IMPACT OF NUC ACCREDITATION EXERCISE ON LIBRARY AND INFORMATION IN BUSINESS EDUCATION PROGRAMMES OF UNIVERSITIES

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Abstract
The paper sought to determine the impact of National Universities Commission accreditation exercise on library and information in the business education programmes of the universities in the south-east geopolitical zone of Nigeria. One research question and one null hypothesis guided the study. The survey research design was used for the study. The population comprised 66 respondents made up of 6 directors of academic planning and 60 academic staff of the departments of business education of the six universities in the zone. There was no sampling since the population was not too large. A researcher-developed instrument duly validated by three experts was used for data collection. Test re-test method was used for testing the reliability of the instrument. With the use of the Pearson Product Moment, the reliability co-efficient correlation was found to be 0.86 which was considered adequate for the study. The mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research question while t-test was used to test the null hypothesis. The findings of the study indicated that NUC accreditation exercise had high extent of impact on the adequacy of library and information in business education programmes of the universities in the south-east geopolitical zone. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that NUC should continue to insist on the adequacy of library and information in business education programmes.

Keywords: Business Education, NUC, Accreditation and Library and Information
Introduction

Business education has remained an invaluable academic programme in tertiary institutions. The programme is geared at empowering its products with the educational and business competencies needed to effectively cope with the challenges in the world of work. According to Okpuzor (2012), the goal of business education is primarily to produce competent, skillful and dynamic business teachers, office administrators and businessmen and women that will effectively compete in the world of work. For the goals and objectives of the programme to be realized, there must be a mechanism put in place to ensure proper standards and quality.

Quality control in universities is vested on the National Universities Commission (NUC). The agency was established in 1964 and it has vast powers to ensure quality of process, products and services. NUC as a quality assurance agency, among other things sets standards for Nigerian universities. The key NUC activities towards assuring quality include programme accreditation, periodic monitoring and evaluation. According to Okebukola (2010) NUC examines the effectiveness and efficiency of input, process and output elements of the teaching, learning, research and service activities of a higher institution programme. For instance, the quality of products is measured by how well the graduates are prepared to serve society and for meeting the challenges in the world of work. It can be judged through ascertaining how efficient the teachers are and the adequacy of the facilities and materials needed for effective teaching and learning. The utility value of quality assurance can be seen through the provision of information to the public and other interested parties about the worth of the higher education delivery system. NUC equally ensures accountability in respect of the investment of public fund. (Okebukola, Shabani, Sambo, and Yusuf, 2007).

The NUC benchmark is criteria established by the NUC to maintain minimum academic standard in Nigeria universities. Okebukola (2010), asserted that for the educational system to meet up with its expectations both in input, process and output, there is need for the institutions to meet up with the lay down minimum academic standards for the universities and it includes personnel, physical facilities, library and information, academic content and leadership.

Accreditation

According to Ediagbonya, Agbaje and Suberu (2012) accreditation is an evaluation of whether an institution or programme meets a threshold standard and qualifies for a certain status. Accreditation could also mean the process by which the quality and standard of educational institutions are assessed. According to Okebukola (2010), accreditation can be broadly defined as a process leading to the granting of approval or authority to a programme or institution after meeting a set of minimum standards or criteria. The process of accreditation begins with the establishment of a set of minimum standards against which programmes are evaluated. Secondly, a panel of experts evaluates the performance of the programme against the standards. Thirdly, a decision is taken based on the accreditation status whether to permit continued operation of the programme, make minor adjustments to it or cause the programme to be suspended.

Ukoha and Ahia (2004) asserted that programme accreditation is the process, whereby a professional group judges its educational programme against a set of consensually derived norms, usually referred to as standards. Professionals are involved in
programme accreditation. There must be generally accepted and previously set standards which are criteria for evaluation. The assessment is usually conducted by accrediting agencies set up by the government through the Ministry of Education or by professional organizations. In Nigeria, this quality assurance function is conducted by the National Universities Commission (NUC) for federal, state and private universities. Accreditation is essentially, about quality and standard. Dill (2000) opined that accreditation exercise strengthened institutions to put in place the necessary human and material resources on ground.

NBTE (1993) defined programme accreditation as the means by which the Board grants public recognition to a diploma programme offered by an institution which has met its established educational standards and qualifications as determined through initial and periodic evaluations. The implication is that institutional accreditation precedes programme evaluation. Programme evaluation can take place only in an accredited institution. The NBTE (1992) further explained that programme accreditation involves the evaluation of the quality of a programme offered in an institution by the Board to confirm that the competence and number of teaching and administrative staff and the necessary physical and other facilities are available. This is necessary to ensure that the curriculum is adequately preparing students to be able to perform satisfactorily in their chosen field.

Ademiluyi (2007) contended that properly conducted accreditation should be the one which compels currency in academic curricula, thoroughness in instruction, integrity in assessment, sufficiency in infrastructures and equipment; and adequacy in the level of funding. Improved programme quality is the most significant gain of programme accreditation (NCCE, 1996). Quality in this content is used to mean those distinguishing parameters that expose the worth or goodness associated with the programme. This is also in line with Militzer (2004) who believed that accreditation has been a significant influence in improving quality of American higher education. Accreditation has stimulated considerable improvement in qualifications of faculty members; the conditions under which they work, the provision of services for students and financial support for higher education (Rice, 1998).

Library and Information
According to Okeke (2000), library is defined as a social institution meant to collect, organize, preserve and disseminate informational materials to library patrons. This definition shows that library is not just a collection of books where people can go to pursue independent search for knowledge. Ezemba (2004) asserted that library as an institution has the responsibility of collecting books and other information materials made available to people for study or reference.

The central mission of a library is to collect, organize, preserve and provide access to knowledge and information. In the views of Onwurah (2002) libraries are the essential link in communication between the past, present and the future. Whether the cultural record is contained in books or in electronic format, libraries ensure that the record is preserved and made available for later use. University libraries are those academic libraries established in the university environment to promote research, teaching and learning activities in the parent institutions. In other words, a university library is understood by everybody as a house of knowledge established in various universities where students are expected to visit and effectively make use of the resource to satisfy their information needs. Oyedum (2011) contended that for effective use of university libraries to be achieved, they should not only
provide and preserve information materials for all categories of users but should endeavour to keep the reading environment inviting and attractive. Thus, the environmental factors such as good ventilation, noise-free reading areas and physical facilities such as furniture and lighting/illumination are necessary for adequate use of university libraries to be achieved. According to Okeke (2000) the objectives of the university library is to make information available in all its ramifications using application like ICT in support of the learning process at all levels including undergraduate, postgraduate and researchers. It also includes:

1. Provision of materials in support of the learning process that is, materials for students course work, assigned readings, as well as background reading for essays, term papers and project works.
2. Provision of materials to meet the requirement of faculty specialists and postgraduate students who are doing research.
3. Provision of materials to assist the library user in his own personal self-development.
4. Co-operate with other university libraries with a view to developing a network of academic.

On the other hand, information is “any stimulus that reduces uncertainty” (Laloo, 2002). Information in the real sense does not inform unless the person can make personal sense of it, and personal sense can only be made when information can be processed in the frame of already existing personal understanding (Brookes, 1980). According to NUC Minimum Academic Standards (2007), in the university and departmental libraries, current basic texts, reference books, journals, books and other relevant textual and non-textual materials are expected to be readily available there.

**Purpose of the Study**

The major purpose of the study was to assess the extent to which NUC accreditation exercise has impacted on providing adequate library and information in business education programmes of universities.

**Research Question**

The following research question guided the study.

To what extent has NUC accreditation exercise impacted on the provision of adequate library and information in business education programmes of universities?

**Hypothesis**

One null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance, thus: experienced respondents do not differ significantly from the inexperienced ones in their mean rating of the impact of NUC accreditation exercise on provision of adequate library and information in business education programmes of universities.

**Method**

The study adopted descriptive survey design. The study was carried out in universities in the south-east geopolitical zone. The population of the study comprised 66 respondents made up of 6 directors of academic planning and 60 academic staff of the departments of business education of the six universities in the zone. The instrument for data collection was structured on a 4-point rating scale of very high extent (VHE) 4, high extent (HE) 3,
The questionnaire was validated by three experts in business education from NnamdiAzikiwe University Awka. A total of 61 copies of the questionnaire were produced and administered by the researcher with the help of two research assistants. Mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the research question while t-test statistic was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. Items with mean rating of 3.50 to 4.00 were regarded as very high extent, those that ranged between 2.50 to 3.49 were regarded as high extent, and those that ranged between 1.50 to 2.49 were regarded as low extent while those that ranged between 0.50 to 1.49 were regarded as very low extent. The null hypothesis was rejected where the calculated t-value was equal to or greater than the critical t-value otherwise the null hypothesis was not rejected.

**Results**
The data collected in respect of the research question for this study are presented in Table I.
Table 1: Respondents’ Mean Rating on the Impact of NUC Accreditation on Library and Information in Universities South-East Geopolitical Zone. (N=61)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Minimum Standards for Library and Information</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Establishment of spacious departmental Library</td>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>Very High Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Provision of adequate number of reading chairs and tables</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Provision of electricity in the library.</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Well ventilated departmental library</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Departmental library well stocked with books</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Adequate number of contemporary books in business education</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Adequate number of contemporary books in education</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Adequate number of contemporary journals in business education</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Adequate number of students supervised projects</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Availability of library attendant</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Application of modern library operations.</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>High Extent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grand Mean 2.94 High Extent
The data in Table 1 showed that out of 11 items on minimum standards for library and information only item 1 had a mean of 4.16 which were interpreted as very high extent of impact. The other 10 items were rated high extent and their mean scores fell within the real limits of 2.50 to 3.49. The grand mean of this category is 2.94 indicating that NUC accreditation exercise had high extent of impact on the adequacy of library and information in business education programmes. The SD in Table 1 shows that only item 1 had SD of 1.46 which indicates that the respondents have different opinions. The other 10 items had SD that ranged from 0.21 to 0.92 indicating that the respondents have a common opinion in all the items.

Table 2: t-test Analysis of the Mean Ratings of Experienced and Inexperienced Respondents’ on the Impact of NUC Accreditation Exercise on the Provision of Adequate Library and Information in Business Education Programmes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>S^2</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>α</th>
<th>t-cal</th>
<th>t-crit</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inexperienced administrators</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>1.960</td>
<td>Not Rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experienced Administrators</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Analysis of data in Table 2 showed that the calculated t-value is 0.67 at 59 degree of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated t-value (0.67) is less than the critical value of 1.960, the null hypothesis was not rejected. This indicated that experienced and inexperienced respondents did not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the Impact of NUC accreditation exercise on business education library and information.

**Discussion of Findings**

The result of the analysis presented in Table 1 indicates that the respondents are of the opinion that NUC accreditation exercise had impacted on all the minimum standards for library and information in business education programmes. According to the respondents, NUC accreditation exercise had impacted on the establishment of spacious departmental library, provision of adequate number of reading chairs and tables, provision of electricity in the library, well ventilated departmental library, departmental library well stocked with books. This is in line with Oyedum (2011) assertion that for effective use of university libraries to be achieved, libraries should not only provide and preserve information materials for all categories of users but, should endeavour to keep the reading environment inviting and attractive.

Onwurah (2002) advocates that environmental factors such as good ventilation, noise-free reading areas and physical facilities such as furniture and lighting/illumination are necessary for adequate use of university libraries to be achieved. Also, it was found that NUC accreditation exercise had impacted on adequate number of contemporary books
in business education, contemporary books in education, adequate number of students supervised projects, availability of library attendant and application of modern library operations. According to Ezemba (2004) a university library is understood by everybody as a house of knowledge established in various universities where students are expected to visit and effectively make use of the resources to satisfy their information need. In the views of Okeke (2000) the aim of every academic library is to promote research, teaching and learning activities in the parent institutions and for this to be achieved, school libraries must be stocked with contemporary books and journals.

The study also found that experienced and inexperienced respondents did not differ significantly in their mean rating of the impact of NUC accreditation exercise on business education library and information.

**Conclusion**

From the findings of the study, it was concluded that NUC accreditation exercise had high extent of impact on the adequacy of library and information in business education programmes of universities in south-east geopolitical zone.

**Recommendations**

In view of the findings and conclusion of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. NUC should continue to insist on the adequacy of library and information in business education programmes.
2. NUC should continue to put in place effective mechanisms for verifying claims by universities regarding business education programmes during accreditation and follow-up visitations.
References


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