

ACCREDITATION OF BUSINESS EDUCATION IN KWARA STATE TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS: CHALLENGES AND WAYFORWARD

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Abstract

The study examined the challenges faced by tertiary institutions in Kwara State in getting business education programme accredited by the National Universities Commission. Descriptive survey research design was used for the study. Four research questions and three hypotheses guided the study. The tertiary institutions offering business education programme courses at the degree level were purposively selected for the study. The study sample included all Heads of Departments and lecturers in the Departments. A self-designed questionnaire "Business Education Programme Accreditation Questionnaire" was used for the study. It was validated by experts in measurement and evaluation to ensure face and content validity, its reliability was done using split half method and a reliability coefficient of 0.76 was obtained using Pearson Product Moment correlation statistics. Findings revealed low availability of facilities for teaching and learning business education in the institutions, inadequate office accommodation, poor preparation for accreditation, inadequate funds provision, unavailability of facilities, provision as well as poor human resources provision. Based on the findings, it was recommended that; adequate facilities should be provided to meet up the bench mark standard required for accreditation exercise and early preparation must be put in place to ensure all personnel and materials are ready for accreditation exercise.

Keyword: Accreditation, Business Education, Challenges, Way forward

Introduction

Business education is seen as a unique programme that is designed for total eradication of poverty right from the inception a few decades ago. It is also recognized as an instrument for change that has capacity to bring about total liberation to this present challenging environment and for national development. It is an academic programme intended to inculcate in the students understanding, value, knowledge, business skills, ethics, and technical skills required in the world of work, self-reliant and for teaching other business students (Umoru, & Yusuf 2018). Accreditation of business education programme in this dispensation should serve as way of improving the standard that will bring about changes and corrective measure to the present challenges that have overwhelmed and lowered the quality of the programme.

Accreditation of academic programme is one of the quality assurance mechanisms initiated by the different commissions or boards like National Universities Commission, National Commission for Colleges of Education, National Board for Technical Education, who are charged with the responsibility of monitoring the activities of the various tertiary institutions. This exercise is usually carried out every two-five years after which the programmes that are not relevant are eliminated while programmes that are relevant and of good quality are given full accreditation.

According to Okebukola in Apkan and Etor, (2016) accreditation is a process of examining the availability and adequacy of resources, merit rating of resources and programmes in order to enhance quality of output. That is, it involves the process of ensuring that the curricula, physical facilities, personnel, funds and so on meet the needs of the institution in order to achieve its stated philosophy and objectives. However, the exercise is aimed at improving the academic standard of the institution and quality output. Uduak and Aniefiok (2017) described accreditation as evaluation of programmes to improve upon excellence, to enable higher institutions face competition and attract clients to provide relevant profile for better result achievement, and to provide the rationale for funds granted by government and external donors. They further outline the three main objectives of accreditation as provided by the National Universities Commission (NUC) as follows: (a) to ensure that minimum academic standards are maintained in programmes; (b) to ensure employers of labour (both local and international) that Nigerian graduates possess required competence in requisite areas of specialization; and (c) to confirm to the international community that programmes offered in Nigerian universities are of acceptable standards and their graduates are adequate for further studies. In line with the objectives of accreditation, business education programme aims to provide certain academic standards to the students to meet the demand of the industries both local and international for economic growth and national development.

Aliyu (2016) defined business education as part of the field of education that deals with business experiences both for specialized occupational uses and for general use. He further stated that, it deals with relationship, techniques, attitude and knowledge necessary for individual to understand the social institutions of business and successfully adjust himself to it. The National Policy on Education (FRN, 2014) defined business education as that aspect of education which deals with the acquisition of practical and applied skills as well as basic scientific knowledge. It is a programme that deals with knowledge that makes the recipients job provider rather than job seekers. Business education programme is based on competences and acquisition of skills for self-reliance or for a gainful employment. The present need for global competitiveness demands that the programme of instruction have to be well structured and well guided. This is where the NUC must come in to give all the needed guidance and measures for a successful accreditation of business education programme.

Statement of the Problem

For some years back, it has been observed that the graduates of Business Education cannot meet up with the requirements of the industries in the labour market and this has brought about concern and doubt about the potency of the programme in our higher institutions. The question is, could it be attributed to the curriculum content, inadequacy

of qualified personnel (lecturers), inadequate funding, level of students' preparation or participation and engagement in learning, perception of the parents, or that of the society at large? These questions need to be answered in order to ensure that business education programme in Nigeria tertiary institutions meet the minimum academic benchmark. It is therefore the thrust of this study to examine the challenges facing accreditation of business education programme in Kwara tertiary institutions as at 2018-2019 academic sessions and the way forward.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the accreditation status of business education programmes in Kwara State tertiary institutions?
2. What is the level of availability of facilities required for business education accreditation in Kwara State tertiary institutions?
3. What are the challenges facing accreditation of business education in tertiary institutions in Kwara State?
4. What are the solutions to those challenges?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were raised for the study:

- H₀₁:** There is no significant difference in the impact of infrastructural facilities in Business Education Programme accreditation in Kwara State tertiary institutions.
- H₀₂:** There is no significant difference in the impact of human resource availability in Business Education Programme accreditation in Kwara State tertiary institutions.
- H₀₃:** There is no significant difference in the impact of fund availability in Business Education Programme accreditation in Kwara State tertiary institutions.

Methodology

Descriptive research design of survey type was adopted for the study. There are six universities in Kwara State (Federal, State and Private) but only three are offering business education as at 2019 when this study was carried out. This study population comprised 23 lecturers of business education from the universities in Kwara State as at 2018-2019 academic sessions. The three universities are; University of Ilorin, Ilorin (Federal Government Owned), Kwara State University (State Government Owned) and Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin (Privately Owned). The tertiary institutions are basically universities offering business education programme at degree level. The universities offering Business Education at degree level were purposively selected because they were all offering Business Education courses at degree level. The study population comprised the HOD and lecturers in business education department of the three Universities. University of Ilorin (08), KWASU (10) and Al-Hikmah (04). The instrument used for data collection was a self-designed questionnaire titled: Business Education Programme Accreditation Questionnaire (BEPAQ). The Split half method was used to determine the internal consistency of the instrument which yielded reliability co-efficient of 0.76. The researcher administered 23 copies of the questionnaire to the Heads of Departments and lecturers in the universities in the year 2019 and all were retrieved. Mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the data collected to answer the research questions while t-test was used to test the hypotheses raised at 0.05 level of significance. The data for this study was collected on the 19th August, 2019.

Results

Answering of Research Questions

Research Question One: What is the accreditation status of business education programme in Kwara State tertiary institution?

Table 1: Accreditation Status of Business Education Programme in Kwara State Tertiary Institutions

Tertiary Institution (Business Education Programme)	Mean (%)	Percentage	Accreditation status
UNILORIN	3.89	60.0%	Full
KWASU	2.51	30.0%	Partial
AL-Hikmah	1.25	10.0%	Not yet accredited

Field Survey, 2019

Table 1 reveals that only University of Ilorin was fully accredited for business education programme among universities in Kwara State offering the course. The KWASU Business Education was enjoying partial accreditation while that of Al-Hikmah was going through accreditation process.

Research Question Two: What is the level of availability of facilities required for business education accreditation in Kwara State tertiary institutions?

Table 2: Percentage Availability of Facilities Required for Business Education Accreditation in Kwara State Tertiary Institutions

S/N	Facilities	Availability (%)	Not (%)	Available	Remarks
1	Shorthand laboratories	17 (73.9)	6 (26.1)		Moderate
2	Computer Studios	9 (64.3)	14 (60.9)		Low
3	Word processing Room	21 (91.3)	2 (8.7)		High
4	Office Accommodation	19 (82.6)	4 (17.4)		High
5	ICT facilities	21 (91.3)	3 (8.7)		High
6	Model Office Facilities	19 (82.6)	4 (17.4)		High
7	Sufficient funds	17 (73.9)	6 (26.1)		Moderate
8	Human Resources (Academic Staff)	13 (56.5)	10 (43.5)		Moderate
9	Non-academic staff (Secretary Executive Officer & IT Officer)	20 (87.0)	3 (13.0)		High

(Field Survey, 2019)

Decision Rule: < 50% Low, 51-75% Moderate >75% High

Table 2 reveals the percentage of availability of facilities in Kwara State tertiary institution. Generally, physical facilities are relatively high in supply except computer study facilities and model office facilities. Non-physical facilities are highly available.

Research Question Three: What are the challenges faced by tertiary institutions in accreditation?

Table 3: Challenges Faced by Tertiary Institutions in Accreditation Programme for Accreditation

S/No	Challenges	Mean score	Rank
1	Irregular power supply	3.41	
2	Lack of office accommodation for all academic staff	3.41	
3	Poor library facilities	3.40	3 rd
4	Inadequate Information and Communication Technology facilities (ICT)	3.40	3 rd
5	Inadequate skilled manpower	3.39	5 th
6	Insufficient time for preparation	3.01	6 th
7	Poor attitude of lecturers to accreditation exercise	3.01	6 th
8	Inadequate funding for the departments	2.93	8 th
9	Too much documentation that is time consuming and staff are always stressed-up	2.88	9 th
10	Inadequate expertise	2.85	10 th
11	Limited internet connectivity	2.85	10 th
12	Content development	2.83	12 th
13	Population Explosion	2.82	13 th
14	Dearth of well trained teachers	2.82	14 th

Field Survey, 2019

From the Table 3, it was revealed that all the items have mean above 2.5 which is the justification for positive and negative response from the respondents thus this implies that all the items were challenges facing tertiary institutions in preparing business education programme for accreditation. Therefore, the greatest challenges faced by tertiary institutions in preparing business education programme for accreditation are Irregular power supply; Lack of office accommodation for all academic staff; Poor library facilities; Inadequate Information and Communication Technology facilities (ICT); skilled manpower; and Insufficient time for preparation. These ones were very significant because they have a mean value above 3.0, while inadequate funding for the departments as well as too many documentation activities that stressed staff time also significantly posed challenges.

Research Question Four: What are the solutions to those challenges?

Table 4: Solutions to the Challenges in Tertiary institutions in Kwara State

S/No	Way Forward	Total Number of Respondents	Positive Respondents	% of Positive Responses
1	Improved budget	23	16	70
2	Appointment of more personnel	23	16	70
3	Provision of Facilities	23	14	61
4	Internal quality assurance	23	14	61
5	Library Guidelines for accreditation	23	16	70
6		23	10	43.5

Field Survey, 2019

Table 4 indicates that 70% of the respondents suggested 1, 2 and 5 solutions to the challenges of Business Education accreditation in the institutions while 61% suggested facilities provision and internal quality assurance as way forward. However, only 41% suggested guideline for accreditation as a solution.

Testing of Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference in the impact of infrastructural facilities in Business Education Programme accreditation in Kwara State tertiary institutions.

Table 5: Mean, Standard Deviation and t-value of Respondents' view on the Basis on school type

Institution type	N	Mean	SD	Df	Cal. t-val.	Crit. t-val.	p-value	Decision
Public	18	40.78	14.98	21	3.38	1.96	0.001	Rejected
Private	5	50.80	5.67					

*Significant; $p < 0.05$

Table 5 above shows the mean, standard deviation and t-value of respondents on the basis of Institution type. The result on the table revealed that the calculated t-value of

3.38 is greater than the critical t-value of 1.96 with 21 degrees of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. Since the p-value of 0.001 is less than the 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, Infrastructural facilities do make a significant difference in Business Education programme accreditation in Kwara State tertiary Institution based on Institution type.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference in the impact of human resource availability in Business Education Programme accreditation in Kwara State tertiary institutions.

Table 6: Mean, Standard Deviation and t-value of Respondents' view on the Basis on Institution Type

Institution type	N	Mean	SD	Df	Cal. t-val.	Crit. t-val.	p-value	Decision
Public	18	55.00	7.19	21	2.40	1.96	0.02	Rejected
Private	5	49.60	4.72					

***Significant; $p < 0.05$**

Table 6 above shows the mean, standard deviation and t-value of respondents on the basis on Institution type. The result on the table revealed that the calculated t-value of 2.40 is greater than the critical t-value of 1.96 with 21 degrees of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. Since the p-value of 0.017 is less than the 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, human resources availability does significantly influence Business Education programme accreditation in Kwara State tertiary institutions.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant difference in the impact of fund availability in Business Education Programme accreditation in Kwara State tertiary institutions.

Table 7: Mean, Standard Deviation and t- value of Respondents' view on the Basis of Institution Type

Institution type	No.	Mean	SD	Df	Cal. t-val.	Crit. t-val.	p-value	Decision
Public	18	56.00	7.39	21	4.40	1.96	0.00	Rejected
Private	5	47.50	4.22					

***Significant; $p < 0.05$**

Table 7 above shows the mean, standard deviation and t-value of respondents on the basis on institution type. The result on the table revealed that the calculated t-value of 4.40 is greater than the critical t-value of 1.96 with 21 degrees of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. Since the p-value of 0.00 is less than the 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, finance made significant difference in the accreditation of Business Education programme in Kwara State tertiary institutions.

Discussion of Findings

The study found that the level of availability of facilities required for business education accreditation in Kwara State tertiary institutions was low. The level of facilities in university education is a crucial ingredient that can determine the level of academic performance of students. This finding is in line with the study of Uduak and Aniefiok

(2017) that most universities usually beef-up their facilities during the time of accreditation programme. Also, this study agreed with the findings of Akomolafe and Ibijola (2014) who reported low status of infrastructural facilities in south west universities caused by inadequate funding despite the monitoring and compliance driven mechanism. The study further found that the greatest challenges facing the institutions in setting business education programme accreditation are majorly those of poor power supply and lack of adequate office accommodation. Prominent among the problems were those of poor library facilities and ICT facilities. Personnel availability seems to be of little problem for the institutions but time spent for accreditation and documentation process was recognized as one of the challenges facing the institutions. This agrees with Aworanti (2015a) who stated that the basic infrastructural facilities have declined both in quality and quantity. Also, even where these infrastructural facilities are available, they are not only in bad and non-functional state but also very obsolete. Kapur (2019) who found that availability of infrastructural facilities has a considerable impact upon the school environmental conditions. These facilities area also regarded as one of the important indicators of ensuring a conducive and favourable learning environment for students. All these are not being properly noticed by accreditation team due to window dressing of facilities during accreditation. This attitude have defected the aims of accreditation in the bid to ensure quality education in Nigeria tertiary institutions. The finding from hypotheses showed that solution to the challenges of business education accreditation programme in tertiary institutions can be laid on the improved budgetary allocation to Business education programme, appointment of more personnel, internal quality assurance measures and diligent adherence to accreditation guidelines. The findings are supported by the study of Udida, Essien and Pisca (2017) that higher institutions of education are not adequately funded. This implies that accreditation of academic programmes in Nigerian tertiary institutions are thwarted because ill-funded institutions lack facilities, experts and action plan guiding the various programmes. This implies that quality school facilities and materials has the potential to affect greatly the quality of education provided the students.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the researchers concluded that business education programme in tertiary institutions has come to stay because of the significant roles it has been playing in the national development. The programme has complimented government efforts at reducing graduates unemployment and holds a key to ensuring graduates self-employment. Therefore, to ensure that the programme live up to these biddings, the universities' education must meet the bench mark standards set by the NUC for it to be a course of study in any higher institutions in Nigeria. To ensure this, all University programmes are expected to be subjected to regular accreditation exercise for effectiveness and efficiency of the programme, Also, adequate provisions of facilities, human resources, fund and financial provision for teaching and learning business education courses in Kwara State tertiary institutions will go a long way.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made for a successful business education programme accreditation:

1. Adequate provision of teaching and learning infrastructure should be the priority of the institutions, especially information and communication technology facilities, as well as internet connectivity.
2. Funds must be adequately appropriated in the university budget for accreditation as well as for provision of office space, and specialized rooms and offices needed for full accreditation of business education programmes.
3. More personnel should be recruited especially support staff in the specialized areas, such as IT officers, software developers and system engineers that will compliment academic staff efforts to develop competencies in emerging areas of business education teaching.

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