



Deregulation of Provision of Educational Services and Quality of Staff, Facilities for Effective Teaching and Learning in Nigerian Universities

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Abstract. This work is centered on Deregulation of provision of educational services and quality of staff, facilities for effective teaching and learning in Nigerian universities. The purpose of the study is to investigate the impact of the deregulation of provision of educational service and quality of staff in both public and private universities, standard of facilities available for effective teaching and learning. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. Data were elicited based on the following variables as they relate to ensuring quality of staff, quality of facilities. The theoretical framework of the study is based on public interest theory of deregulation, the design of the study is ex-post facto while the population of the study is all academic administrators in both public and private universities in the study area, and the sample size is 714. Questionnaire titled: “Deregulation of provision of Provision of Educational Services and Quality Assurance in Nigerian Universities” is the main instrument used for generating data. The instrument was subjected to scrutiny by three experts. T-test statistic was used to test the two null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The results show that there is a significant difference in the mean rating of academic administrators in public and private universities in deregulation of educational services on quality of staff and provision of educational services in quality of facilities for effective teaching and learning in Nigerian universities. This is to say that some have qualitative facilities while others have not. (especially public universities).

Keywords: Deregulation, Educational Services, Quality of Staff, Facilities for effective teaching and learning, Nigerian Universities.

1. Introduction

Education is widely acclaimed as the pivotal point on which the wheel of the development of any nation or society rests. This is largely due to the fact that education brings new knowledge that can be used in the development of the society, as well as, individual members of the society. Consequent upon this, it is asserted that the level of development of any country is dependent upon the level of development of its knowledge base. Informed by this, the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) (2008) in her National Policy on Education referred to education as the most important instrument of change since any fundamental change in the intellectual and social outlook of any society has to be preceded by an educational revolution. In view of this, countries all over the world are investing much in the provision/funding of education. It is even seen as the basic right of every citizen. Nigeria is not an exception as concerted efforts are made to improve the quality of education provided.

Suffice here to say that, the history of western education in Nigeria, which is the type of education we are referring to, will be incomplete without mentioning the role of the Portuguese traders, missionaries and colonial masters or government. The missionaries, for instance, were the first to establish schools in Nigeria notably the Methodist, the Church Missionary Society, the American Baptist Mission, the Roman Catholic Mission etc. In 1842, the Methodist Mission opened a primary school in Badagry while the Christian Missionary Society (CMS) did the same in 1845, and in 1850, the American Baptist followed suit. In 1868, the Roman Catholic Mission joined the race for the establishment of schools by establishing a school in Lagos. Other religious sects followed later (like the

Qua Iboe of Northern Ireland who established schools at Eket and Uyo-Eworo (2004).

The management and financing of these schools were initially left to the whims and caprices of the various religious bodies by the Colonial Government. It was not until 1925 that the Colonial Government showed concrete interest in the development of education in Nigeria when the Education Ordinance was enacted (Fafunwa, 2004).

Furthermore, at the tertiary level, as Fafunwa (2004) puts it, the colonial government also showed interest in providing higher education for Nigerians with the setting up of Phelps Stroke Commission. According to him, January, 1934 marked the official commissioning of the first tertiary educational institution by Sir Donald Cameron. This was followed by the Elliot's Commission, specially set up for the purpose of higher education. This effort gave birth to the University College Ibadan in 1948 and accordingly the tempo for government's involvement in the control and funding of education increased from here. After independence, education continued to be in the exclusive legislative list until the beginning of the Civil War. In 1970, the military government announced the complete take over of schools from the missions.

Prior to the take-over of schools from their respective proprietors in the 1970s, education was owned and managed by various agencies – regional and state governments, local authorities, voluntary agencies and private proprietors as earlier noted. Most of these private, community and voluntary agency schools were indeed famous, competing favourably with the few ones owned and controlled by government. With the take-over of these schools, Nigeria's education system became over-centralised and characterised with unnecessary bureaucracy. This stand was concretized by government declaration as contained in the National Policy on Education with various editions (1977, 1981, 1998, 2004, 2008 and the latest 2014).

Unfortunately, in administration, there is a difference between policy formulation and implementation, and so the document could not provide the needed magic that could completely turn around the fortunes of the nation's education. Consequently, the system was marked with overcrowded students' hostels; classrooms without desks and seats for students, libraries and laboratories without necessary equipment or infrastructure; dilapidated buildings and absence of meaningful staff development programmes coupled with short supply of qualified staff and ill-equipped products that could not favourably compete with their counterparts from

other countries (Ejiogu, 2003). With this type of ugly picture, coupled with the Nigerians' criticism of the system of education, it was no longer worthwhile for the government to have complete monopoly of the education system. In furtherance of this, the government thought it wise to withdraw her monopoly and in turn decentralise the education sector. In the bid to carry out this decision, the policy of deregulation was introduced. The term deregulation simply put, means removal of control. It also implies di-vestment of monopolistic control over a system or an institution allowing the participation of corporate, non-corporate, governmental and non-governmental bodies. In strict economic parlance, the Wikipedia encyclopaedia defines deregulation as the process by which government remove selected regulations on business in order to (in theory) encourage the efficient operation of markets.

Deregulation therefore relieves the government of some responsibilities and allows them the opportunity to do the needful when appropriate. It breeds serious competition and also enhances the quality of services provided.

Applied to education, deregulation means that education would cease to be public good provided solely by government, but shall witness the involvement of interested individuals and corporate bodies (Danhassan & Abdulmumir, 2005). In this context, deregulation means throwing the door open to encourage wider participation by individuals, groups and non-governmental organizations in the setting up, ownership and management of educational institutions and the provision of educational services. This view tallies with Ejide (2005:166) who avers that deregulation of education means "decentralizing the control of the educational system, freeing the schools from rules, mandates and government monopoly, and allowing the control of the educational system to revolve on local authorities nearer to the students". According to Ekpo and Anuna, (2005: 63), "Deregulation as a new applicable concept in education means government divesting its interest in it and encouraging private sector participation in the management of the education system for the achievement of the pre-determined objectives and goals of education".

As it applies this study, education deregulation is defined as divestment of monopolistic control of government over the provision of educational services thereby allowing corporate, non-corporate, private and non-governmental bodies to establish and manage educational institutions according to their whims and caprices.

In Nigerian context, the idea is traceable to the period when her public sector was being mismanaged leading to poor performance, thereby imposing more burden on government finance. This prompted the government into the idea of privatization and commercialization programme which consequently took off in 1988. The legal backing of this programme also saw the enactment and promulgation of decree number 25 on deregulation (precisely, July, 1988). The coming into force of this decree laid the foundation upon which the policy of deregulation was built upon. The essence of the evolution of deregulation was to create a synergy between the government and other agencies in rendering qualitative services in all facet of the economy (education inclusive). Deregulating the educational system also implies making the education sector autonomous, free from unnecessary interference by the government. By this fact, groups or person(s) is (are) free to enter into the business of providing education to the citizens. Among other reasons behind this lofty idea is to ensure quality assurance (Archibong, 2013).

Quality assurance as used in this sense refers to whether the current educational system in Nigeria placed side by side with educational systems of other countries can stand the test of time. Quality assurance also involves a systematic procedure of ensuring that education is meeting the specified conditions requisite to the actualisation of its goals. Ofojebe and Ezugoh (2010) supported this view by stating that quality assurance entails the quality of teaching personnel, quality of available instructional/teaching materials, equipment and facility, school environment and pupils, and quality education delivery. It embraces all functions and activities that will ensure that quality is maintained in the university system.

This can only be possible if they needed man power, infrastructure, facilities, and other necessities are put in place to ensure that the system work fine.

This is predicated on the fact that the teaching staff, for instance, are the pivotal point on which the wheel of the system revolves. The teaching staffs are the ones actually saddled with the responsibility of transforming the learners because as the adage goes, 'no one can give what he/she does not have'. Supporting this, the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004:26) in her National Policy on Education (2004:26) also recognised that "no education system may rise above the quality of its teachers". Besides qualification, the staff strength must be increased to match the population of the students' enrolment. Constant retraining exercise is a condition

precedence for improvement. On the other hand, there might be enough qualified teachers to match students' population, but if there are no enough facilities, the teachers will be incapacitated. To accentuate and calibrate the teachers' potency, necessary teaching – learning materials are imperative. In order to ensure quality in our educational sector, teaching – learning facilities must be improved. Facilities as used here refers to the physical and spatial enablers of teaching – learning. They include classrooms, libraries, laboratories, workshops, playfield, hostels, staff offices, text books, projectors, flannel board, computers and others (UBE, 2000). These are all necessary to ensure quality. Both the teachers and students need current text books to make research, do assignment and have current information in their various fields. Library provision is needed to supplement teachers' effort and make it easier for learners to do assignment and researches. Also included in this list are well ventilated and spacious classrooms and theatres. Projectors, computers, flannel boards are sine qua non in this ICT era. The teacher as well as student need computer for browsing and typing of materials. Students need desks to sit on to receive lectures and write examinations. Wonah, (2002) avers that just as enough textbooks, building are essential ingredients or requirement for learning to take place, so also are desks, chairs and tables. To him, without the desks, the learner will not be comfortable in class, as well as the staff.

Ogarenren – osghae and Irabor (2012) did a research on the topic "Availability and adequacy of human and material Resources for Teaching and Learning of skill based courses in Nigerian public universities". The general purpose of the study was to assess the availability and adequacy of human and material resources for the teaching and learning of skilled based courses in Nigerian public universities. Specifically the study was designed to:

- Determine the availability of human resources in the teaching and learning of skill – based courses in Nigerian universities.
- Determine the availability material resources in the teaching and learning of skill based courses in Nigerian public universities.
- Ascertain the adequacy of available human and material resources using the minimum standard requirement of the national universities commission for the teaching and learning of skill – based courses in Nigerian public universities.

Three research questions and two hypotheses guided the study while the methodology adopted for the study was survey design. The population of the study was 175 (comprising 150 students and 25 lecturers) drawn from 10 public universities from north, east, west and southern parts of Nigeria. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select these public universities. Questionnaire titled “Availability and adequacy of human and material resources for the teaching and learning of skill – based courses in Nigeria universities (AAHAMRTALSACNU) was used as instrument for data collection. The mean statistics was used to analyze the number 1 and 2 research questions. For research question, a checklist was used as the research instrument while for the analysis. t–test for two independent samples was used to analyze the two hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The major finding of the study includes:

- There is inadequacy of human and material resources in public universities in Nigeria as perceived by academic staff and final year students of these institutions.
- The available human and material resource in the public universities did not meet the National Universities commission minimum standard requirement for the teaching and learning of skill based courses.

The study is relevant and very much aligned with the on – going research because it touches on the issues of availability and adequacy of both human and material resources in order to enhance quality assurance in higher education in Nigeria. However, a vacuum is created due to its non – inclusion of the concept of deregulation in its content scope. Moreover, it did not incorporate the private sector in its discussion.

Ezea (2007) carried out a study on the topic “A comparative study of private and public secondary schools within FCT Abuja”. The purpose of the study was to compare the quality of education offered in both public and private secondary schools in FCT Abuja in terms of facilities, quality of teachers and the quality of instruction. Five research questions guided the study while the design adopted for the study was descriptive survey. The population and the sample of the study consisted of 400 teachers randomly selected from 12 secondary schools in FCT Abuja (6 public and 6 private). Instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire while method of data analysis was simple percentage. Findings from the study indicated a strong disparity in terms of the availability of facilities in both public and private secondary schools in the FCT. The results further showed that private schools are better equipped than the public ones. Moreso, the findings

shows a short fall in the number of teachers in private secondary schools compared to those in the public. In terms of qualification too, the finding reveals that private secondary schools have unqualified teachers under their employment (SSCE and TCCII) which spells doom for quality assurance.

The study is relevant to the present study because it seeks to know the calibre of teachers in both public and private secondary school which is a feeder stage to university education. Secondly, discussing about quality of facilities in schools is of uppermost importance to this study. However, there is a gap between the reviewed study and the present study in the sense that the reviewed study did not extend its content scope to cover tertiary education which is the main focus of the present study. Secondly, the geographical scope is too narrow since it is centered on FCT only.

Ojong, Atsu, and Ettah (2009) carried out a study research on the topic “Towards ensuring quality graduates output from Nigerian Universities in a Deregulated Education System”. The purpose of the study was to examine factors that ensure the production of qualitative graduates from Nigerian Universities. Five research questions and three hypotheses guided the study. Descriptive survey was the research design while the population of the study consisted of 400 respondents. Instrument for data collection was questionnaire. The major findings of the study were:

- To ensure the production of quality graduates’ output from Nigerian universities, there must be enough qualified lecturers as well as other supporting staff.
- There must be adequate infrastructure / facilities for effective teaching and learning.
- Admission process must be devoid of sharp practices, especially by private university managers, and should be strictly based on merit against other unethical practices. The National Universities Commission’s regulation on admission should be adhered to.

When all these, and other points not included here are followed, then can the system be sure of turning out qualitative products or graduates that will stand the test of time. The nexus between the reviewed study and the present study lies on the fact that some of the variables treated are also major variables under examination in the present study. Furthermore, it provided insight into the reason behind poor graduate performance in some of their workplace. However, a noticeable short – coming in the reviewed work or

study emanated from its – holistic approach to variables treated in the present study like calibre of students, quality of facilities, etc.

Achu (2010) undertook a study on the topic “University education in Nigeria, an examination of private participation and quality assurance”. The purpose of the study was to investigate the role of private individuals in provision of educational services in Nigeria. Secondly to ascertain whether the standard of education provided by these private universities is better than those in public. Four research questions and two hypotheses were formulated to guide the study while the design adopted for carrying out the study was ex – post facto. The targeted population was both lecturers and students and the sample size was 300 respondents that were randomly selected through stratified sampling technique. The instrument used to elicit responses from the respondents was a structural questionnaire captioned, “university Education in Nigeria, an Examination of Private participation and Quality Assurance Questionnaire (ENEPPQAQ). Mean score was used to answer the research questions while the hypotheses were tested using t – test at 0.05 level of significance. The major findings of the study include:

- Private individual’s participation in the provision of university education can enhance quality in the system due to improved facilities for teaching and learning.
- Guarantee qualitative calibre of products due to the absence of rampant strike as it is common with public universities and examination malpractice.
- Admission is not strictly based on merit in both public and private universities and often, some universities admit students more than their carrying capacity.

These findings are important to the present study because it touches on a number of variables under consideration by the present study such a quality of facilities, calibre of products (graduates) and admission criteria. However, the study did lack an in – depth comparison of the fact between public (state, federal) and private universities. This actually created a gap between it and the present study.

Statement of the problem

The management and provision of education in Nigeria has passed through many stages. Initially, it was in the hands of the missionaries without the colonial government showing interest. During this time, the standard of instruction and the quality of the products were adjudged to be alright. Later the

colonial government showed interest and joined in the provision and management of educational services. At this time, the management and provision of educational services became a joint venture between the government and the missionaries. The quality of staff and teaching facilities were seen to be alright and their products capable of defending their certificates.

After independence, the trend continued especially during the era of oil-boom when “money was not a problem but how to spend it.” But after the civil war, in 1970, the military government decided to take over the provision and management of the education services from the missions. This was short lived as there arose public outcry about the fallen standard of education (dilapidated buildings, poor infrastructural provision, near lack of teaching and learning facilities, incessant strikes leading to the production of half-baked graduates).

With the return to democratic rule, the door of the provision and management of education was once again thrown open. This time around, the policy of deregulation was introduced. This cut across all levels of the education sector (the University inclusive). The worrisome and unanswered question that gave impetus to the choice of this study is whether deregulation as a policy is a magic wand that will turn around the misfortune of the Nigerian education system especially at the university level. Put in question form, *will deregulation bring succour or quality of staff, facilities for effective teaching and learning in Nigerian universities?*

2. Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the following theory

2.1 Public interest theory of deregulation

The public interest theory of deregulation was propounded by Mcferidge and Lall in 1991. The public interest theory of regulation states that regulation exists to correct market failure, thus, regulation increases societal wealth.

The theory posits that natural monopoly, asymmetric information and externalities are sources of the market failure which regulation controls. The public interest theory of regulation predicts that deregulation would occur if market imperfection which necessitated regulation in the first place were to disappear, for example, change in technology which eliminated natural monopoly. The theory further predicts deregulation would occur if it were realized

that a regulatory regime which had been perceived to be in the public interest either never had been or no longer was. It may turn out that, in the light of experience, the cost of the regulatory apparatus or mechanism is, or has become greater than the loss resulting from the market imperfection it was designed to correct. The theory went on further to posit that regulation is one of the ways government can control the economy.

However, when regulation fails or becomes detrimental to government expectations, the government will be left with no option other than to deregulate. Thus, the theory of regulation becomes deregulation. At this point in time, the government either completely or partially withdraws from the control status it used to enjoy. The government becomes an umpire, watching situations.

Applied to the education, it implies that the government assumes a supervisory role in the provision and/or management of educational services. Private and corporate individuals and organisations then come in the provision and management of education. On this note lies the relevance of this theory to the present study that seeks to investigate the impact of the deregulation of educational services on quality assurance in Nigerian universities. The theory suggests that the government should be an umpire in order to guarantee quality in the system.

3. Purpose of the study

The general purpose of the study is to investigate the impact of the deregulation of educational services and quality of staff, facilities for effective teaching and learning in Nigerian universities. Specifically, the study sought to:

- Determine the impact of deregulation of provision of educational services on the quality of staff in public and private universities in Nigeria.
- Ascertain the impact of deregulation of provision of educational services in public and private universities in Nigeria on the standard of facilities available for effective teaching and learning in order to maintain quality assurance.

4. Research Methodology

4.1 Population of the study

The population of the study consists of 714 academic administrators in public and private Universities in

the south-south geo-political zone of Nigeria. There are six federal, six states and seven private universities, in the zone.

4.2 Sample

The sample size is 714 academic administrators drawn from all the public and private universities in the study area.

4.3 Research Questions

The following research questions were stated to guide the study:

- In what ways has deregulation of educational services affected the quality of staff in public and private universities in relation to quality assurance?
- In what ways has deregulation of educational services affected the provision of teaching and learning facilities in public and private universities in Nigeria for quality assurance to be maintained?

4.4 Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

H0₁: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of academic administrators in public and private universities on the impact of deregulation of provision of educational services on quality of staff.

H0₂: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of academic administrators in public and private universities on the impact of deregulation of provision of educational services on quality of facilities for effective teaching and learning.

4.5 Data Analysis

The data in both variables were analysed using t-test statistics (independent), at 0.05 significant level and 712 degrees of freedom.

Hypothesis 1 there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of academic administrators in public and private universities on the impact of deregulation of provision of educational services on quality of staff.

To test this hypothesis, the academic administrators were grouped into public and private universities. The mean responses of the two categories were analyzed as shown in **Table 1**

Table 1: Summary of t-test for Hypothesis One

S/N	Groups	N	Mean	SD	t-cal	df	Sig.
1	Academic administrators in public universities	608	3.23	.49	12.6*	712	0.00
2	Academic administrators in private universities	106	2.56	.58			

*Significance of groups at p<05

Table1 presents the summary of t-test analysis on the mean ratings of academic administrators in public and private universities on the impact of deregulation of provision of educational services on quality of staff. The analysis shows a probability value 0.00 which is less than 0.05 at 712 degree of freedom, meaning that there is a significant difference in the responses of public and private academic administrators of universities on quality of staff. Therefore, hypothesis one was rejected, meaning that there is a significant difference in the mean rating of academic administrators in public and private universities in deregulation of educational services on quality of staff.

Hypothesis 2 there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of academic administrators in public and private universities on the impact of deregulation of provision of educational services in quality of facilities for effective teaching and learning. To test this hypothesis, the academic administrators were grouped into public and private universities. The mean responses of the two categories were analyzed as shown in Table 2

Table 2: Summary of t-test for Hypothesis Two

S/N	Groups	N	Mean	SD	t-cal	Df	Sig.
1	Academic administrators in public universities	608	3.21	.26	12.00*	712	0.00
2	Academic administrators in private universities	106	2.89	.20			

*Significance of groups at p<05

Table 2 shows the summary of t-test analysis on the mean ratings of academic administrators in public and private universities on the impact of deregulation of provision of educational services in quality of facilities for effective teaching and learning. The data reveals a probability value 0.00 which is less than .05 at 712 degree of freedom, meaning that there is significant different in the responses of public and private academic administrators of universities on quality of facilities for effective teaching and learning. Thus, hypothesis two was rejected, meaning that there is significant difference in the mean rating of academic administrators in public and private universities on the impact of deregulation of provision of educational services in quality of facilities for effective teaching and learning. This is to say that some have qualitative facilities while others have not. (especially public universities).

5. Discussion of findings

Deregulation of educational services and quality of staff in public and private universities in relation to quality assurance.

The result of the analysis in hypothesis one showed a probability value 0.00 which is less than 0.05 at 712 degree of freedom, meaning that there is significant difference in the responses of public and private academic administrators of universities on quality of

staff. Therefore, hypothesis one was rejected, meaning that there is significant difference in the mean rating of academic administrators in public and private universities in deregulation of educational services on quality of staff.

This finding is in line with Omoregie (2005) carried out a study on the topic “Teacher’s adequacy and deregulation of the education sector: comparative study of public and private secondary schools in Edo state”. The sole purpose of the study was to find out the quality of teachers in public and private secondary schools in the state. Five research questions were formulated to guide the study. The design of the study was descriptive survey. The population of the study were 797 respondents drawn from both public and private schools through simple random sampling technique. Instrument for data collection was questionnaire. The statistical tool used was simple percentage. The major finding of the study includes:

- Public schools have greater numbers of teachers than private schools.
- Private schools employed unqualified teachers.
- The teacher – students ratio is also higher for public schools (1:30), than private schools (1:19).

The relevance of this study to the present study stems from the fact that the criteria or qualification into the university is predicated on secondary school certificate. The secondary school is the bedrock for university education. Therefore, if unqualified staffs are used to prepare the students, it spells doom for the future of the students and the education system in the country. However, the gap created by the study under review is that the content scope is narrow compare to that of the present study. Secondly, the reviewed study is centered on secondary schools, and not university.

Deregulation of educational services and provision of teaching and learning facilities in public and public universities in Nigeria for quality assurance.

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6. Conclusion

Sequel to the findings of the study, the following conclusions was reached by the researcher that:

There is a significant difference in the mean rating of academic administrators in public and private universities in deregulation of educational services on quality of staff.

There is a significant difference in the mean rating of academic administrators in public and private universities on the impact of deregulation of provision of educational services in quality of facilities for effective teaching and learning. This is to say that some have qualitative facilities while others have not. (especially public universities).

7. Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

- Government and authorities concerned (especially the National Universities Commission (NUC) should ensure that adequate number of quality staff are available in both public and private universities to ensure quality in the system.
- Adequate and functional facilities for effective teaching and learning should be made available in both public and private universities especially ICT based equipment.

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