

QUALITY ASSURANCE AND STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN NORTH WESTERN STATE UNIVERSITIES IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined the perspectives on quality assurance and students' academic performance in North Western State Universities in Nigeria. It is essentially a pilot study and the problematic of the study focused on such research objectives as to assess the impact of quality assurance on students' academic performance in the Universities under study; to ascertain the influence of students' enrolment on students' academic performance as well as examine the effect of physical facilities on students' academic performance in North Western States Universities in Nigeria. Employing General Systems Theory, the study adopts survey research method of an ex post facto type to elicit data from respondents using structured questionnaire, unstructured oral interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) as research instruments which were complemented by a review of extant body of literature on quality assurance. The major findings of the pilot study revealed that quality assurance has direct stimulating impacts on students' academic performance in North Western States Universities in Nigeria and that specifically, it has negative impacts on students' academic performance in North Western States Universities in Nigeria as it significantly depressed students' academic performance in the Universities under study. More so, the work finds that students' enrolment has direct significant influence on students' academic performance in the state's universities in North Western Nigeria. Moderate Students' enrolment is found to promote students' academic performance in North Western States Universities in Nigeria as high level of Students' enrolment negatively affects students' academic performance in the Universities. Consequently, it was also found that physical facilities have no significant effects on students' quality academic performance in North Western States Universities in Nigeria as the facilities have not stimulated students' quality academic performance nor have serious bearing on students' academic performance in North Western States Universities. The results further imply that there are no good physical facilities to improve students' academic performance in North Western States Universities in Nigeria. The paper recommends that quality assurance activities should be reorganized and redesigned to have positive impacts on students' academic performance in North Western States Universities in Nigeria. Moderate Students' enrolment should be encouraged to promote students' academic performance in North Western States Universities in Nigeria as high level of Students' enrolment negatively affects students' academic performance in the Universities. Universities in the areas under study and beyond should improve on physical facilities to have significant effects on students' quality academic performance in North Western States Universities in Nigeria.

Keywords: Quality Assurance, Students, Academic performance, State Universities, North West Nigeria.

Introduction

The main aim of establishing university education in any country is to ensure the effective teaching, learning and research works take place in a serene environment. It is aimed at equipping the students with appropriate skills required for human capital development (Nzokurun and Agala, 2019). Effective learning and research play very pivotal and polar role in the overall development of individuals and the entire society. (Eriaga, 2013). Where the satisfying stimuli are lacking, teaching, learning and research activities pose a big challenge. Nzokurun and Agala (2019) have alleged that lack of stimuli in the teaching; learning and research environment have significantly affected universities in Nigeria.

Eriaga (2013) argues that lecturing facilities are grossly inadequate in most of our universities, and that such few facilities are not even conducive in most cases; teaching staff are too few and are overloaded. Outstanding graduates are not retained, but ill-equipped graduates are employed. Yet the number of both undergraduate and post graduate admissions keeps on increasing. The universities in Nigeria are plagued with several quality assurance problems. In universities, quality assurance is measured based on the quality, skills and performances of the graduates that are produced from the system. It is also measured in terms of academic performances in various internal and external examinations by the students'. It is also measured at job placement interviews, performances on the job among others. In addition, there is a minimum standard for university students' performance in the world. It is expected that graduates all over the world meet up with the minimum threshold. This means that the university system has to establish standards that will turn out graduates who will meet up with the needs of the society (Obadara and Alake, 2013).

This paper examines the perspectives on quality assurance and students' academic performance in North Western States Universities in Nigeria. The study is based on such specific research questions as what is the impact of quality assurance on students' academic performance in North Western States Universities in Nigeria?, What is the influence of students' enrolment on students' academic performance in North Western States Universities in Nigeria?, What is the effect of physical facilities on students' academic performance in North Western States Universities in Nigeria?. It is on record that most Nigerian well intended programmes and projects failed due to lack of proper implementation. Many Scholars acknowledged these facts and concluded that Nigerians can recognize need areas, but find it very difficult to adequately provide for the need, resulting to poor implementation. Nigerians are in addition know to be very good critics of project and programmes, but not very good at proffering solutions to the problems. As a matter of fact, the National University Commission (NUC) that was established to ensure quality education in the Nigerian universities is appeared to be failing in its responsibility, as can be seeing from the graduates from the universities and the continuous public outcry concerning the poor quality of the Nigerian university graduates.

Review of Related Literature

Quality assurance has been defined as a process centered approach for certifying organizational needs of providing the best possible products and services for their customers. It is a process that focuses on enhancing and maintaining the appropriate procedures, that are used to create the desired results, rather than focusing on the results itself (Ranson-Yusuf in Asiyai, (2013). However, Kisilowska (2002) defined quality assurance in universities, as the capability of the university to meet the expectations of the users of human capital regarding the quality of skills imparted in their graduates. Kis (2005) sees quality assurance in university system as composing of three distinct related concepts: accreditation, assessment and audit. Both accreditation and assessment are concerned with monitoring the quality of teaching, learning and research works. However, audit is primarily concerned with internal monitoring of the educational programmes with the aim of ensuring that the target and set basic standard is not only attained but maintained.

Obtaining an accreditation means obtaining a permission to mount certain programmes of study in the university. The result of an accreditation is either a yes or no answer (Dill,

2000). The authority in charge of accrediting universities and their programmes in Nigeria is the Nigerian Universities Commission (NUC). Adeyemi and Adeyemi (2020) have explored the impact of Quality Assurance on Students Performance in senior secondary school examination, using Ilesa West Local Government Area Osun State, Nigeria. A Sample of 250 randomly selected teachers from secondary schools was applied. The study uses descriptive survey research design. The study uses likert rating scale with 4 grading system A-D. The result shows that out of eleven (11) quality assurance areas, the respondents were only aware of three (3). The three (3) areas the respondents were aware of oneself classroom environment, school's mission, and monitoring of student's successes. The study establishes that Quality Assurance improves student's performance.

Ajibade and Ajibade (2020) study the impact of Quality Assurance based on Monitoring and evaluation on student's academic performance in Ondo State. The study uses purposive sampling method. The samples composed of 300 senior secondary school two (2) students and twenty (20) schools teachers and administrators. The result shows that Quality Assurance through monitoring and evaluation improves student's performance. It moves the state performance to 33rd position in 2009 to the 7th position in 2016 in West African Certificate examination (WAEC). Philemon (2020) has evaluated the contribution of Quality Assurance and Control on Student's Academic Performance in state owned Secondary Schools Missenyi District, Kagera, Region, Tanzania. The study was guided using three theories: the institutional theory, Labour market theory and scientific management theory. The sampling method was based on simple random sampling, with one hundred and thirteen (113) participants. The results show that Quality Assurance does not significantly impact on student's academic performance. The reasons given are: inadequate funds, transportation and communication problems. There were also inadequate human resources used in the implementation of quality assurance. Kagochi, Kimosop and Mbugua (2019) have evaluated the impact of internal Quality Assurance practices on Student's Academic performance in Secondary schools using Nyeri County, Tanzania. The study employs descriptive survey design. The sample of the study was targeted at 1004 respondents. The study uses purposive sampling method. The result shows that Quality assurance practices have significantly impacted on student's academic performance. Mwinyipembe and Orodho (2014) have studied the effectiveness of Quality and standard officer's supervisory roles on academic performance in national examination in Nakuru District, Kenya. The study has four objectives to find out: Level of training of quality assurance standard officers before employment, access the factors affecting the quality of school's Standard assessment, find out teachers' perception towards the usefulness of Quality Assurance standard officers, establish the effectiveness of Quality Assurance standard officer's assessment reports and their impact on student's performance in national examination. The study uses descriptive survey research design. The study uses a random sampling design to select 46 schools and 82 teachers, out of 818 teachers. The Quality Assurance standard officer's reports have significantly impacted on student's academic performance.

Kagochi, Kimosop and Mbugua(2019) evaluated the influence of internal Quality Assurance practices carried out by principals on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Nyeri county. The study was guided by supervisory-matrix centered theory by Frawley-O. Dea and Sarnat. The study employed the descriptive survey research design and it targeted 1004 respondents, comprising 56 principals, 944 teachers and (4) four sub-county Quality Assurance officers (SQASOS). A sample of 18 principals, 290 teachers and two (2) SQASOS were drawn. Purposive sampling method

was used to select principals and SQUASOS, while stratified random sampling was used to sample teachers according to their administrative duties. Questionnaire and interview schedule was used to collect data. Validation of the research instruments was done by experts view from the supervisor and others. A pilot study was conducted in two schools outside Kieni constituency, which produced a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of 0.82. the study find out that the practice of examining professional documents, such as scheme of work, lesson plans, and records of work, lesson notes and lesson attendance registers were related to the academic performance of the students. That the more frequently the practice is carried out, the better the academic outcomes of the learners. That prudent management of teaching/learning resources, such as libraries, ICT equipment, science laboratories as well as sporting equipment, by the school administration to ensure adequate supply and maximal utilization was found to be closely related to the academic performance of the students. That the frequency at which the principals gave feedbacks to the teachers on the internal quality assurance activities was found to correlate to the academic performance of the students. The frequency at which the principals review and monitor the coverage of the syllabus was found to be linked to the academic performance of the students. The principals' who closely monitor the extent and depth of coverage of the syllabus was found to enhance better academic performance by students in their schools.

Bassey, Owan and Agunwa (2019) have assessed the Quality Assurance practices and students' performance evaluation in universities of South-South Nigeria, using SEM approach. Three (3) null hypotheses guided the study. The study used factorial research design, using stratified random sampling technique. A sample of 878 academic staff was drawn from sampling frame of 15 universities in South-South Nigeria. Quality Assurance practices student's performance evaluation scale (QAPSPEs) with split half reliability estimates ranging from 86-92 was used as the instruments for data collection. Multiple regression and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) were used for the analysis of data, model building, and testing of hypothesis at 0.5 alpha level. The findings show a significant composite and relative influence of school management, staff and student Quality Assurance practice or students' performance evaluation. The result also indicated that they were positive and significant covariances between the four variables of the study.

Theoretical Framework of Analysis

This study employs general system's theory to analyze the perspectives on quality assurance and student's academic performance in Nigerian universities. Systems Models are almost always normative, meaning that they say how the system or an organization should behave if it were to follow the model for success. Systems theory comes from the general systems theory propounded by the Biologist, Ludwig Von Bertalanffy, who recognized a compelling need for a unified and disciplined inquiry in understanding and dealing with increasing complexities that are beyond the competence of any single discipline. The systems theory, therefore, investigates the competence of a phenomenon so as to understand the interaction between or among the component parts and the relationship of the component parts to their larger environment.

Implicitly, the general system's theory relates to the issues of quality assurance and students' academic performance in North-Western state universities in Nigeria in a variety of ways to include the fact that the standard of quality assurance in North-Western state universities in Nigeria in the areas of accreditation of academic programmes,

physical facilities for teaching and learning, admission quota, students' enrolment and academic staff qualification are the component parts that relate to the standard of students' academic performance in North-Western state universities in Nigeria. The relationship between accreditation of academic programmes and students' academic performance, the relationship between physical facilities for teaching and learning and students' academic performance, admission quota and students' academic performance, students' enrolment and their academic performance, academic staff qualification and students' academic performance in North-Western state universities in Nigeria all form part of the necessary requirements for enhanced quality assurance in the university system which makes for the significance of systems theory in this research.

The implication and relevance of systems theory to this study is that no system or individual would do everything alone and become self-sufficient in life. In this case, no system of education would be perfect on its own without necessarily depending on some internal and external expertise for perfection and improvement, in order to accomplish to the set goals. By implication, therefore, quality assurance can improve student's academic performance. Quality assurance is designed and made to improve students' performance in order to achieve the desired goals of setting up like universities.

Materials and Methods of the Study

This pilot study was conducted in State Universities in North-Western Nigeria. The population of the study consists of 3282 academic staff of the states owned Universities in North West Nigeria which include Kaduna State University, Kaduna; Kano State University of Science and Technology, Wudil; Umar Musa Yar'Adua University, Katsina; Zamfara State University, Gusau; Sokoto State University, Sokoto; and Sule-Lamido University, Kafin Hausa. Using Morgan and Krejcie (1970) table for sample selection, a sample of 381 was selected from the population of 3282. About 381 copies of the questionnaires were administered while only 375 copies returned for analysis as shown on the tables that follow in the analysis. Thus, the study has applied questionnaire method to collect the data needed for the research work as data collected were analyzed using frequency counts and Likert scale analytical methods. The mode of presentation is thematic in nature. In this regard, relevant issues are systematically considered under selected themes and sub-themes designed to address declared objectives of the paper.

Results and Discussions on Quality Assurance and Students' quality of Academic Performance in North Western States Universities in Nigeria

In this section, efforts are made to analyze results of the pilot study and discussions on quality assurance and students' academic performance in North Western States Universities in Nigeria. The tables that follow are drawn in line with the research questions and hence the declared objectives of this paper:

Table 1: The impact of quality assurance on students' academic quality performance in North Western States Universities in Nigeria

S/N	impact of quality assurance on students' academic performance in North Western States Universities in Nigeria	Rating					TWV	IQAI
		1	2	3	4	5		
1.	Quality assurance has direct stimulating impacts on students' academic performance in North Western States Universities in Nigeria	54	47	77	100	93	1, 244	3.4
2.	Quality assurance has negative impacts on students' academic performance in North Western States Universities in Nigeria	48	62	55	104	102	1, 251	3.4
3.	Quality assurance has significantly depressed students' academic performance in North Western States Universities in Nigeria	56	57	80	87	91	1, 213	3.3
4.	All of the above	49	45	49	118	110	1, 308	3.5
5.	None of the above	95	93	76	56	51	988	2.7
		$AIQAI = \frac{\sum ANCI}{5}$		$AIQAI = \frac{16.3}{5} = 3.3$				

Source: Pilot Study, 2022

As shown on Table 1, the respondents were asked to express their opinion on the things that constitute the impact of quality assurance on students' academic performance in North Western States Universities in Nigeria. The Likert Scale of strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree were employed with the weight value of 5,4,3,2, and 1 accordingly. The Average Impact of Quality Assurance Index (AIQAI) was found to be 3.3 while the opinions of the respondents on the impact of quality assurance on students' academic performance, indicate that quality assurance has direct stimulating impacts on students' academic performance, (IQAI=3.4) and that specifically, quality assurance has negative impacts on students' academic performance (IQAI=3.4). The results further show that quality assurance has significantly depressed students' academic performance in the Universities under study (IQAI=3.3). This implies that quality assurance has direct stimulating impacts on students' academic performance in North Western States Universities in Nigeria and that specifically, it has negative impacts on students' academic performance, which significantly depressed students' academic performance in the Universities under study.

Table 2: The influence of students’ enrolment on students’ quality of academic performance in North Western States Universities in Nigeria

S/N	influence of students’ enrolment on students’ academic performance in North Western States Universities in Nigeria	Rating					TWV	ISENI
		1	2	3	4	5		
1.	Students’ enrolment has direct significant influence on students’ academic performance in North Western States Universities in Nigeria	53	50	84	90	94	1,235	3.3
2.	Moderate Students’ enrolment promote students’ academic performance in North Western States Universities in Nigeria	50	50	47	109	115	1,302	3.5
3.	High level of Students’ enrolment negatively affects students’ academic performance in North Western States Universities in Nigeria	74	64	50	91	92	1,176	3.2
4.	All of the above	58	55	69	93	96	1,227	3.3
5.	None of the above	97	93	75	58	48	980	2.6
$AISENI = \frac{\sum AISENI}{5}$		$AISENI = \frac{15.6}{5} = 3.1$						

Source: Pilot Study, 2022

Table 2 shows how the respondents were asked to express their opinion on the influence of students’ enrolment on students’ academic performance. The Likert Scale of strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree were employed, with the weight value of 5,4,3,2, and 1 assigned. The Average Influence of Students’ Enrolment Index (AISENI) was found to be 3.1 while the opinions of the respondents on the influence of students’ enrolment on students’ academic performance, indicate that students’ enrolment has direct significant influence on students’ academic performance , (ISENI=3.3). Moderate students’ enrolment promote students’ academic performance, (ISENI =3.5) as high level of students’ enrolment negatively affects students’ academic performance in the universities (ISENI = 3.2). The implication of the foregoing findings on the influence of students’ enrolment on students’ academic performance in North Western States Universities in Nigeria is that Students’ enrolment has direct significant influence on students’ academic performance. Moderate students’ enrolment is found to have promoted students’ academic performance, as high level of students’ enrolment negatively affects students’ academic performance in the Universities.

Table 3: The effects of physical facilities on students' quality academic performance in North Western State Universities in Nigeria

S/N	effects of physical facilities on students' quality academic performance in North Western States Universities in Nigeria	Rating					TWV	EPFI
		1	2	3	4	5		
1.	No idea	97	107	60	52	55	974	2.6
2.	Not interested to comment on University education in Nigeria	101	111	60	50	49	948	2.6
3.	Physical facilities have not stimulated students' quality academic performance in North Western States Universities in Nigeria	55	50	51	106	109	1,277	3.4
4.	Available physical facilities have no serious bearing on students' academic performance in North Western States Universities in Nigeria	52	50	57	111	101	1,272	3.4
5.	There are no good physical facilities to improve students' academic performance in North Western States Universities in Nigeria	50	50	56	110	105	1,283	3.5
		$\frac{\sum AEPFI}{5}$		$\frac{AEPFI}{5} = \frac{15.5}{5} = 3.1$				

Source: Pilot Study, 2022

As indicated on table 3, likert Scale of strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree were employed with the weight value of 5,4,3,2, and 1 assigned. The respondents were asked to express their opinion on the effect of physical facilities on students' quality academic performance in North Western States Universities in Nigeria. The Average Effects of Physical Facilities Index (AEPFI) is found to be 3.1 while the opinions of the respondents on the effects of physical facilities on students' quality academic performance, indicate respondents had no idea to be insignificant (EPFI = 2.6) as others who equally had no interest to comment on the issue were with an index of EPFI= 2.6. Incidentally, most of the respondents argued that physical facilities have not stimulated students' quality academic performance in North Western states universities in Nigeria (EPFI = 3.4); available physical facilities also have no serious bearing on students' academic performance, (EPFI = 3.4) and that there are no good physical facilities to improve students' academic performance. (EPFI = 3.5). This implies that physical facilities have no significant effects on students' quality academic performance in universities studied, as the facilities have not stimulated students' quality academic performance nor have serious bearing on students' academic performance. The results

further imply that there are no good physical facilities to improve students' academic performance in North Western States Universities in Nigeria.

Conclusion

Based on the result of the analysis and findings, the study drew the following conclusions:

1. The study established that quality assurance has not significantly contributed to students' academic performances in the North-Western state universities.
2. The study also established that students' enrolment significantly promote students' academic performance in the North -Western state universities studied.
3. Staff qualification has significant impact on students' academic performance in the universities studied.
4. Physical facilities have no significant effect on students' academic performance in the universities that were studied.

Recommendations

1. The paper recommends that quality assurance activities should be reorganized and redesigned to have positive impacts on students' academic performance in North Western State Universities in Nigeria.
2. Moderate Students' enrolment should be encouraged to promote students' academic performance in North Western States Universities in Nigeria as high level of Students' enrolment negatively affects students' academic performance in the Universities.

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