The conversion process in the university system: Nigerian university students' assessment

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Abstract. This study examined the Nigerian university students' assessment of the conversion process in the university system. The descriptive research design of survey type was used. The population consisted of all students of the public universities in Nigeria, while the sample was made up of 1,200 students from six universities selected using multistage procedure, purposive and random sampling techniques. A self-designed questionnaire tagged 'Students' Assessment of the Conversion Process in the University System' (SACPUS) was used to collect data for the study. The instrument was validated by research experts in Educational Management and Tests, Measurement and Evaluation Departments of Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti. The data were analyzed using frequency counts, percentage scores and t-test analysis. The Hypothesis formulated was tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study revealed that, inadequacy of infrastructural facilities, equipment, the consumables, and the student support service affected the quality of outputs, even when the quality and quantity of lecturers are adequate and curriculum contents are adequately covered. Based on the findings, it was recommended that adequate infrastructural facilities, equipment and consumables be made adequate in Nigerian universities in order to improve upon the quality of its outputs.

Keywords: Conversion process, university education, university students, assessment.

INTRODUCTION

The university as a system is often viewed from the perspective of (Inputs – Conversion – Outputs) processes. Educational inputs are the items that come into the university system from the external environment for processing. Such inputs include among others are, financial and human resources, physical facilities, material resources, the curricula and the students. While the outputs are the impacts or end results of the conversion processes that are inbuilt and closely associated with measuring achievement and the missions of the university education in producing qualitative, self-reliant and globally acceptable outputs (graduates). These include right skills acquisition, attitudes, knowledge and values that will bring about qualitative, productive, employable, self-reliant and globally

acceptable graduates. However, Ibijola (2014b) in a study established a significant relationship between the quality of the conversion process of education and the quality of outputs.

The conversion process is the transformation stage in the educational processes. It is the stage between the inputs and the outputs in which the students (raw material) are processed through internal mechanisms of teaching and learning, based on adequate and good quality teachers, adequate curricula, quality evaluation procedure, very good administrative processes, adequate student support services, very good research opportunities, school and society interactions among others. The conversion stage in the educational processes is about the most important stage, as it is the

stage where the actual impartation of knowledge takes place. The stage according to Ojerinde (2008), involves the improvement and effectiveness of the internal process and the teaching/learning encounter.

According to Ekundayo and Adedokun (2009), the role of universities in human capital development, promotion of research and technological innovation cannot be underestimated. Consequently, knowledge through education has become the most important factor for economic development in the 21st century (Fashola, 2012; Saint *et al.* 2013). However, there have been reports that outputs of Nigerian universities education have been found deficient both in communication skill and professionalism (Oto, 2006; and Okojo-Oweala, 2012). In line with these reports, Okebukola (2012) observed that the issue of decline in quality of education has become a worldwide phenomenon, while Odenigo in Ibijola (2015) posited that the set back in academic performance is due to learning difficulty as a result of overcrowded classrooms and poor infrastructure in the system. Obadara (2011) also posited that in many universities, laboratories are dusty, rusty and empty. The Honorable Minister, Economic Matters (FRN, 2000) also remarked that schools at all levels lacked basic infrastructure. It was on this note that Ibijola (2014) submitted that quality of Nigerian university education needs be improved upon considerably. Experts in educational theories believe that a university is a place of refining and maintaining all that is best in local traditions and cultures. Ogunlade (2012) added that, maintaining high quality in the delivery of educational process in Nigerian university system has become a subject of interest to many stakeholders in the education industry today.

It is a common knowledge that the task of the teacher is to create or influence desirable changes in behaviour or in tendencies toward behaviour in the learner. This implies that successful teaching is determined by the extent to which the teacher is able to achieve the desired learning in the students. However, it has been perceived that the demand for quality teachers has been continuously on the increase globally. On this premise, the quest to ensure that students achieve quality education in terms of the acquired values and skills that will help them play a positive role in their societies has become the topmost issue on the mind of every stakeholder in education. Banyah (1999) submitted that some teachers in developing countries are asked to teach subjects without the necessary laboratories and equipment, while Azeke in Ibijola (2014b) remarked that some teachers do not use available laboratory facilities effectively due to lack of knowledge and experience. Ogunlade (2012) had earlier posited that adequate attention must be given to the teaching delivery of the academic staff in the university system.

It has often been said that, the quality of education of any country cannot rise above the quality of its teachers since it's the teacher who will translate the curriculum from a theoretical piece of paper to practical terms through provision of learning experience. On the other hand, the National Commission for Colleges of Education (2002), described the teacher as the King-Pin of quality education. Corroborating this assertion, the importance of methodology in curriculum delivery was stressed by Farrant in Ibijola (2014b) when he posited that what remains in the student's memory mostly is not the lesson delivered but the teacher who delivers it and how he does so. Obayan (2003), Iyamu (2003), Kis (2005) and Anetta (2007) also submitted that the quality of an educational system depends on the quality of the teachers and that qualitative education is a function of quality and quantity of teaching personnel within the system. Consequently, teachers' quality has become a critical variable in the internal efficiency of the school system (Adeyemi and Adu, 2012).

Saint *et al.* (2013) observed that, Nigerian Federal University system is performing poorly in the area of teaching and learning, while Yakubu (2009) asserted that a major criticism of curriculum delivery has in institutions been the poor pedagogical skills of our teachers. Curriculum has been defined as the sum of desirable values, skills and knowledge that a child acquires from school which will enable him to be a productive and contributing citizen of his society (Ibijola, 2014b). However, the curriculum content of Nigerian educational system had been criticized as being over loaded, and does not sufficiently attend to the needs of the Nigerian learner. Corroborating this assertion, Oladipo *et al.* (2010) submitted that, the data from the Monitoring of Learning Achievement project has shown that there is a wide gap between the intended curriculum and the achieved curriculum, not only in terms of the traditional quality standards for customary curricula employed in the NUC accreditation exercise, but also in terms of meeting labour requirements. The more reason employers of labour are complaining about the quality of outputs of Nigerian university education (Debalen *et al.*, 2000). Hence, the need for government to review and overhaul the curriculum for teacher education at all levels of Nigerian education in order to meet the demand of 21st century was stressed by Oladipo *et al.* (2010). More importantly, teachers' development and improved welfare should be more focused for improved education (Bamiro, 2012).

It appears that, the positive contributions of students to quality issues seem to have often been neglected in Nigerian universities, even though their contributions could be of great value in numerous ways. For instance, students' evaluation of teaching and learning process could be of great importance to quality enhancement. Gibbs and Ashton (2007) posited that students are an integral and vital part of the life of all universities and their contributions to the quality of learning and teaching is recognized and actively encouraged. Akomolafe and

Ibijola (2012) identified students' participation in university governance as desirable, and on this premise, the students (raw materials), who are being processed into outputs (graduates), are made to assess their conversion process in this study.

Statement of the problem

As important as university education is to the development of any nation, most importantly in the supply of human capital to the labour market, employers and stakeholders in education are complaining about low quality of graduates from Nigerian universities. These problems have been discussed variously in the literature. Consequently, this study approached the problem from the perceptive of the students, who are the 'raw materials' being processed through the conversion process of education, bearing in mind that the student is also an important stakeholder in education and should always have a say.

Purpose of the study

The study examined the assessment of the university students on the conversion process in the university system with the purpose of proffering solution to the problem of the study.

Research questions

The following research questions guided the study:

i. How effective is the administrative processes?
ii. How adequate is the quality of the lecturers?
iii. How adequate and effective is the curriculum delivery?
iv. How adequate is the provision of infrastructural facilities, equipment and the consumables?
v. How adequate is the provision for students support services?

Research hypothesis

One hypothesis was generated for the study:

i. There is no significant difference between the federal and the state universities students' assessment of the conversion process of university education?

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive research of survey type. The population consisted of all students of Nigerian public universities. The sample of the study was made up of 1200 students from 6 public universities in south west Nigeria. Multistage sampling procedure was used to select the sample. The first stage was a purposive selection of south-west out of six geo-political zones in Nigeria. The second stage was also a purposive sampling selection of six universities, comprising of 3 federal and 3 state universities. The purposive selection was to allow one university each from each of the 6 states in the zone selected, and to also comprise of the federal and state universities. The third stage, was a proportionate stratified random sampling technique used for selecting the sample. The stratified random sampling technique was done to put the population into strata, that is, state, faculties, departments and levels (100 to 500). In the fourth stage, a simple random sampling technique was used to select 1,200 respondents, 300 respondents each from each of the university selected. Data were collected using a self-designed instrument titled 'Students' Assessment of the Conversion Process of University System' (SACPUS).The instrument was divided into section A and B. Section A was meant for the bio data of the respondents while section B comprised 33 items that elicited information on the followings: Administrative processes; lecturers' quality; curriculum delivery; infrastructural facilities, equipment and consumables; students support service; and provision for research.

The instrument was validated by research experts in Educational Management and Tests, Measurement and Evaluation department in Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria. The reliability of the instrument was also ascertained using the split-half method. The split-half co-efficient was corrected to full-length co-efficient using the Spearman Brown prophecy formula which gave reliability co-efficient of 0.89.The researcher administered the instrument by direct contact with the respondents with the help of 2 trained research assistants. Data collected were analyzed using both descriptively and inferential statistics. The general questions were analyzed descriptively using frequency counts and simple percentage. The rating was done; 70 to 100% (high), 60 to 69% (moderate), below 60% (low). The only hypothesis generated for the study was tested inferentially, using t-test analysis.

RESULTS

Question 1: How effective is the university administrative process?

The answer to question 1 is presented in Table 1. The analysis on Table 1 revealed that university administrative processes as assessed by the students were moderate with an overall average percent of 60.9%. Items 2, 3, 5 and 6 were assessed as moderate with

Table 1. Students' assessment of universities' administrative processes.

S/N	Statement	Agree		Disagree		Remark
		F	%	F	%	
1	The university academic calendar is very stable and effective	650	54.2	550	45.8	Low
2	Students' admission processes within are very effective and done within stipulated time	829	69.1	371	30.9	Moderate
3	Semesters' registration are very effectively and done within the stipulated time	804	67.0	396	33.0	Moderate
4	Students are carried along by management whenever major policies affecting them are being formulated	642	53.5	558	46.5	Low
5	Moderation of examination questions is very effective	825	68.8	375	40.3	Moderate
6	Evaluation procedure is very effective	803	67.0	397	33.1	Moderate
7	Convocation ceremonies hold annually	691	57.6	509	42.2	Low
8	The community/university relationship in terms of community service is very high and effective	696	58.0	50.4	42.0	Low
9	Academic transcripts are easily obtainable	634	52.9	566	47.1	Low

Average percentage: 60.9%, 40.9%. N=1,200.

Table 2. Lecturers' quality.

S/N	Statement	Agree		Disagree		Remark
		F	%	F	%	
1	Lecturers are of good quality and are adequate in number	887	73.9	313	26.1	High
2	Both lecturers and students are concerned about quality	918	76.5	282	23.5	High
3	There is sufficient time for teaching/learning process	768	64	432	36.0	Moderate
4	Subject matter is well taught and learnt	731	60.9	469	39.1	Moderate
5	Lecturers are approachable and available to students	732	61.0	468	39.0	Moderate
6	Teaching of students and coverage of the course content by lecturers is usually within the period stipulated by the university	720	60.0	480	40.0	Moderate
7	Lecturers are very punctual and regular in the delivery of lectures	748	62.3	452	37.7	Moderate
8	There is regular conduct of continuous assessment tests before commencement of semester examinations	965	80.4	835	19.6	High
9	Semester examination results are usually processed and released at the appropriate time	688	57.3	512	42.7	Low

Average percentage: 66.3%, 33.7%. N=1,200

69.1, 67.0, 68.8 and 67.0% respectively, while items 1, 4, 7, 8 and 9 were assessed as low with 45.8, 46.5, 42.2, 42.0 and 47.1%, respectively.

Question 2: How adequate is the quality of the lecturers?

The answer to question 2 is presented in Table 2. Table 2 revealed that the overall assessment of lecturers' quality was assessed as moderate with 63.3%. However, items 1, 2 and 8 on the table were assessed as high, while items 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 were assessed as moderate with 64.0, 60.9, 61.0, 60.0 and 62.3% respectively. Item 9 on the table was assessed as low, with 57.3%.

Question 3: How adequate and effective is the curriculum delivery?

The answer to question 3 is presented in Table 3. Table 3

showed that the students' assessment of the curriculum delivery in university system and the adequacy of the curriculum contents was moderate with 65.0 and 62.3% respectively, while the adequacy of the coverage of course contents by lecturers was assessed as high with 75.7%.

Question 4: How adequate is the provision of infrastructural facilities, equipment and the consumables?

The answer to question 4 is presented in Table 4. Table 4 showed that, the adequacy of provision of infrastructural facilities as assessed by the students was low with an overall average percentage of 42.7%. However, all items on the table, that is, items 2, 3, 4 and 5 were scored 54.8, 37.8, 35.9, 41.6 and 43.6%, respectively.

Question 5: How adequate is the provision of student

Table 3. Students' assessment of curriculum delivery in university education.

S/N	Statement	Agree		Disagree		Remark
		F	%	F	%	
1	The curriculum contents is very relevant to the current work place	195	65.0	105	35.0	Moderate
2	The adequacy of the curriculum contents is very high	187	62.3	113	37.7	Moderate
3	There is adequate coverage of course contents by lecturers	227	75.7	73	24.3	High

Average percentage: 67.7%, 32.3%. N=1,200.

Table 4. Students' assessment of provision of Infrastructural facilities, equipment and consumables.

S/N	Statement	Agree		Disagree		Remark
		F	%	F	%	
1	There is adequate provision for infrastructural facilities	657	54.8	543	45.2	Low
2	The lecture rooms and theaters are very conducive and well illuminated	453	37.8	747	62.2	Low
3	Multi-media are available and used in the classrooms	430	35.9	770	64.2	Low
4	There is adequate provision of consumables for teaching/learning process	498	41.6	701	58.5	Low
5	There is adequate seating facilities in the lecture rooms/theaters	524	43.6	676	56.4	Low

Average percentage: 42.7%, 57.3%. N = 1,200.

Table 5. Student support service.

S/N	Statement	Agree		Disagree		Remark
		F	%	F	%	
1	The guidance and counseling unit is very effective and adequate	657	54.8	543	45.2	Low
2	There is provision of adequate decent students' hostels	457	38.0	743	62.0	Low
3	There is provision for adequate and effective campus shuttle for the students by management	639	53.2	461	46.8	Low
4	There is adequate provision of toilet facilities	639	53.3	561	46.7	Low
5	There is provision of adequate sporting equipment and functional recreational facilities	636	53.0	564	47.0	Low
6	The university library is well furnished and equipped with current and adequate books and academic journals	823	68.6	377	21.4	Moderate

Average percentage: 53.5% 46.5%. N =1,200

Table 6. Research.

S/N	Statement	Agree		Disagree		Remark
		F	%	F	%	
1	Research facilities are available to students	504	42.0	696	58.1	Low

N=1,200.

support services?

The answer to question 5 is presented in Table 5. Table 5 revealed that items 1 to 5 on the table were assessed as low with 54.8, 38.0, 53.2, 53.3 and 53.0% respectively, while item 6 was assessed as moderate. Items on the table revealed an overall average 53.5%. This implies that the level of provision of student support service was assessed by students as low.

Question 6: How adequate is the provision for research facilities?

The answer to question 6 is presented in Table 6. Table 6 revealed that the level of adequacy of research facilities for students was low with 42.0%.

Table 7. T-test analysis showing federal and state university students' assessment of the conversion process of education in Nigerian universities.

Group	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-cal	t-table
State	600	98.00	20.35	1198	9.293*	1.960
Federal	600	108.20	17.58			

*$P < 0.05$.

Testing of hypothesis

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference between federal and state universities students' perception of the conversion process of education in Nigerian Universities.

The mean scores of federal and state universities students' assessment of the conversion process of education in Nigeria universities were compared for statistical significance using t-test statistics at 0.05 level. The result is presented in Table 7.

Table 7 shows that t-cal of 9.293 is greater than t-table of 1.960 at 0.005 level of significance. The null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is significant difference between Federal and State students' perception of the conversion process of education in Nigeria Universities.

DISCUSSION

The study revealed that the students' assessment of the conversation process of their university education was only at the moderate level; with the rating of the administrative effectiveness at 60.9%, the adequacy and the curriculum delivery at 67.7%, provision of infrastructural facilities, equipment and the consumables at 42.7%, provision of students' support service at 53.5%, and availability of research facilities for students at 42.0%. The overall assessment of the conversation process of university education was assessed as 55.52% which is low.

The findings revealed that the provision of infrastructural facilities, equipment, the consumables and the students support service need serious attention, even when items 1&2 on Table 2 revealed that there were good quality and adequate number of lecturers, and students were concerned about quality with 73.9% and 76.5% respectively. Item 3 on Table 3 also revealed that, there was adequate coverage of course contents by lecturers with 75.7%. These findings implied that, even where lecturers are of good quality, and course contents are adequately covered by lecturers, there must be adequate provision of infrastructural facilities, equipment and the consumables for the conversion process to produce good quality outputs.

By implication therefore, the level of provision of facilities and equipment, and student support service have effect on the conversation process of education. These findings corroborated Ibijola (2014)'s submission that the conversation process of education has a significant relationship with the quality of education output, and the submission of Ojerinde (2008) that the conversion stage of education process involves the effectiveness of the internal process. The findings was in line with corroborated the submissions of Debalen *et al.* (2000), Oto (2006) and Okojo-oweala (2012). The finding was a revelation of the complaint of employers of Nigerian graduates over the deficiency in quality of graduates from Nigerian university system. On the other hand, Odenigo (2012) added that the set back in academic performance is due to learning difficulty as a result of overcrowded classrooms and poor Infrastructure, and Obadara (2011)'s submission that in many universities, laboratories are dusty, rusty and empty, and Honorable Minister, Economic Matters (FRN, 2000) remarked that schools at all levels lacked basic infrastructure. These findings also supported Ibijola (2014) that quality of Nigerian university education needs be improved upon considerably. The finding revealed a significant difference between federal and state universities' students' assessment of the conversion process of Nigerian university education. This finding may not be unconnected with ownership and funding patterns of these universities.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study revealed that the conversion process of Nigerian university system will not produce the best outputs where infrastructural facilities, equipment and the consumables, research opportunity for students; and the student support services are grossly inadequate. On this premises, it is recommended that adequate infrastructural facilities, equipment and consumables, students' support service and research facilities be made adequate in the university system in order to improve upon the quality of its outputs.

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