

ACADEMIC STAFF INNOVATIVE TEACHING SKILLS FOR QUALITY SERVICE DELIVERY IN UNIVERSITIES IN IMO STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study examined academic staff innovative teaching skills for quality service delivery in universities in Imo State. This is a way forward to finding lasting solution to the many challenging situations confronting university teaching staff due to serious advancement in technology and knowledge explosion particularly in Imo State. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. The population of the study was the three universities in Imo State, two federal universities and a state university with 2,558 academic staff. Stratified random sampling technique was used in choosing a sample of 640 academic staff as respondents. This consists of 430 and 210 academic staff from federal and state universities respectively. Academic Staff Innovative Teaching Skills for Quality Service Delivery Questionnaire (ASITSQSDQ) was the main instrument used to gather data. The instrument was validated by experts in the departments of educational management and measurement and evaluation and the reliability coefficient index of the instrument was established at 0.89. Mean scores and standard deviation and rank order statistics were used to answer the research questions while the hypotheses were tested using z-test at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that academic staff of universities accept innovative teaching skills as veritable tool to improve quality education delivery and innovative teaching skills enhance teacher productivity. The study concluded that quality education service delivery in universities is achievable when university teaching staff are constantly trained, retrained and adaptable to innovative teaching skills.

KEYWORDS: Academic Staff, Innovative Teaching Skills, Quality Service Delivery, Universities.

INTRODUCTION

Educational administrators and other stakeholders in education are in constant research to discover more current ways to create enabling learning environment which will enhance students' love for quality academic achievements in teaching and learning process. Recently, the art of teaching is under serious process of change and innovation starting from primary education level to the tertiary level. The threshold of the 21st century has increasingly transformed the world into becoming more and more a big global village. Achuonye (2008) asserts that the continuous technological advancements, new research findings, changes in curriculum content, government policies and the need to raise educational standard are influencing human learning and pose serious challenges to educators. The challenges emanating from the growth and development of technology thereby compel school administrators and teachers to experiment with innovative teaching strategies, skills and learning resources.

Kaegon and Awah (2013) explain that it is obvious today that the society is undergoing a constant change necessitated by globalization and the ICT revolution, which has as well resulted in the increasing complexities in knowledge expansion. The world we live in today is knowledge-driven, it therefore calls for qualitative education services that globalization and the desire of education system to meet up with the pace of technological advancements, requires educational stakeholders to look inward and make innovation a priority. The major challenge facing education now is the need of education operators for innovation in creating adaptable approaches which will enhance young people's lives within schools and their future employment.

Ojiako and Anyaogu (2014) define teaching as an art which deliberately assists the learner to acquire desired knowledge, skills and attitude through the application of a relevant curriculum and learned methodology. Teaching process must be innovative in approach. It must be adaptive, flexible and responsive to the current challenges and changes in the school environment. To remain relevant in the fast changing realities around the globe, the teacher's skills, knowledge, techniques and competence must undergo constant update. National Policy on Education (2014) stipulates that universities were established to produce high manpower for the nation; inculcating proper values to its graduates as well as making them to acquire both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of the society. The attainability of these objectives depends largely on the quality of the university lecturers (the academic staff). The academic staff form crucial instruments in the formulation and successful implementation of educational policies and programmes within the universities. The quality of the academic staff has tremendous implication on quality education service delivery and students' academic performance. Therefore, the academic staff requires current teaching skills and up-to-date in-depth knowledge of the subject matter in their areas of specialization.

Innovative Teaching Skills (ITS) involve the acquisition and utilization of up-to-date professional skills by the academic staff in solving day-to-day problems encountered in the classroom or any learning environment. akomolafe (2011) opines that the university system has embraced series of variables in which the culture of innovation could be made manifest. These variables include, innovative teaching, innovative learning strategies, pedagogy, ICT learning and the use of ICT in the staff and students administration, teaching and learning, evaluation and instructional technology. The emphasis of innovative teaching skills among university lecturers is on the need to be acquainted with current teaching skills and strategies of imparting relevant knowledge in the students.

Achuonye (2008) notes that currently in the field of education, there is a drive to shift from a mode of unconscious adaptation to one of the conscious anticipation, from traditional method to innovative method. The types of innovative teaching skills needed by the academic staff, according to Lunenburg and Ornstein (2012), Achuonye (2008), Bassey (2009) and Rogers (1995) include: Communication skills, ICT skills, leadership skills, team-work skills, computer skills, library skills, research skills, human relation skills, among others. Nwangwu (2011) adds other skills such as: conceptual skills, thinking skills, creative skills and communication skills as innovative teaching skills needed by university teaching staff to impact knowledge to students. Moreno (2009), in his work classified those innovative skills into two broad skills namely:

1. Professional skills which include: content knowledge, good planning, classroom management and organization, classroom behaviour, communication skills, teachers

- confidence, motivation for learning, respect, fairness and equity, and teacher development, and
2. Personal skills which also include: caring, personal knowledge of the individual student, teacher-student relationship and maintaining a warm classroom environment. These skills are acquired or developed through experience, training, retraining and development programmes.

On the indicators of quality education delivery, there are factors that contribute to quality in education service delivery of universities. Sallis (1996) asserts that there are quality indicators to measure any educational institutions. These quality indicators include: access, service to customers, leadership, physical environment, effective teaching and learning, quality of students, quality of staff, external relations, organization and standard.

Similarly, Obanya (2002) categorically classifies the indicators of quality education service delivery into four. They are: successful learning, full-fledged societal support, a well-motivated teaching and educational management force; and a self-regenerating national education system for a self-regeneration society. Okoli and Youboere (2014) explain that quality in education pervades every action that goes into making the process of educating possible. However, quality in education service delivery involves every elements of educational activities - a wide array of educational inputs and output(s) undertake in any educational system.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Today's ever-advancing technological world requires special skills and innovative approaches which would enable the university manpower to fit into the current trends in our education system. Universities are going on-line and the students are exposed to different pieces of information through their daily contacts with internets, it becomes pertinent that university authorities must ensure that the academic staff are updated daily with current skills in teaching and learning activities. The problems of incompetence, ineffectiveness and unproductivity amongst academic staff; poor research skills, poor communication skills, poor technological skills and "brain drain" syndrome which have bedevilled our university system are issues of great concern. Therefore, it is against this background that the researchers embarked on this study which seeks to investigate academic staff innovative teaching skills as it improves quality service delivery in universities in Imo State.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of the study is to investigate the innovative teaching skills that enhance quality service delivery of academic staff in universities in Imo State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Identify various innovative teaching skills for academic staff in universities in Imo State.
2. Ascertain the indicators of quality in education service delivery in universities.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. What are the academic staff innovative teaching skills in universities in Imo State?
2. What are the indicators of quality in education services delivery in universities in Imo State?

HYPOTHESES

The following null hypotheses guided the study:

1. There is no significant difference between the mean scores of academic staff in federal and state universities on various academic staff innovative teaching skills in universities in Imo State.
2. There is no significant difference between the mean scores of academic staff in federal and state universities on the indicators of quality in education service delivery in universities in Imo State.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study will be beneficial to the government, Ministry of education, National University Commission (NUC), lecturers, educational planners, University management, university students, future researchers among others.

METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN: The design for the study was descriptive survey. The study aimed at collecting, analysing data on the required number of academic staff and describing in a systematic manner the characteristics or facts about the given population in this case-academic staff of universities in Imo State.

POPULATION: The population for the study included three (3) universities in Imo State. The universities in this study are: Federal University of Technology, Owerri, Imo State University, Owerri and Alvan Ikoku University of Education, Owerri. The respondents were drawn from 2,558 academic staff in three universities in Imo State.

SAMPLE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE: The sample size of the study was made up of 640 academic staff in the universities, representing 25% of the total population. This is made up made of 430 academic staff in federal universities and 210 academic staff in the state universities in Imo State. A stratified random sampling technique was used in the selection of academic staff (Assistant lecturers, lecturers I and senior lecturers) in both federal and state universities.

INSTRUMENT FOR DATA COLLECTION: The research instrument used for this study was the questionnaire titled: Academic Staff Innovative Teaching Skills for Quality Service Delivery Questionnaire (ASITSQSDQ), developed by the researchers. The instrument was divided into two sections: A and B. Section A was used to elicit information on the demographic variables of the respondents while Section B consisted of 20 items based on the variables of the study was used to elicit data for the study. Structurally, the questionnaire was patterned after a modified Likert four point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) representing 4, 3, 2, 1 respectively. A criterion mean of 2.50 was adopted. Any item that is less than the criterion mean were rejected while items above the criterion mean were accepted.

VALIDITY OF THE INSTRUMENT: To validate the research instrument, the instrument was given to experts in educational management and measurement and evaluation departments. Their observations, views, opinions and comments were used to modify the instrument before administering to the respondents.

RELIABILITY OF THE INSTRUMENT: The researchers used test – retest method.

METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS: The data collected for the study were coded according to the response sets on the questionnaire. The research questions were answered with mean (\bar{x}),

Standard Deviation (SD) and rank order statistics, while the hypotheses were tested using z-test at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

RESEARCH QUESTION 1: What are the academic staff innovative teaching skills in universities in Imo State?

TABLE 1: MEAN, MEAN SETS, STANDARD DEVIATION AND RANK ORDER ON THE ACADEMIC STAFF INNOVATIVE TEACHING SKILLS IN UNIVERSITIES IN IMO STATE.

S/N	Items Innovative Teaching Skills Variable	Federal N = 430		State N = 210		Mean Set		Rank Order	Decision
		\bar{x}_1	S.D	\bar{x}_2	S.D	\bar{x}_1	\bar{x}_2		
1.	Communication skills.	3.08	1.45	3.05	1.44	3.07	7 th	Agree	
2.	ICT skills.	3.85	2.02	3.11	1.47	3.48	2 nd	Agree	
3.	Human relations skills.	3.37	1.64	3.69	1.88	3.53	1 st	Agree	
4.	Research skills.	2.83	1.35	3.09	1.45	2.96	9 th	Agree	
5.	Computer skills.	3.86	2.03	3.05	1.44	3.46	3 rd	Agree	
6.	Teamwork skills.	3.47	1.71	2.99	1.40	3.23	5 th	Agree	
7.	Library skills.	3.35	1.62	3.10	1.47	3.23	5 th	Agree	
8.	Leadership skills.	3.27	1.57	3.38	1.64	3.33	4 th	Agree	
9.	Time management skills.	2.98	1.40	2.95	1.39	2.97	8 th	Agree	
10.	Problem-solving skills.	2.81	1.34	2.52	1.29	2.67	10 th	Agree	
	Aggregate mean	3.29	1.61	3.09	1.49			Agree	

Table 1 above indicates that all the mean items were accepted by the respondents as staff innovative teaching skills in universities in Imo State. This is because the mean for both federal (3.29) and state (3.09) universities academic staff were above the criterion mean of 2.50. The respondents agreed that communication skills, ICT, human relations, research, computer, teamwork, library, time management and problem-solving skills are innovative teaching skills in universities. Also, the academic staff of federal universities agreed on computer skills as the most acceptable innovative skills while human relation skills was accepted by state staff as the most innovative skill.

RESEARCH QUESTION 2: What are the indicators of quality in education services delivery in universities in Imo State?

TABLE 2: MEAN, MEAN SETS, STANDARD DEVIATION AND RANK ORDER ON THE INDICATORS OF QUALITY IN EDUCATION SERVICES DELIVERY IN UNIVERSITIES IN IMO STATE.

S/N	Items Indicators of quality education services delivery Variable	Federal Universities N = 430		State Universities N = 210		Mean Set \bar{x}_1 \bar{x}_2		Rank Order	Decision
		\bar{x}_1	S.D	\bar{x}_2	S.D	\bar{x}_1	\bar{x}_2		
11.	Access.	3.74	1.93	3.30	1.59	3.52		3 rd	Agree
12.	Service to customers.	3.06	1.44	3.36	1.64	3.21		9 th	Agree
13.	Leadership.	3.23	1.54	3.17	1.51	3.20		10 th	Agree
14.	Physical environment.	3.67	1.87	3.33	1.61	3.50		4 th	Agree
15.	Effective teaching and learning.	3.64	1.84	3.17	1.51	3.41		7 th	Agree
16.	Quality of students.	3.66	1.86	3.31	1.59	3.49		5 th	Agree
17.	Quality of staff.	3.69	1.88	3.37	1.64	3.53		1 st	Agree
18.	Extent of external/community relations.	3.56	1.78	3.15	1.49	3.36		8 th	Agree
19.	Organization.	3.59	1.80	3.27	1.57	3.43		6 th	Agree
20.	Standards/benchmarking.	3.74	1.93	3.31	1.59	3.53		1 st	Agree
	Aggregate mean	3.58	1.79	3.27	1.57				Agree

Table 2 indicates that all the mean items were accepted by the respondents as the indicators of quality in education services delivery in universities. This is because the mean items for both federal (3.58) and state (3.27) academic staff were above the criterion mean of 2.50. The respondents therefore agreed that, access, service to customers, leadership, physical environment, effective teaching and learning, quality of students, quality of staff, extent of external/community relations, organization, and standards/benchmarking are the indicators of quality in education services delivery in universities. Also, the highest indicator by federal staff is access while for state is quality staff.

HYPOTHESIS 1: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of academic staff in federal and state universities on various academic staff innovative teaching skills in universities in Imo State.

TABLE 3: COMPARISON OF THE MEAN OF ACADEMIC STAFF OF FEDERAL AND STATE UNIVERSITIES IN IMO STATE ON THE ACADEMIC STAFF INNOVATIVE TEACHING SKILLS.

Universities	N	\bar{x}	SD	z-cal.	df	z-crit	Level of Significance	Decision
Federal	430	3.29	1.61					
State	210	3.09	1.49	1.55	638	1.96	0.05	Accept

Table 3 shows a summary of scores, mean, standard deviations and critical ratio test of difference between academic staff of federal and state universities in Imo State on the academic staff innovative teaching skills. The calculated z-value used in testing the hypothesis stood at 1.55 while the critical table value stood at 1.96 using 638 degree of freedom (df) at 0.05 level of freedom. At 638 degree of freedom, and 0.05 level significance, the calculated value of 1.55, is far less than the z-value of 1.96, hence no significant difference exist between the academic

staff of both federal and state universities on the various types of academic staff innovative skills. Based on the above observation, we accept the null hypothesis that, there is no significant difference between the mean scores of academic staff in federal and state universities on various academic staff teaching skills in universities in Imo State.

HYPOTHESIS 2: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of academic staff in federal and state universities on the indicators of quality in education service delivery in universities in Imo State.

TABLE 4: COMPARISON OF THE MEAN OF ACADEMIC STAFF OF FEDERAL AND STATE UNIVERSITIES IN IMO STATE ON THE INDICATORS OF QUALITY IN EDUCATION SERVICES DELIVERY IN UNIVERSITIES

Universities	N	\bar{x}	SD	z-cal.	df	z-crit	Level of Significance	Decision
Federal	430	3.58	1.79					
State	210	3.27	1.57	2.24	638	1.96	0.05	Reject

Table 4 shows a summary of scores, mean, standard deviations and critical ratio test of difference between academic staff of federal and state universities in Imo State on the indicators of quality in education services delivery in universities. The calculated z-value used in testing the hypothesis stood at 2.24 while the critical table value stood at 1.96 using 638 degree of freedom (df) at 0.05 level of freedom. At 638 degree of freedom, and 0.05 level of significance, the calculated value of 2.24, is far above the z-value of 1.96, hence a significant difference exist between the academic staff of federal and state universities on the indicators of quality in education service delivery. Based on the above observation, we reject the null hypothesis that, there is no significant difference between the mean scores of academic staff in federal and state universities on the indicators of quality in education services delivery in universities.

DISCUSSION

Academic staff assessment of their views on various types of innovative teaching skills for quality education delivery in universities were in agreement that communication skills, ICT, human relations, research, computer, teamwork, library, time management and problem-solving skills are innovative teaching skills in universities. The findings agree with Alimba (2009) when he noted that some of the generic skills and competence that academic staff should possess for quality service delivery in education include: problem-solving skills, team building skills, effective communication skills, interpersonal relations skills, thinking skills and so on. Nwagwu (2011) also affirms to the findings when the scholar added skills such as: conceptual skills, thinking skills, creative skills, and communication skills as innovative teaching skills needed by university teaching staff to impact knowledge to students. Achuonye (2008) and Bassey (2009) in their studies agreed that communication skills, ICT skills, leadership skills, teamwork skills, computer skills, library, human relation skills, research skills and time management are the innovative teaching skills suitable for academic staff of universities. However, there are various types of innovative teaching skills that can be acquired and utilized by the academic staff of universities to achieve quality service delivery in education. This implies that innovative teaching skills involve the acquisition and utilization of current professional skills by the academic staff to solve educational problems. It is a process of experimenting teaching with up-to-date skills.

From the responses of academic staff of federal and state universities there is a high agreement that, access, service to customers, leadership, physical environment, effective teaching and learning, quality of students, quality of staff, extent of external/community relations, organization, and standards/benchmarking are the indicators of quality in education service delivery in universities. The findings agreed with Sallis (1996), who asserted that quality indicators to measure any educational institutions include: access, service to customers, leadership, physical environment, effective teaching and learning, quality of staff, external relations, organization and standard. The findings support Obanya (2002) assertion that quality in education is only a combination of quality inputs/outputs and quality processes that can produce quality outcomes. Also, in line with the present findings is Okoli and Youboere (2014) when the scholars explain that quality in education pervades every action that goes into making the process of educating possible. However, quality in education service delivery involves every elements of educational activities (a wide array of educational inputs and outputs) undertake in any educational system.

Another finding of the study is that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of academic staff in federal and state universities on various academic staff teaching skills in universities. This finding agrees with Alimba (2009) who enumerated various generic skills and competence that academic staff should possess for quality service delivery in education. Serious efforts towards achieving professional skills by the academic staff in universities especially in this era of COVID-19 is highly solicited by the writers.

Another pertinent finding of the study is that there is a significant difference between the mean scores of academic staff in federal and state universities on the indicators of quality in education service delivery in universities. The findings support Obanya (2002), Okoli and Youboere (2014) assertion that quality in education is only a combination of quality inputs, outputs and quality processes that can produce quality outcomes. Quality is a household name, therefore, should be embraced by all the stakeholders in education to get quality results.

IMPLICATIONS

There are some implications from this study:

1. Its educational implication lies in the fact that educational resources and policies must be kept under frequent assessment in order to provide the necessary support against lapses. Without such assessment, it will be difficult for authorities to determine whether the purpose for such innovation was achieved or not. Therefore, education that is not anchored on sound management practices and policies cannot have utility relevance to the individual and society. University management must be positioned to establish some form of education that is indeed relevant through improvement of innovations.
2. The current management structure of the university on which this study is hinged is currently subject to pressure to turnout graduates with global competitive abilities with stronger emphasis on the need for wealth generation and job creation among other objectives. This demand has become necessary especially because of government priority attention to address unemployment situation in Nigeria. In effect, this study is considered timely and useful in providing the much needed data that will assist universities in Imo State gauge the level of success of the current implementation of innovation and be better able to plan towards an implementation that will support quality teaching and learning.

CONCLUSION

Stakeholders in university education can achieve improved quality service delivery when academic staff of universities are adaptive, flexible and responsive to innovations in teaching skills.

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