

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN KWARA STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This paper focused on planning and development of higher education in Kwara State, Nigeria. It examined the extent to which internal operations of the higher educational institutions have been planned and developed as a predictor of the institutions' ability to achieve educational objectives. Four research questions were answered through researchers' designed 20-item instrument tagged "Planning and Development of Higher Education Questionnaire". The instrument was validated and a reliability co-efficient of 0.78 was obtained through a test-retest method. Stratified and simple random sampling techniques were adopted to select 421 students from the institutions. Frequency counts and percentages were used for data analysis. It was found that the condition of lecture rooms, facilities on campus, lecturers' job performance and instructional materials fall below average. It was recommended that planning strategies should be adequately utilized for effective internal operations of higher educational institutions in Kwara State of Nigeria.

Key words: Planning, development, higher education, Kwara State

INTRODUCTION

Development of human resources is a prerequisite to the development of a nation. Thus, the skills, knowledge and capabilities in the citizens have to be nurtured and development so as to produce the required manpower in adequate quality and quantity. This constitutes a major objective of schools, colleges, universities and other educational institutions.

In the early period of introduction of formal education in Nigeria, products of primary and secondary schools constituted the highest levels of indigenous workforce. This was due to lack of opportunities for higher education. The establishment of tertiary educational institutions provided opportunities for many Nigerians to acquire knowledge and skills which qualified them as high level professionals in different fields.

Fadipe (1999), observed that tertiary educational institutions are pivot of national development. They are expected to produce the right type of manpower for transformation of the nation from a developing country to a developed one, he concluded. In addition to manpower production, tertiary educational institutions are expected to inculcate appropriate values for survival of the individual and the society, assist in acquisition of physical and intellectual skills, and promote national unity (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004).

However, higher education in Nigeria is facing many challenges which have resulted into a mismatch between its outputs and the needs of the society. The challenges include inadequate resources, irrelevant curriculum, poor attitude to vocational education and low absorptive capacity of the economy, among others (Babalola, 2007). The inadequacies which bedevil the institutions could have negated the achievement of desired objectives. For example, many graduates lack appropriate skills in their areas of specialization and they perform poorly on the job (Okebukola, 2005). This situation

should be a source of concern to the governments and the educational administrators at all levels. The society would expect that positive actions are taken in order to avert wastage of resources which have been invested on education. Therefore, the governments and their educational agencies are duty bound to plan and ensure proper development of the entire education system.

The focus of this paper is on planning and development of higher education in Kwara State of Nigeria. The State Government has established three colleges of education and one polytechnic to complement the efforts of the Federal Government in production of required manpower and in accomplishment of other national objectives. The extent to which the internal operations of these higher educational institutions are planned and developed are likely to determine their levels of success.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In Kwara State, higher educational institutions have been established for achievement of national objectives, especially production of high level manpower. Expectations from these institutions will be a mirage if essential human and materials elements for proper functioning are neither available nor utilized. Extent of planning and development of the elements could determine the level at which the institutions have achieved their objectives. This study is, therefore, set to examine the extent to which different aspects of higher education are planned and developed in Kwara State. Specifically, availability and utilization of lecture rooms, instructional materials and facilities on campus are examined. Also, teachers' effective job performance is examined as a factor for achievement of educational objectives.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Are the lecture rooms conducive for learning?
2. To what extent are facilities on campus adequate and safe for lecturers and learners?
3. How effective are the lecturers in their job performance?
4. Are instructional materials adequately provided and well utilized?

RESEARCH METHODS

The study was a survey research and it was carried out exposit facto. Population for the study consisted of all students in the four state-owned tertiary institutions. The institutions were stratified into schools and departments. Out of five schools in each of the institutions, four were selected by simple random sampling technique, making sixteen schools. In each of the schools, three departments were selected by simple random sampling technique, making 48 departments in all. From each department, 10 students were selected, using simple random sampling technique. The total number of students sampled was 480.

An instrument tagged "Planning and Development of Higher Education Questionnaire" (PDHEQ) was constructed by the researchers. It has two sections-A and B. Section 'A' is on bio-data while section 'B' contains 20 items on different areas of higher education such as conducive lecture rooms, adequate and safe facilities on campus, effective lecturers and availability of instructional materials. Responses were on a modified Likert type scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The instrument was validated by experts in educational administration from a university, a college of education and a polytechnic. Their suggestions were reflected in the final draft of the questionnaire. Reliability co-efficient of 0.78 was arrived at through a test-retest method.

Questionnaire administration was done by the researchers and two assistants. Out of 480 copies that were administered, 421 copies were usable returns, representing 87.7%. Analysis was done by frequency counts and percentages.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

For the purpose of analysis, 'Strongly Agree' and 'Agree' were group as positive responses; while 'Strongly Disagree' and 'Disagree' were regarded as negative responses.

Research Question 1

Are the lecture rooms conducive for learning?

Table 1. Conducive Lecture Rooms

S/N	Items	Responses		Total
		Positive	Negative	
1.	There are no leaking ceilings in lecture rooms	216(51.31%)	205(48.69%)	421
2.	Furniture is sufficient in the lecture rooms	117(42.04%)	244(57.96%)	421
3.	I enjoy adequate ventilation in the lecture rooms	256(60.80%)	165(39.20%)	241
4.	Chalkboards in all lecture rooms are in good condition	231(54.87%)	190(45.13%)	421
5.	Lecture rooms are sufficient for students' use	128(30.40%)	293(69.60%)	421
	Total Responses	1008(47.89%)	1097(52.11%)	2105

Source: Fieldwork

Response in Table 1 showed that in all the lecture rooms, ceilings were in good condition (51.31%), there was adequate ventilation (60.8%), and chalkboards were in good condition (54.87%). However, lecture rooms were insufficient (30.4%). The available lecture rooms were not adequately equipped with furniture (42.04%). The total responses showed 47.89% positive and 52.11% negative.

Research Question 2

To what extent are facilities on campus adequate and safe for lecturers and learners?

Table 2. Facilities on campus

S/N	Items	Responses		Total
		Positive	Negative	
1.	There are recreational facilities for staff and students	192(45.61%)	229(54.39%)	421
2.	There are health facilities for staff and students	214(50.83%)	207(49.17%)	421
3.	Facilities on campus are well maintained.	208(49.41%)	213(50.59%)	421
4.	People can enter the campus through the main gate only.	206(48.93%)	215(51.07%)	421
5.	All parts of the campus are always cleared of bushes	176(41.81%)	245(58.19%)	421
	Total Responses	996(47.32%)	1109(52.68%)	2105

Source: Fieldwork

Table 2 presented the response on availability of facilities on campus and extent of their safety as a result of maintenance. Positive responses on recreational facilities were 45.61%, health facilities 50.83%, extent of maintenance of the facilities 49.41%, safety through fencing and clearing of bushes on the campus attracted 48.93% and 41.81% respectively. Overall positive responses were 47.32% .

Research Question 3

How effective are the lecturers in their job performance?

Table 3: Lecturers' Effective Job Performance

S/N	Items	Responses		Total
		Positive	Negative	
1.	Lecturers have knowledge of subject matter	221(52.49%)	200(47.51%)	421
2.	Lecturer-student relationship is cordial	241(57.24%)	180(42.76%)	421
3.	Lecturers teach all their periods	150(35.63%)	271(64.37%)	421
4.	Lecturers make lessons interesting	192(45.61%)	229(54.39%)	421
5.	Students' academic standard improves due to lecturers' efforts	188(44.66%)	233(55.34%)	421
	Total Responses	992(47.13%)	1113(52.87%)	2105

Source: Fieldwork

Data on lecturers' job performance were presented in Table 3. The lecturers had knowledge of their teaching subjects (52.49%) and their relationship with students was cordial (57.24%). The Table also revealed that lecturers did not teach all their periods (35.63%), lessons were not interesting (45.61) and lecturers' efforts towards improving students' academic standard were negligible (44.66%). Positive response on effective job performance was 47.13% while negative response was 52.87%.

Research Question 4

Are instructional materials adequately provided and well utilized?

Table 4: Provision of Instructional Materials

S/N	Items	Responses		Total
		Positive	Negative	
1.	There are relevant reading materials in college library	189(44.89%)	232(55.11%)	421
2.	Laboratories are well equipped with modern facilities	163(38.72%)	258(61.28%)	421
3.	Workshops/studio are well equipped with modern facilities	185(43.94%)	236(56.06%)	421
4.	Teaching aids are available for all topics in all courses	168(39.90%)	253(60.10%)	421
5.	Computer facilities are available for instruction	159(37.77%)	262(62.23%)	421
Total Responses		864(41.05%)	1241(58.95%)	2105

Source: Fieldwork

Table 4 presented data on provision of instructional materials in the colleges and the polytechnic, Positive responses on availability of reading materials in the libraries were 44.89%. provision of modern facilities in the laboratories had 38.72% positive responses. Also, modern facilities in workshops and studios had 43.94% positive responses. Availability of teaching aids and computers had positive responses of 39.9% and 37.77% respectively. The overall positive responses were 41.05%.

DISCUSSION

The first research question was on whether the lecture rooms in the campuses were conducive for learning or not. Analysis of data showed that ceilings in the institutions were good, that the lecture rooms were adequately ventilated and the chalkboards were in good condition. However, furniture and number of lecture rooms available were not adequate. These aspects could negate the positive effects of some facilities that were available in the lecture rooms on the campuses of the institutions.

The second research question was on facilities on the campuses of the institutions. Data analysis on this aspect showed that health services were available adequately, but recreational facilities were insufficient. The study also showed that the available facilities were not well maintained. It was possible for people to enter college campuses from different points other than the main gates. This situation, coupled with a lot of bushes around the campuses (as shown in the study) could pose threat to life and properties. Teaching, learning and other school activities would also be negatively affected (Ojedele, 2004).

The third research question addressed the lecturers' job performance. Many of them had sound knowledge of their teaching subjects and they maintained cordial relationship with their students. However, they did not attend all periods on the time-table, the lessons were not interesting to the learners and lecturers' effort towards academic improvement was low. These negative tendencies could be due to insufficiency in number of lecturers, poor motivation and inadequate supervision. These could affect the processing and the output of the education system in these institutions.

The fourth research question was on instructional materials which covered reading materials, laboratories, workshops, studios, teaching aids and computer facilities. The study showed that none of these materials were adequate. Provision of teaching aids, laboratories and computer facilities suffered more than others. Some of the problems militating against lecturers' effective job performance (Table 3) could be the result of poor supply of instructional materials. For example, lessons are not likely to be interesting to learners where required instructional materials are not available in adequate quantity and quality.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Findings from the study led to a conclusion that lecture rooms were not fully conducive for learning. Additional lecture rooms and furniture would be needed in the institutions. It could also be concluded that facilities and instructional materials in the campuses are inadequate in provision, utilization and maintenance. Finally, the study led to the conclusion that lecturers' level of effective job performance is low. Based on the conclusions, the following recommendations are made.

In planning and development of higher education, the Government should identify areas of needs of each institution and ensure that the needs are catered for. There should be supervision and monitoring of lecturers, facilities and funds in the institutions to ensure judicious utilization of available resources. Also, more lecturers should be appointed to ensure adequate quality and quantity of academic staff.

On the part of the internal administrators of the institutions, strategies for getting assistance from stakeholders in education should be planned and effectively implemented. There should be judicious utilization of available resources through internal supervision and monitoring.

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