

Assessment of the Nigerian Universities during the Post-Deregulation period

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Abstract

This study assessed whether there was improvement in service delivery and quality delivery efforts in Nigerian universities in the post deregulation era. Two hypotheses were formulated to give this study a direction. Ex-post facto design was adopted for it. 48 faculties, 480 lecturers and 960 students were randomly drawn to constitute the sample. Data collection was carried out using two researcher-constructed instruments called post-deregulation Assessment Inventory (P.D.A.I.) and Universities Quality Delivery Efforts Questionnaire (U.Q.D.E.Q.) Data collected were subjected to statistical treatment using population t-test (test of single mean) at 0.05 alpha level of significance with 479 and 959 degree of freedom. Results obtained revealed that improvement in service delivery in the Nigerian universities during the post deregulation era was significantly low with respect to some programs and facilities such as accommodation, water supply, security, computer training, books, lectures and examinations; while improvement in service delivery with regard to library facilities was not significantly low. Improvement in quality delivery efforts was significantly low with regard to functions such as curriculum review, student admission, staff training, conference attendance and teaching facilities but there was high improvement in quality delivery efforts related to staff welfare and introduction of new programmes.

Introduction

Nigeria had a civil war which lasted from 1967 to 1970. The end of the war heralded the oil boom in which Nigeria was realizing more money from crude oil. This necessitated the taking over of all schools- primary, secondary and tertiary - with respect to ownership, funding and management by the Federal Government. Thus, during this period, that is, the 70s, education at all levels enjoyed full regulation. During that time, the Federal Government hinted in the Third National Development plan of 1975 that it had assumed full regulation of the education system at the tertiary level with the taking over of the six existing universities and had plans to establish seven new ones (Omoike & Gbinigie, 2005).

Things went awry for the education sector with the economic downturn of 1980s. Education which was a protected sector showed signs of decline (Varghese, 2005). The burden of funding education became too heavy for the government to shoulder alone. Government's approach to deregulation gained impetus with the emerging shift in perception of education as a public good to education for private benefit, and that education is not really an investment, but a cost. This was the period of structural adjustment programmes of 1980s. To worsen matters, the policies advocated during this period also affected the universities. The public policy and action during this period encouraged diverting public investment from higher to primary education. The reason adduced for this policy shift was that returns to primary education were higher than returns at other levels of education, and so, the diversion of resources from higher to primary education was justified in terms of economic rationality and profitability (World Bank, 1986). Such policies led to the declining resource base and deteriorating service conditions in many of the institutions of higher education (Varghese, 2005)

As at 2002, the cost of managing the Nigerian University system had assumed a disturbing proportion, judging from the government's paltry budgetary allocation of 7.9 % to education. This turned out to be a far cry from what the universities and other educational institutions actually needed to stay afloat. Then, it was observed that government's budgetary allocation to education from 1998 to 2002 was 9.6 % in 1998, 11.1 % in 1999; 8.7 % in 2000, 7 % in 2001 and 7.9 % in 2002 (Udejaja, 2005). This implied that the budgetary allocation in Nigeria to education had followed a downward trend. This trend witnessed a slight improvement in the year 2008, with the allocation of 13 % to education (Edukugho, 2008).

To salvage the situation, the government - in 2002 - initiated some deregulatory measures in the higher education sector. This was aimed at privatizing public universities to an extent and encouraging private universities. The privatization option for the universities was to adopt cost-recovery and cost-sharing methods, and initiate income generating activities and profit-oriented commercial ventures to mobilize resources needed for the smooth operation of the university activities (Varghese, 2005). The measures included the introduction of school charges in the following areas: sharing costs on academic-related matters such as library, computerization of results; departmental related issues such as books, chairs, tables, fans, and air conditioners; student-related issues such as admission and screening; staff-related issues such as training, welfare and promotion, and other school – related issues such as security, vehicle parking spaces, business operation and maintenance of equipment. The Build, Operate and Transfer (BOT) policy was adopted with regard to physical facilities. Thus, declining public funding forced the universities to embrace the deregulation option.

Worika (2002) argued that deregulating education was most likely to create a situation whereby education was no longer regarded as a public good, but a commodity whereby the highest bidder got it. Thus those who needed university education would have to pay for it. The essence of deregulation was competition or profit from investment. Through deregulation of universities in Nigeria, the government intended to decrease its knowledge to the highest bidder (Morgan, 2000; Worika, 2002). The sale of knowledge would likely result in lowering of standards in students' admission, evaluation of academic performance and in supervision of instruction, in order to attract customers (students) (Omoike & Aluede, 2007). It was also likely that deregulation would lead to tremendous increase in the cost of university education (Kaplan, 2003).

Proponents of deregulation argued that it would lead to improvement in service delivery efforts by universities. However, despite the fact that deregulation has brought about high charges in universities in Nigeria, student enrolment is still on the increase. This paper therefore is geared towards assessing the post-deregulation of university education to ascertain whether there are improvements or not in service delivery.

Literature Review

Several studies have been undertaken to examine the deregulation of tuition fees in Ontario (Dept. of Epidemiology & Biostatistics, Faculty of medicine & Dentistry, University of W. Ontario; 1999) in each study, the investigators found a startling decline of students from lower and middle – income homes. This has been most strikingly apparent since the deregulation of tuition fees at Ontario medical schools in the late 1990s. The studies further found that after deregulation, the participation rates of low- income families fell by half. These studies have been

reflected in the United States. In 1999, researchers at the University of California, Los Angeles found that for every \$1000 increase in tuition fees, enrolment rates dropped by 15 percent. The study revealed that the decrease in enrolment was composed almost exclusively from minority and low – income students (Kane, 1999).

In another development, Duffin (2001) expressed serious concerns about the quality of study and of students at post deregulation medical schools. According to her, there is never a shortage of people who want to, and who can afford, to become doctors. Thus, no matter how sharply there is a rise in tuition fees for medical schools, enrolment does not drop. What does drop is admission standard. When there is a rise in tuition fees, well qualified applicants who cannot afford the fees opt not to apply. Instead, medical schools are forced to accept not the best qualified students.

Deregulation leads to the removal of restrictions by governments in the establishment of universities by both governments and private organizations. This is the case in Nigeria today where out of the 93 functional universities (Shaibu, 2008), the Federal Government owns 25, state Governments 32 while private organizations owned 36. There are likely to be more private universities than public ones going by the recent call by the executive secretary of National Universities Commission (a body responsible for overseeing the running and funding of universities) for the establishment of more private universities to tackle the admission crises where over 3 million candidates are scrambling for 200,000 spaces (Edukugho, 2008). Before deregulation, a student's expense was said to constitute 44.8 percent, while government contribution stood at 55.2 percent. The government contribution covered academic costs, administrative costs, building and equipment costs (Okebukola, 2002). However, with deregulation, the total unit cost of training the student in any university in Nigeria was transferred to the students and their parents. This is currently in vogue in private universities, which has made them beyond the reach of the common man. This could lead to less demand, especially from poor students and parents who are in the majority (Omoike & Aluede, 2007).

Mackenzie's study (2005) cited six arguments that proponents of higher tuition fees (deregulation) adduce in support of their position:

1. Public funding of post secondary education amounts to the subsidizing of the rich by the poor.
2. Tuition levels do not affect access to post – secondary education.
3. Where high tuition fee is a barrier to access, this can be addressed through assistance to students from low- income families.
4. Due to economic returns from participating in post-secondary education, if all potential students were sufficiently informed, they would all be eager to pursue post secondary education.
5. Students' claims of financial distress are exaggerated; they can actually pay more than they claim.
6. Deregulating tuition and providing targeted assistance to students benefits the post-secondary sector by making public funding more secure, by making colleges and universities more independent, and thereby making them better able to differentiate themselves from one another.

Altogether, Mackenzie (2005:10) found that data on the distribution of college and universities students and the distribution of family income showed that, “subsidizing tuition from general revenues results in an income transfer from higher – income families to lower – income families”. Mackenzie’s (2005) research further revealed that despite the tuition increases that occurred in Canada between 1993 and 2001, there was very little change over this period in enrolment patterns for students from low and middle – income backgrounds.

Ita (2004) pointed out that stakeholders, other than the government rejected the idea of deregulation of federal and state universities in Nigeria. Their fear was that deregulating university education would cause the removal of government subsidy and this would lead to increase in fees payable by students. Rising tuition fees are symptomatic of government underfunding and not a cure to the problem. Whenever tuition fees are allowed to increase, the government simply withdraws a commensurate portion of public funding. In practice, the only factor that ever has or ever will determine the quality of higher education is the level of public funding the government is prepared to invest (Canadian Federation of Students, 2005).

Omoike and Aluede, (2007) argued that deregulation may be admirable in profit maximizing for an organization but not in Education. It cannot guarantee an enhanced quality; neither can it assure increased and equitable access to university education. Higher education, according to them, must remain a public good because among other benefits, higher education is an important instrument for high level manpower for the nation’s economy. University funding is often a hard sell for the general public. According to them, the reasons are three fold:

1. Universities are largely populated by the privileged.
2. The work they do is sometimes arcane with applications whose benefits are not always obvious.
3. Graduates of these universities go on to make generous incomes; as such, the public should not be made to fund them (Dea, 2007).

Statement of the Problem

The Nigerian university system has in the last 20 years witnessed lots of constraints in its quality delivery services to staff, students and members of the public. The primary limiting factor is centered on the fiscal resources at its disposal. As a reaction to this development, the system has gone through close to 30 major strike actions championed by the various unions domiciled within the system and the students. It is in response to this problem that the government set out to initiate the reformation of this education sector through the deregulation of its services since 2002. The primary essence of deregulation or divesting government activities in this sector is aimed at allowing increased participation of private individuals, organizations and parents as a veritable means of breaking the government monopoly. The participation of others in the development of this sector is to ensure efficiency in quality delivery, enhance participation and broaden the burden. In light of the above, this study is aimed at assessing the extent to which the universities have recorded improvements with respect to library facilities, departmental – related issues, academic – related issues, e-policy, and the extent to which the universities have worked towards quality delivery with respect to curriculum, students-related issues, staff-related issues, linkages and funding.

Purpose of the Study

The growing need for rapid transformation in university education calls for periodic assessment of programmes as a way of determining the extent of government achievement of its reform agenda; in this case since 2002, in comparison with the pre-deregulation era. Specifically, the purpose of this study centres on the following considerations.

1. To determine the extent to which universities have improved in library-facilities, departmental-related, academic-related issues and adapting to e-policy.
2. To assess the extent to which the universities have worked towards quality delivery efforts, with respect to curriculum, students-related issues. Staff-related issues, linkages and funding.

Hypotheses

1. Universities service delivery improvements in post deregulation era are not significantly low with regards to:
 - (a) Library facilities
 - (b) Learning environment – related issues
 - (c) Department- related issues
 - (d) Academic – related issues
 - (e) E- policy
2. Universities quality delivery efforts in post deregulation era are not significantly low with regards to:
 - (a) curriculum
 - (b) student-related issues
 - (c) Staff-related issues
 - (d) Linkages
 - (e) Funding

Methodology

Research Design and population: The research design adopted for this study was ex-post facto, because the deregulation exercise had already taken place before this research was conceived. The population of this study comprised lecturers and students of the 25 federal universities in Nigeria

Sampling: The sample was drawn from the 25 federal universities in Nigeria using stratified random sampling techniques. The universities were stratified into six zones representing the six geo-political zones in the country namely: North West, North east, North Central, South west, South east and South south. 2 universities were drawn from each zone to constitute the sample, giving a total sample of 12 universities. The sampled universities included: Bayero University, Kano and Usman dan Fodio university Sokoto (North west), University of Maiduguri and Federal University of Technology, Yola (North East), University of Jos and Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi (North Central), university of Ibadan and University of Lagos (south west), university of Nigeria, Nsukka and Federal University of Technology, Owerri (South East), University of Calabar and University of Uyo South south)

In each of the sampled universities, faculties were randomly selected, making a total of 48 faculties 20 students were drawn from each faculty, making a total of 80 students from each university. This gave rise to 960 students as the total sample for this study. In the case of lecturers, 10 were randomly drawn from each faculty making a total of 480 lecturers.

Data Collection: Two researcher-constructed instruments namely Post Deregulation Assessment Inventory (P.D.A.I) and University Quality Delivery Efforts Questionnaire (U.Q.D.E.Q) were used. Post – deregulation assessment inventory was responded to by the students and it was divided into two sections – A and B. sections A contained the demographic variables such as sex, age, year of study, faculty and type of institution. Section B had 4 sub-divisions addressing library facilities, departmental – related issues, academic- related issues, and e-policy. Library facilities had 7 items measuring it, departmental – related had 6, academic- related has 5 and e-policy had 3 items.

University quality delivery efforts questionnaire had 2 sections also – A and B. section A contained demographic information such as sex, age, rank, highest academic qualification, teaching experience, type of institution and faculty. Section B contained 21 items measuring curriculum, student- related issues, staff- related issues, linkages and funding.

Results

Hypothesis one: Universities service delivery improvements in post deregulation era are not significantly low with regards to;

- (a) Library facilities
- (b) Learning- environment-related issues
- (c) Department – related issues
- (d) Academic- related issues
- (e) E – Policy

This hypothesis has only one variable which is universities service delivery improvements in post deregulation era. It has five dimensions, with various items measuring each dimension. Population t-test (test of one sample or single mean) is used to analyze data generated from the dimensions summaries of the result are presented in Table 1

Table 1

Population t-test (test of single mean) Analysis of the Universities service delivery improvements in post deregulation era. N=960

Variables	Expected Mean		Observed mean	
	u	X	SD	T
1 Library Facilities	5.5	5.36	2.88	-1.762
2 Accommodation facilities	5.5	4.86	3.12	-6.384*
3 Water Supply	5.5	4.94	2.99	-5.760*
4 Power Supply	5.5	5.19	2.78	-3.432*
5 Environmental Cleanliness	5.5	5.95	2.67	5.215*
6 Security	5.5	5.26	3.12	-2.357*
7 Computer training facilities	5.5	3.17	2.84	-25.454*
Improvements in Department Library facilities				
8 Books	5.5	3.88	3.15	-15.923
9 Fan	5.5	3.79	3.15	-16.842*
10 Air Conditioner	5.5	3.03	2.89	-26.483*
11 Tables	5.5	4.56	3.11	-9.367*
12 Chairs	5.5	4.25	3.05	-12.704*
13 Computer	5.5	3.32	2.98	-22.664*
Academic Related Issues				
14 Result Publication	5.5	5.78	3.41	2.529*
15 Lecture Delivery	5.5	6.86	2.84	14.796*
16 Staff Lecture Attendance	5.5	7.16	2.65	19.399*
17 Examination Administration	5.5	7.44	2.56	23.502*
18 Academic Calendar Stability	5.5	7.28	2.88	19.080*
19 Computer with Operational Internet Facilities	5.5	1.70	0.48	-245.242*
20 Online Registration Facilities	5.5	1.29	0.45	-286.719*
21 Result Publication Online	5.5	1.63	0.55	-215.994*

* P> 0.05; df = 959; Critical t = 1.962

An observation of the results presented in this table revealed that universities service delivery improvements in post deregulation era are significantly low with respect to accommodation facilities (t =-6.384, p<.05); water supply (t= - 5.560, p<.05); power supply (t=-3.432,p<.05); security (t=-2.357,p<.05); computer training facilities (t=-25.454,p<.05); Books (t=-15, 923,p<.05); Fan (t=- 16.842,p<.05); Air Conditioner (t=-26.483,p<.05); Tables (t=-9.367, p<.05); Chairs (t=-12.704,p<.05); computer (t=- 22.664,p<.05); Results publications (t=2.529,p<.05); Lecture delivery (t=14.796,p<.05); Staff lecture attendance (t=19.399,p<.05); Examination administration (t=23.502,p<.05); academic calendar stability (t =19.080,p<.05); computer with operational internet facilities (t=-245.242, p<.05); online registration facilities (t=-286.719, p<.05) and results publications online (t=-215.994, p<.05) the null hypothesis was therefore rejected because the obtained t – values were observed to be greater than the critical t – value of 1.962 at .05 alpha level of significance and with 959 degrees of freedom. This result also revealed that universities service delivery improvement in most deregulation era are not significantly low with respect to library facilities (t=-1.762, p>.05), given the same critical t-

value, alpha level of significance and degrees of freedom. This means that universities service delivery improvements in library facilities in post deregulation era are significantly high.

A further observation of table 1 results indicated that the observed mean values were found to be lower than the expected mean value in most of the variables as confirmed by the negative t – value, except environmental cleanliness, publication, lecture delivery, staff lecture attendance, examination administration and academic calendar stability. Statistical comparison of the observed and expected mean values for each variable using population t-test analysis gave significant t-values, except for library facilities.

This finding means that universities service delivery improvements in post deregulations era are significantly low with respect to learning environment related issues, department related issues, academic related issues and e-policy, but not significantly low with respect to library facilities.

Hypothesis Two: Universities quality delivery efforts in post deregulation era are not significantly low with regards to:

- (a) Curriculum
- (b) Student- related issues
- (c) Staff related issues
- (d) Linkages
- (e) Funding

This hypothesis has a single variable which is: universities quality delivery efforts in post deregulation era. This hypothesis contains five dimensions, each having a number of items measuring it. Population t-test (test of one sample or single mean) is used to analyze data generated from the variables. Summaries of the results are presented in table 2.

Table 2

Population t-test (test of single mean) Analysis of the Universities Quality Delivery Efforts in Post deregulation era. N=480

Variables	Expected Mean		Observed mean	
	u	X	SD	T
1 Curriculum Diversification	5.5	5.98	2.21	4.709*
2 Curriculum Review	5.5	6.55	2.28	10.080*
3 Students Admission Reduction	5.5	5.88	2.58	3.180*
4 Courses Rationalization	5.5	5.19	2.56	-2.638*
5 Post – UME Examination Administration	5.5	8.15	2.34	24.781*
6 Effectiveness of Students Screening	5.5	8.18	2.07	28.252*
7 Adherence to NUC Directive on Diploma programme	5.5	7.30	2.63	14.987*
8 Adhere to NUC Directive on Satellite Campus Operation	5.5	8.43	2.42	26.480*
9 Academic Calendar Stabilization	5.5	8.60	1.50	45.332*
10 Adherence to carrying Capacity of Continuing Education Programme	5.5	7.38	2.41	17.062*
11 Adherence to accreditation Requirement	5.5	7.28	2.22	17.551*
Staff Development Practices				
12 Staff Training	5.5	8.48	2.12	30.696*
13 Conference Attendance				
a) Local	5.5	6.75	2.67	10.276*
b) Foreign	5.5	3.50	2.61	-16.786*
Linkages Establishment in Terms of:				
14 Staff	5.5	5.95	2.72	3.621*
15 Programme	5.5	5.88	2.72	3.025
16 Equipment	5.5	4.58	2.51	-8.069*
17 Examination administration	5.5	7.63	1.84	25.281*
18 Teaching Facilities Improvement	5.5	4.80	2.27	-6.744*
19 Staff Welfare Improvement	5.5	5.33	2.29	-1.676
20 Staff Promotional Demand Evaluation	5.5	5.98	2.50	4.167*
21 Provision of Internet Facilities for Staff	5.5	3.18	2.21	-23.001*
22 Funding Source Diversification	5.5	5.17	2.23	-3.260*
23 Student Result Handling	5.5	6.83	2.58	11.250*
24 Introduction of New Programme	5.5	5.58	2.49	0.660

* $P > 0.05$; $df = 479$; Critical $t = 1.965$

Results presented in table 2 showed that universities quality delivery efforts in post deregulations era are significantly low with respect to curriculum diversification ($t = 4.709$, $P < .05$); curriculum review ($t = 10.080$, $P < .05$); student admission reduction ($t = 3.180$, $P < .05$); courses rationalization ($t = -2.638$, $P < .05$); Post-UME examination administration ($t = 24.781$, $P < .05$); effectiveness of student screening ($t = 28.252$, $p < .05$); adherence to NUC directive on diploma programme (14.987, $P < .05$); adherence to NUC directive on satellite campus operation ($t = 26.480$, $p < .05$); academic calendar stabilization ($t = 45.332$, $P < .05$); adherence to carrying

capacity of containing education programme ($t=17.062$, $p < .05$); staff training ($t=30.696$, $p < .05$); conference attendance : Local ($t=10.276$, $p < .05$); Foreign ($t=-16.786$, $p < .05$); staff linkage ($t=3.621$, $p < .05$); Programme linkage ($t=3.025$, $p < .05$); Equipment linkage ($t=-8.069$, $p < .05$); examination administration linkage ($t=25.281$, $p < .05$); teaching facilities improvement ($t=-6.744$, $p < .05$); staff promotional demand evaluation ($t = 4.167$, $p < .05$); provision of internet facilities for staff ($t=-23.001$, $P < .05$); funding source diversification ($t=-23.001$, $p < .05$); and students results handling ($t=11.250$, $p < .05$). the null hypothesis was therefore rejected because the obtained t – values were observed to be greater than the critical t – value of 1.965 at 0.05 alpha level of significance and with 479 degrees of freedom.

A further look at the table revealed that universities improvement in quality delivery efforts in post deregulation era was not significantly low with regard to staff welfare ($t = - 1.676$, $p > .05$) and introduction of new programme ($t = 0.660$, $p > .05$) given the same critical t-value, alpha level of significance and degrees of freedom. This means that universities quality delivery efforts in post deregulation era in the aspect of staff welfare improvement and introduction of new programme are significantly high.

This result also indicated that the observed mean values were found to be higher than the expected mean value in most of the variables. However, the negative t-values found in respect of courses rationalization, attendance to foreign conference, equipment linkage, teaching facilities improvement, staff welfare improvement, provision of internet facilities for staff and funding source diversification means that the observed mean values were lower than the expected mean value of 5.5 statistical comparison of the observed and expected mean values for each variable using population t-test analysis gave significant t-values, except staff welfare improvement and introduction of new programme.

This finding implies that universities quality delivery efforts in post deregulation era are significantly low. But in the case of staff welfare improvement and introduction of new programme, they are not significantly low. That is, universities quality delivery efforts in post deregulation era in these two isolated cases are significantly high.

Discussion of Results

The result of hypothesis one indicated that universities service delivery improvement in post deregulation era is significantly low with respect to accommodation facilities, water supply, power supply, environmental cleanliness, security, computer training, books, fan, air conditioner, Tables, chairs, computers, results publications, lecture delivery, staff lecture attendance, examination administration, academic calendar stability, computer with operational internet facilities, online registration facilities and results publications online.

The low improvement in accommodation facilities in universities stem from the fact that accommodation charges have remained static since 2004. By implication, students are paying less than the market value. In other words, for a probable milestone to be gained, the pricing mechanism is supposed to be elastic with reference to prevailing market conditions. The growth is not a one time dose; it is supposed to be a multiple exposure tied to time. Besides this the build operate and transfer (BOT) is not gaining much ground as was anticipated by service providers because of difficulties in implementing contractual clauses. These providers recourse to land

near the universities to erect these facilities as a way of giving them absolute leverage in operating outside regulated conditions.

In the case of water supply, the low improvements by universities means that this service has not yielded the impact it was supposed to, as envisaged by the authorities. The universities have decentralized water supply by developing boreholes for each hostel. The source of this significant result therefore is due to prevalent power shortage inhibiting pumping of water for the university community. Compounding the matter further is the issue of high cost of securing petroleum products to maintain the power generators. This results in irregular water supply and this in turn adds to sanitation problems.

The low improvement with regard to power supply is because the financial outlay required to provide regular power supply is beyond the funds generated by the universities. This problem of power supply is worsened by the fact that universities are dedicated subsidized zones which pay lumps of money for power consumption. Therefore electricity providers prefer providing light to individual customers who pay economic rates as opposed to uneconomic lump sum rates paid by universities. This articulation is supported by the findings of Calder (1998) that energy deregulation in campuses results to greater choice of rate structures, where the providers prefer rendering services to those who are willing to pay market prices. In addition, most universities are yet to embrace the alternative power supply option through the use of solar energy. So this low improvement in power supply is not a surprise.

The implication of low improvement in environmental cleanliness is a direct result of large influx of business activities operating in some of these campuses. Deregulation emphasizes more fund generation by universities; they have resorted to attracting large number of business activities. As a consequence there is an increase in refuse generation, which becomes problematic for universities to manage.

In the case of security, the low improvement arose from the fact that money realized from deregulation is not enough to employ more security personnel, provide vehicles for patrol, communication gadgets, and light arms. It is therefore not surprising to see University management inviting the police to come into the campuses to secure the staff residential areas, as well as the university entrances.

The low improvement found on computer training is mainly observed on the apathy shown by academic staff in this area. This can be attributed to the generational problem whereby some of the academic staff work with secretaries who handle their documents. No doubt the facilities are there, and universities are setting up more centres for ICT. Another reason for this finding is that the available facilities are jostled between the staff and students; nevertheless, there is enthusiasm noticeable among the junior or younger academic staff in this area. However, this has not added a significant improvement in computer training.

The findings with regards to departmental library facilities showed a significantly low improvement. The reason for this is that most of the departments lacked spaces for establishing libraries. Where they have the space it is too small to accommodate large number of such facilities as books, tables, chairs and computers. For fans and air conditioners, the low

improvement can be attributed to irregular power supply. These are facilities whose usefulness is linked to constant power supply. So, even if they are provided, irregular power supply affects their usefulness.

The results also revealed that there is a significantly low improvement in academic related issues such as result publications, lecture delivery, staff lecture attendance, examination administration and stability of academic calendar. With regards to result publication, the low improvement results from poor power supply. The power situation affects the processing of results. This is also the case with lecture delivery where the power problems do not enable ICT equipment used for the purpose to function effectively.

The low improvement in staff lecture attendance are a direct result of the dearth of classroom spaces. The bloated student population which is not matched with improvement in classroom spaces has put pressure on the existing classrooms. What happens in some universities is that groups of students that find an empty classroom space can use it irrespective of whether it is officially assigned to them or not. The implication is that other students would be forced to forgo their lectures, and as such staff attendance to such lectures cannot be said to have taken place. The classroom space problem also affects examination administration. In some cases examinations may be postponed because, the seats may be too few in number to accommodate the students. This results in students writing examinations in a less than ideal situation. Furthermore the lecturer-student ratio has not helped matters. In most universities, one lecturer administers examination to a class of two to three hundred students alone, this makes students' control very difficult.

With regards to stability of academic calendar, the low improvements is caused by incessant disruptions occasioned by strike actions by university lecturers to press home their demand for improved welfare conditions. These interruptions more often has resulted in unnecessary elongation of academic sessions and in some cases, outright cancellations. In addition, the non-payment of fees by students has led to the prolonging of academic calendar. This is usually the case where the fee payment does not meet the university target of certain percentages. The university authority may therefore prolong the calendar so as to enable students to pay their fees.

This study also showed a low significant improvement in e-policies in such areas as computer with operational internet facilities, online registration facilities and results publication online. A plausible explanation for this result is the high cost of maintaining internet facilities which in most cases is beyond the affordability of the departments or the universities themselves. Furthermore, trained personnel required to handle these responsibilities are lacking, added to this is the power situation in most campuses. So, there anomalies has not favored any improvement in this area.

However, this study also indicated that the universities service delivery improvement in post deregulation era is high with regards to library facilities. This implies that service delivery in library facilities witnessed a significant improvement. A plausible explanation for this finding is that in most universities, libraries have embraced computerization of their services which has resulted in some kinds of improvement. This findings is corroborated by Ogunsola's (2004) report which had it that digitalization is taking place in many university libraries in Nigeria and

that library information networks are established with connectivity through the university campus network to the internet. This no doubt has resulted in improvement in their service delivery.

Results of hypothesis two revealed that university quality delivery efforts in post deregulation era are significantly low with respect to curriculum diversification, curriculum review, students admission reduction, courses rationalization, post UME examination administration, effectiveness of students screening, adherence to NUC directives on diploma programmes, adherence to NUC directive on satellite campus operation, academic calendar stabilization, adherence to carrying capacity of continuing education programme, adherence to accreditation requirements, staff training, conference attendance: local and foreign, staff linkage, programme linkage, equipment linkage, examination administration linkage, teaching facilities improvement, staff promotional demand evaluation, provision of internet facilities for staff, funding source diversification and students results handling.

The low improvement in university quality delivery efforts recorded with regards to curriculum diversification can be traced to the lack of exposure of departmental managers with regard to their roles in a deregulated school system. As a result, the affected officers still operate their functions based a regulated context which merely prepares students to existing jobs as opposed to the demand of students running their own businesses after graduation, which is currently being promoted. Besides this, in a regulated system the students are prepared not taking into consideration the demands of the labour market. This position was strengthened by the earlier finding of NUC (2004) that the problem of unemployment facing the country arise from the inability of the universities to produce graduates with employable or sector-related skills. However, the reverse is the case with deregulation where labour market demands are given top priority through running of such programmes as ICT and entrepreneurial studies, and the post UME screening tests.

In terms of curriculum review, this finding is not surprising. About the expected review of the existing curriculum in line with the demands of our present time has not happened. The curriculum still retains its outlook of reflecting the old order as was bequeathed to us by colonial masters. This articulation is consistent with the views expressed by the former Nigerian education minister Dr Mrs Obiageli Ezekwesili (Shaibu, 2006).

With regard to low improvement in quality delivery efforts of universities in respect of student admission and adherence to the policy of continuing education programmes the finding were significant. The reduction in students' admission is observed in regular programmes, but not so with evening programmes. The increase in admissions is necessitated by the fact that high student enrolment remains the potential source of revenue generation for a university which is what deregulation is meant for. However, the reduction in students' admission and adherence to the policy of continuing education programme results from the desire to satisfy accreditation requirements.

In the aspect of courses rationalization, the findings showed a significantly low improvement. This is so because courses are still taught as they have been in pre-deregulation era. The low significant improvement of university quality delivery efforts with regards to post-UME

examination administration results from the inability of the existing facilities to match students' population on yearly basis; candidates sitting for this examination continue to increase while the facilities have remained stagnant.

These findings also indicated a low significant improvement in effectiveness of students screening. A plausible explanation for this is that the online facilities meant for this purpose in universities suffer the problem of constant breakdown as well as the incessant power shortage. This therefore makes it difficult for the university authorities and students to log in for information. With regards to adherence to NUC directive on diploma programme and operation of satellite campuses, the findings showed a low significant improvement in university quality delivery efforts. These imply that universities have not been able to adhere strictly to these directives.

Academic calendar stabilization has also not witnessed a significant improvement. There are alternatives in the calendar to allow students pay their fees, which is the centre of deregulation. There is also the problem of internal management- labour wrangling within universities which often result to actions that favour the prolonging of the calendar.

The low improvement in university quality delivery efforts in post deregulation in accreditation requirement era starts from the position of some department. Most of them are bottom heavy in terms of staff distribution. There is also the differential promotion criteria in universities which do not follow the standards obtained in accreditation requirement.

This study also revealed that university quality delivery efforts in post deregulation era with regards to staff development practices such as staff training, and local and foreign conference attendance is significantly low. The reason for this finding can be attributed to the fact that the amount given to the beneficiaries is low compared to the prevailing economic conditions. Besides, those studying locally and abroad are enjoying the same conditions. Worse still, some universities do not have a culture of early graduation. They associate maturity in the programme to number of years spent, instead of exposure. In the aspect of conference attendance, there is huge financial outlay involved which often is beyond the provision of the staff. Besides that collaborative studies are viewed as staff inability to show mastery their specialty, and when staff undertake studies alone, they it is considered that they are not mentoring others. This confuses the staff in as they fail to know the exact requirements for promotion.

The study also showed a low significant improvement in university quality delivery efforts in linkages establishment in terms of staff, programmes, equipments, examination administration. The reason for this finding is the poor internet facilities on campuses, which usually serve this purpose. In addition, there is lack of awareness of sources for staff linkages.

The findings on teaching facilities improvement did not pose any surprise. The funds generated by universities under deregulation are not enough to give attention to all the critical areas. In addition, some teaching facilities require huge amounts to produce and maintain them, and as such they are treated as capital intensive. However, universities only provide the ones they can afford. This therefore has led to the low significant improvement in this area.

In terms of staff promotional demand evaluation, the explanation for the finding is that universities do not provide resources for research publications and sponsorship to conferences. This is so because, money from deregulation is still low and there is no assistance from the schools with regards to access to publication avenues.

The low significant improvement found in respect of the provision of internet facilities for staff arises from the paucity of funds at the disposal of universities. This does not mean such facilities do not exist, but the problem lies with the maintenance of the existing ones and the lack of enough to serve the population in these universities.

In relation to funding source diversification, the reason for the low improvement is that various avenues leading to generating income for the universities are inadequate. The politicization of appointment to leadership of such fund generating avenues and misapplication of resources has made it antithetical to the progress of such avenues.

Regarding handling of students' examination results, the financial gains are not enough for the procurement and maintaining of facilities for this purpose. This has led to the low improvement recorded in this area, as revealed by this finding.

However, despite the negative posturing with regards to most of these findings, the university quality delivery efforts in post deregulation era recorded a significantly high improvement with regards staff welfare improvement and introduction of new programmes. The reason for the high improvement in staff welfare improvement is the regularity in salaries payment, provision of research grants and attention given to staff welfare demands internally in campuses. Improvement in the introduction of new programmes stems from the response by universities to public demand.

Conclusion

On the strength of the findings, it was concluded that universities service delivery improvement in post deregulation era are significantly low with respect to accommodation facilities, water supply, power supply, environmental cleanliness, security, computer training, books, fan, air conditioner, tables, chairs, computer, results publication, lecture delivery, staff lecture attendance, examination administration, academic calendar stability, computer with operational internet facilities, online registration facilities and results publication online, university service delivery improvement is high in the area of library facilities.

University quality delivery efforts in post deregulation era are significantly low with respect to curriculum diversification, curriculum review, reductions in student population, post-UME examination administration, effectiveness of student screening adherence to NUC directives on diploma programme and satellite campus operation, academic calendar stabilization, adherence to carrying capacity of continuing education programme, adherence to accreditation requirements, staff training, local and foreign conference attendance, linkages in staff programme, equipment and examination administration, teaching facilities improvement, staff promotional demand evaluation, provision of internet facilities for staff, funding source diversification and handling of student results. University quality delivery efforts in post

deregulation era showed high improvements in staff welfare and introduction of new programmes.

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