe, 2014).

In tertiary institutions, academic staff are important in the implementation of curriculum. The quality of teaching staff is known to be a key predictor of students' performance. Obi & Muo (2021) observed that generally, teaching as a profession demand continuous development of knowledge and ability through training programmes, such as in-service, conference, workshop and seminar. Staff development through in-service, conference, workshop and seminars offer one of the most promising ways of improving classroom instruction (Obi & Muo, 2021).

Meanwhile, tertiary education is generally referred to as education given after secondary education, usually in universities, colleges of education, polytechnics, monotechnics 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). All of these goals collectively gears toward attaining academic effectiveness, and this academic effectiveness cannot be achieved without well efficient staff that are continually trained and retrained (Dada, Oladapo and Olayiwola, 2018).

To maintain a minimum standard of effectiveness that will guarantee quality lessons and adequate infrastructure to support such lessons within the university system, accreditation exercises become necessary. Accreditation, according to Obi & Muo (2021), is the process of self-study and external quality review, used in higher education to scrutinize colleges, Universities and higher education programmes for quality assurance and quality improvement. Amaechi & Obiweluozor (2021) described it as a measure of quality of academic programmes and it is aimed at strengthening academic programmes for quality assurance and quality improvement. In sum, accreditation is a measure of the quality of academic programmes on acceptable minimum standard provided by the accrediting agency. In the Nigeria university system, the Nigerian University Commission (NUC) is the approved agency with the mandate of granting these accreditations. In 1985, the Federal Republic of Nigeria, through Decree No. 16 of 1985, vested in the National Universities Commission (NUC) with the powers to lay down minimum Academic Standards (MAS) for all academic

programmes taught in Nigerian Universities and also to accredit their degrees, certificates and other academic awards (Enefu & Okolo, 2021).

Meanwhile, the objectives of accreditation of higher institutions/programmes as outlined by the NUC (2012) include: to ensure that at least the minimum academic standards documents are attained, maintained and enhanced; to assure employers and other members of the community that Nigerian graduates of all academic programmes have attained an acceptable level of competency in their areas of specialization; and to certify to the international community that the programmes offered in Nigerian universities are of high standard and their graduates are adequate for employment and further studies. For these objectives to be achieved, there is need for effective staff development within the university system. It is against this backdrop that this study sought to investigate the perceived impact of programme accreditation on promoting staff development for academic effectiveness in federal universities in the South East in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

The impact of programme accreditation on staff development in universities is worth investigating when one looks at the overview in the background to the study. The calibre of many staff (particularly academic staff) working in the public universities is something to the worried about. There appear to be high degree of inefficiency in these



universities. Administrators of these universities rarely organize in service training, conferences, workshops and seminars for staff to improve themselves in spite of their critical role in bringing about staff effectiveness and this has grossly affected the quality of their service delivery.

Academic staff are faced with challenges of poor staff development programmes implement which amongst others include failure to be involved in the planning of professional development activities. They react negatively to such treatments. As part of an effort to curb some of these problems, the Nigeria University Commission makes it as part of accreditation requirement for staff to have a minimum qualification for employee and also set criteria (qualification level) for promotion as work progresses. Therefore, for universities to secure such accreditation, they must ensure that they employ staff who meet these minimum requirements and set up mechanisms for aiding staff continual on-the-job improvement. The worry of this study, therefore, is to examine the extent to which these accreditation exercises of the NUC have actually affected the staff development systems in federal universities in the five states in the South East region.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the perceived impact of programme accreditation in promoting staff development for academic effectiveness in federal universities in South East. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Ascertain the extent to which NUC's programme accreditation influences the minimum qualification of staff recruited into federal universities in South East, Nigeria
2. Assess the extent to which NUC's programme accreditation affect in-service training of staff in federal universities in South East, Nigeria

Research Questions

1. To what extent does NUC's programme accreditation influence the minimum qualification of staff recruited into federal universities in South East, Nigeria?
2. To what extent does NUC's programme accreditation affect in-service training of staff in federal universities in South East, Nigeria?

Review of Related Literature

Programme Accreditation

Accreditation according to Obadara, and Alaka, (2013), is the process of selfstudy and external quality review used in higher education to scrutinize an institution and/or its programmes for quality standards and need for quality improvement. It is a process of examining the availability and adequacy of resources, merit rating of resources and programmes in order to enhance quality of output (Enefu & Okolo, 2021). 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.

The webster dictionary meanings of accreditation are: official recognition, guarantee of quality, and general acceptance. Hence, the primary purpose of accreditation is to ensure quality control and quality assurance, commonly with reference to a certification system in the areas of education, training, testing, etc. Obadara and Alaka (2013) see accreditation as 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.

Accreditation of university programmes often developed the minimum academic standards and their subsequent approval provided the basis for accreditation exercise of all programmes taught in Nigerian Universities. This exercise is often organized and conducted through the platform provided by the National Universities Commission with about 100% indigenous resource persons. The mechanism for creating quality assurance in the university system was set by National Universities Commission (NUC). The processes of ensuring quality assurance in the University motivated the production of policy guideline on all University programmes. Accreditation visitation became necessary procedure for ascertaining the quality of a university programme (Anugom, 2016). During such visits which, comes up every year as programmes are

continuously maturing for accreditation because they have fulfilled the required validity period for their accreditation status or they have to make a request for re-visitation because they earned denied or interim accreditation status in a previous visit or that they are just maturing for accreditation.

The objectives of accreditation of higher institutions/programmes as outlined by the NUC (2012) include:

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

A cursory look at these objectives reveals that accreditation focuses on the production of quality graduates with needed skills, technical and professional knowledge that would enable them to contribute to national development and compete favourably in employment market.

Staff Development

Staff development refers to the institutional policies, programs and activities that facilitate and support staff in acquiring the skills, knowledge and attitudes required to undertake current and future responsibilities and roles in ways that are considered with the goals of the university. Staff development can also be seen as a process that assists individuals in an agency or organization in attaining new skills and knowledge, gaining increasing levels of competence and growing professionally.

According to medical dictionary (2009) staff development can be defined as the process of providing opportunities for employees to improve their knowledge, skills and performance in line with the goals and values of the organization and in relation to the interest and needs of the employees.

The main purpose of staff development can be summarized as follows:

1. To provide planned staff development opportunities that provide the learning necessary to enable the employees perform in the level of competency required in current and frame position assignments.
2. To foster a climate that facilitates personal self-fulfilment, institutional effectiveness, human creativity and system renewal.
3. To save the school system's primary goals; enhancing and achieving

quality teaching and learning to students.

4. To establish viable and meaningful programs that enable system personnel to work comparatively towards achieving the system goals and their own personal goals in the areas of achievement, satisfaction and self-fulfilment.

Teacher Qualification

Qualification is a special skill or type of experience or knowledge that makes someone suitable to do a particular job or activity (Kola & Olanipekun, 2015). Therefore, teachers' qualification is a particular skill or type of experience or knowledge someone possesses to make him or her suitable to teach. Teachers' qualifications could, therefore, mean all the skills a teacher required to teach effectively. Such skills include formal education, experience, subject matter knowledge, pedagogy studies, duration of training, certificate/licensing and professional development (Zuzovsky, 2012).

According to Kola and Olanipekun (2015), someone might have a teaching certificate at hand but without adequate knowledge of subject matter, this individual has no teaching qualifications yet. Similarly, someone without proper knowledge of pedagogy or someone who spent few years in training without completing the required years does not possess teacher qualifications (Darling-Hammond, Berry and Thoreson, 2011). Professional development and experience also count for teachers' qualifications

because several studies have revealed this. Qualification is one of the critical factors that drive students' academic performance (Darling-Hammond, 2010). Eryilmaz and Laslan (2011) observed that one of the most important factors in the teaching process is a qualification of the teacher. The perspective of Ibrahim (2012) was that teachers' qualifications can go a long way to bring about students' higher academic achievement.

Teachers' profession relates to competence in instruction and management of students and materials in the classroom. Teachers' qualifications, therefore, might not only be the certificate someone is holding as erroneously conceived by some people. Teachers' qualifications are more than just holding a certificate of any institution. Zuzovsky (2012) in her study on "Teachers' qualifications and their impact on students' achievement findings from TIMMS-2003 data in Israel" ties teachers' qualifications to seven indicators that are:

- (i) Teachers' formal education
- (ii) Teachers' education in the subject matter of teaching (in-field preparation)
- (iii) Teacher education in pedagogical studies
- (iv) Duration of the preparation period
- (v) Certification and licensing status
- (vi) Years of experience
- (vii) Preparation in professional development activities

In-service training

According to Hakan (2013) in service training is defined as the educational opportunities to help the staff to improve themselves in their professions. In service training is an attempt to improve staff competence through continuing education courses, meetings and study groups, visit, lecture and personnel reform. Udofia and Ikpe (2012) defined in-service training as the ongoing training of practicing teachers, which is typically arranged by school board who employs them. In service training is a necessity for any organization including public secondary schools to constantly improve and renew themselves, and achieve success. According to Nakpodia (2018), in service training programme is a process for continuous updating of teacher's knowledge, skills and interest in chosen field. It is a means for continuous professional growth which encourages the extension of technical assistance by teacher education. In service teacher education is an integral part of staff development programme which is organized for teachers while in service. Nakpodia outline the benefits of in-service training of teachers to include:

1. To enable teachers obtain higher academic and professional qualifications in order to improve their position in the school system.
2. To help teachers acquire more conceptual and technical knowledge,



skills and competences in their teaching subject.

3. To enable the teachers to be adequately equipped to meet up with the new challenges in the school system.

In-service training also provides employees with ample opportunities to learn new concepts, methods and approaches through professional development. The impact of in-service training on the performance of staff in public secondary schools especially in Enugu South local government area should be looked at from various perspectives. It promotes a very flexible environment and allows staff to adapt with the working situation and it is also one form of motivation for employees or employers and it will continue to increase creativity in staff. It also enables staff to acquire new understanding and skills to develop their effectiveness.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this research hinges on instructional theory

Instructional Theory

Instructional theory was propounded by Benjamin Bloom in 1956. The theory offers explicit guidance on how to better help people learn and develop. Instructional theories focus on how to structure material for promoting the education of human beings, particularly youth. Instructional theory is influenced by three basic theories in

educational thought: behaviorism, the theory that helps us understand how people conform to predetermined standards; cognitivism, the theory that learning occurs through mental associations; and constructivism, the theory explores the value of human activity as a critical function of gaining knowledge.

Instructional theory is different than learning theory. A learning theory describes how learning takes place, and an instructional theory prescribes how to better help people learn. Learning theories often inform instructional theory, and three general theoretical stances take part in this influence: behaviorism (learning as response acquisition), cognitivism (learning as knowledge acquisition), and constructivism (learning as knowledge construction). Instructional theory helps us create conditions that increases the probability of learning.

Empirical Studies

Enefu & Okolo (2021) conducted a study on Effect of Accreditation on the Improvement of Quality Service Delivery in Kogi State University, Anyigba. Two research questions and an hypothesis guided this study. Descriptive survey design was used for the study. The population of this study comprised all academic staff of Kogi State University. They are a total of seven hundred and seventeen academic staff (717), a breakdown of this shows that four hundred and eighty male (480) and two hundred and thirty seven female academic staff respectively. A sample



size of one hundred (100) respondents was used. A 21-item questionnaire titled Impact of Accreditation on the Improvement Quality Service Delivery Questionnaire (IAIQSDQ) was developed and used. The instrument for data collection was validated by three experts in the department of educational foundations and Cronbach Alpha was used to determine the reliability index, the reliability estimate was 0.68. The research questions were answered descriptively using mean and standard deviation, while the hypothesis was tested inferentially using the t-test statistic. The findings of this study among others show that both male and female academic staff agreed to the various criteria for accreditation and the impact of accreditation on quality service delivery, while the null hypothesis indicated that there was no significant difference in the opinion of male and female academic staff on the impact of accreditation on quality service delivery. It was recommended that University management should always make sure NUC accreditation requirements are met, Government on her part should make funds available, Academic staff on their part should be honest as to what they need during accreditation and Students who are the end beneficiaries should always cooperate with the management to ensure a hitch free accreditation activities.

Akpan & Etor (2016) did a study on accreditation of academic programmes and quality university education in South-South Nigeria. The study was aimed at finding out the relationship between accreditation of academic programmes and quality university

education. Two research questions and two hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. Simple random and accidental sampling techniques were used to sample 4 federal universities, 400 academic staff, 300 final year students and 200 employers for the study. Three types of instrument titled: Adequacy of Requirements for Accreditation of Academic Programmes Questionnaire (ARAAPQ), Quality University Education Questionnaire (QUEQ) and Employers Rating of quality University Graduates questionnaire (ERQUGQ) were used for data collection. Each of the three instruments had a reliability coefficient of 0.82, 0.77 and 0.80 respectively, using Cronbach Alpha reliability method. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive (means and standard deviations), Pearson Product moment correlation and independent t-test statistics. The finding of the study revealed that the level of adequacy of requirements for accreditation of academic programmes was moderately adequate and the quality of university graduates was rated as being moderate. There was a significant relationship between accreditation of academic programmes and quality university education in terms of quality inputs and quality processes. Premised on the findings of the study, it was recommended that institutional administrators should ensure that the requirements for accreditation of academic programmes be sufficiently provided in universities to enhance quality education.



Anugom (2016) conducted a study on “accreditation and quality assurance: the management imperative.” Three research questions and three hypotheses guided the study. The design was a correlation survey with a population of 2,893 university administrators out of which 578 Heads of department and Dean of faculties were sampled. The instrument for data collection was titled Programme Accreditation Exercise scale with high levels of reliability. The research questions were answered with Pearson ‘r’ statistics. T-test statistics was used to test the hypotheses. It was found among others that the quality of accredited programme depends on the level of funding of universities in Nigeria. But it was also revealed that programme accreditation is positively related to staffing in Nigerian universities. Based on the findings of the study, the researcher recommend that academic administrators should be included in the team of those who ensure quality programs in the universities. Private sector partnership should be encouraged to fund programs to ensure quality of programme in the universities. Furthermore, independent agencies should be engaged to monitor the activities of accreditation teams to avoid bias.

Research Method

The study adopted descriptive survey design. The research is carried out in five federal universities in the South East states of Nigeria: Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, Abia State, Nnamdi

Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State, Alex Ekwueme - Federal University Ndufu-Alike, Ebonyi State, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Enugu State, and Federal University of Technology, Owerri, Imo State. The population of the study comprised 5,201 academic staff in the five federal universities in south-east, Nigeria while the sample size was 374 academic staff (Heads of Departments-HODs, lecturers and librarians) selected from two public universities using multi-stage sampling technique. Simple random sampling technique was used to select two out of the five federal universities in south-east zone. The simple random technique of cap and draw was used in selecting academic staff from the two universities used for the study.

Data were generated with three faced and content validated questionnaire titled: "Perceived Impact of Programme Accreditation on Promoting Staff Development for Academic Effectiveness Questionnaire (PIPAPSDAE)". The questionnaire had two sections A and B. Section A is information on personal data of the respondents, while section B, contains items on the research questions. The check-list was constructed to use response options VGE – Very Great Extent, (4 points), GE – Great Extent (3 points), LE – Low Extent (2 points) and VLE – Very Low Extent (1point) for the research questions. The data were analysed in tables using mean where in nominal value was assigned to scaling items.



Presentation of Results

Research Question One

To what extent does NUC's programme accreditation influence the minimum qualification of staff recruited into federal universities in South East, Nigeria?

Table 1: Responses on the extent NUC's programme accreditation influence the minimum qualification of staff recruited into federal universities

S/N	Items	VGE	GE	LE	VLE	N	Σfx	\bar{X}	Decision
1.	Setting a minimum qualification for recruitment compels prospective lecturers to upgrade their educational status	131	160	61	22	374	1148	3.07	Great Extent
2.	Setting a high minimum qualification requirement guarantees only academically sound people deliver lessons in these universities	129	138	70	37	374	1107	2.96	Great Extent
3.	A good minimum qualification for staff recruitment enhances the acceptability of degree from Nigerian universities internationally	118	159	74	35	374	1087	2.90	Great Extent
4.	A minimum qualification for recruitment will not affect the people being recruited for teaching jobs in universities	44	76	149	105	374	807	2.16	Little Extent
5.	Recruiting staff with high educational qualification commands good quality graduates from universities	112	153	74	35	374	1090	2.91	Great Extent
Grand Mean								2.80	Great Extent



Table showed that all items, except 4, have mean score above the mean cut of point. This means that they are all accepted to be impacted by the accreditation on staff development to a great extent. Item 4 has mean score of 2.16, which is below the 2.50 cut off point. Hence it was rejected.

Research Question 2

To what extent does NUC's programme accreditation affect in-service training of staff in federal universities in South East, Nigeria?

Table 2: Responses on the extent NUC's programme accreditation affect in-service training of staff in federal universities in South East

S/ N	Questionnaire Items	VG E	GE	LE	VL E	N	Σfx	\bar{X}	Decision
6.	Refresher courses help rekindle tutors interest in teaching	113	152	73	36	374	1090	2.91	Great extent
7.	Seminars and conferences help lecturers get update on best tutoring practices	130	159	60	25	374	1142	3.05	Great Extent
8.	Workshops and other specialized training helps lecturers improve hands-on/practical oriented subject delivery	151	168	24	31	374	1187	3.17	Great Extent
9.	Lecturers still exhibit average performance in spite of in-service training	91	67	96	120	374	877	2.34	Little Extent
10.	Professional development programmes and the consequent promotion motivates lecturers for improved job performance	137	141	64	32	374	1131	3.02	Great Extent
Grand Mean								2.61	Great Extent

Table 2 revealed that all items except 9 have mean scores above the mean cut-off point 2.50. This implies that, to a great extent, they

are all ways NUC's accreditation (through in-service training) affects staff development in federal universities in South East, Nigeria.



Summary of Findings

From the above analysis, the following findings were made:

- (1) That setting a minimum qualification for recruitment as an accreditation requirement compels prospective lecturers to upgrade their educational status, guarantees that only academically sound people deliver lessons in these universities, enhances the acceptability of degree from Nigerian universities internationally, and commands good quality graduates from universities
- (2) That, requiring in-service training for staff as a measure for retaining accreditation in universities affect staff development to a great extent in the sense that: refresher courses help rekindle tutors interest in teaching, seminars and conferences help lecturers get update on best tutoring practices, workshops and other specialized training helps lecturers improve hands-on/practical oriented subject delivery, and that professional development programmes and the consequent promotion motivates lecturers for improved job performance

Conclusion

Haven revealed that NUC's programme accreditation requirements forces university to maintain a minimum qualification for staff recruitment and a system for in-service training, and that these requirements have further compelled prospective lecturers to

increase their minimum academic qualification and further expand their perspective on the job through seminars, conferences, workshops and refresher courses/professional development programmes. It was also revealed that these have culminated into improved lecturers' job performance and increased acceptability of Nigerian graduates internationally. It is therefore concluded that programme accreditation is perceived to have great impact on staff development and in turn academic effectiveness in federal universities in South East, Nigeria.

Recommendations

In view to the findings, the following recommendations are hereby made:

1. University management should always make sure NUC accreditation requirements are met, especially in terms of lecturers' recruitment. The practice of cutting corners and employing lecturers whose qualification are below the minimum requirement should be shunned.
2. Mechanisms should be put in place to guarantee that every lecturer is subjected to compulsory in-service training in their course of their career. Considering the fact that the university is an institution of learning, the management could create a system of giving lecturers scholarship in the form of reduced tuition fee should they agree to do refresher or high degree within them. Seminars,



conferences and workshops could be organised or sponsored by management for staff at intervals to improve staff work practices.

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