

## **INFLUENCE OF POLITICS OF PROGRAMME ACCREDITATION AND MONITORING ON FUNDING OF THE UNIVERSITIES IN IMO STATE**

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### **Abstract**

*This work is on influence of politics programme accreditation and monitoring on funding of university educational programmes in Imo State. Two universities in the state: Imo State University and Federal University of Technology Owerri were studied. A population of 1439 was used and only 1400 questionnaires were returned. Four Likert Scale instrument (questionnaire) called ISIPPAMEFU (Instrument for the **Study of Influence of Politics of Programme Accreditation and Monitoring on Effective Funding of Universities**). Descriptive design was adopted for the study. Two Research Questions and two hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. Data collected was analyzed using Mean to answer the research questions and independent t-test statistic was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level of significance. The result of the analysis revealed that politics of universities programme accreditation and monitoring influences to a very high extent the funding of the universities in Imo State. Result of the hypotheses test also depicts that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of the Imo State University and Federal University of Technology Owerri staff on the extent to which politics of programme accreditation and monitoring influences funding of the universities. Based on the findings it is recommended that the NUC should treat all universities in the country fairly and equally in terms of programme accreditation so that no institution would be neglected especially those in Imo State.*

**Key words:** *Politics, Programme Implementation, Accreditation, Monitoring and Funding*

### **Introduction**

Politics emphasizes units of behaviour. They are those events and acts that are political in nature that guide the instrument in which they occur. Okunamiri (2009) emphasized that this definition of politics tend to satisfy three essential ingredients namely; the event of authority and control, the predominance of public interest, the element of institutionalized legitimacy and accountability in the way activities are performed. Programme accreditation and monitoring are ways of examining the state of educational institutions on how it ought to be; it is a quality assurance process. The politics of programme accreditation and monitoring presents those policies that revolve around assessment of the standard of

programmes run by different institutions in Nigeria whether universities, colleges of education, polytechnic whether private or public, against an established standard often referred as the minimum academic standard (benchmarks). Adequate funding of higher institutions is necessary for effective functioning and good performance. Programme accreditation and monitoring of universities is concerned with looking into the extent to which funds are made available to universities and how they are disbursed. Funds are needed for the provision of infrastructure and equipment for learning, payment of personnel, implementation of educational programmes and to support staff. It is always recognized as the engine room of an organization.

Politics of education refers to social and political contexts of education. According to Okunamiri (2009) its main objective is to identify and examine the various social and political factors, influences, issues and problems which affect education production process and to identify the possible strategies for harnessing or otherwise such controlling factors, influences and problems for the benefit of educational administration and planning in the society. Uchendu (2004) noted that the politics of education involves a complex inter-relationship among interest groups, politicians, bureaucracy and knowledge brokers in the broad field of education. However, the political functions of determination and allocation of values (material) in the society is carried out by the political system through the several social institutions and agencies in Nigeria in which the National Universities' Commission (NUC) as an agency is one of them with the aim of monitoring and accrediting the educational system to bring out the major objective so as to enhance the attainment of minimum academic standard in the institutions' academic programmes.

Funding of universities is one of the issues, politics of education seeks to handle. Okinamiri. (2007) noted that owing to political and other pressures, there are unprecedented rises in student's enrolment, the facilities required and the services demanded making it impossible for the budget not to possibly keep pace with the cost. A major focus of education planning and in fact policies is on availability of funds and the efficient utilization of the available funds which calls for monitoring and inspection, which NUC programme accreditation and monitoring aims to achieve. Having examined what politics of education entails, a brief examination of programme accreditation and monitoring in this paper is essential.

Programme accreditation and monitoring is the assessment of the programme of the universities against the pre-determined standard, which is often referred to as the minimum academic standard. This provides the bench marks against which the quality of programmes (courses), colleges/faculties of the universities are assessed and ranked (Fatunde 2010). Programme accreditation and monitoring of institutions can also be known in terms of the ability to effectively assessment of students' performance and continuous improvement in education. It examines the entire institution, its programme, the cultural context, the community of major stake holders to examine how the parts work together to meet the needs of the students (Uvah 2005). Hence for effective performance and improvement of programme accreditation and monitoring exercise to be recognized in the universities, it requires all available resources should be in place and since fund is the catalyst that propels other resources

it becomes important for it to be adequately provided and utilized for achievement of universities goals. What then is the purpose of accreditation?

### **Purpose of Accreditation**

The overriding rationale for accreditation of universities academic programmes is to assess educational quality which is defined and interpreted within the context of institutions/programmes statement of scope and purpose as compared with conditions that are believed to be necessary and desirable to produce educational quality. Accreditation also makes for institution's integrity that is to say, the determination that a programme is in fact what it claims it is. According to American Occupation Therapy Association (AOTA, 2014) accreditation has two fundamental purposes namely to assure the quality of the institution or programme and to assist in the improvement of the instruction or programme. In fulfilling its two purposes of quality assurance and instructional and programme improvement, accreditation provides services of value to several constituencies The AOTA has outlined the values of accreditation to the public which includes

- a. an assurance of external evaluation of the institution or programme, and a finding that there is conformity to general expectation in higher education or professional field;
- b. an identification of institution and programmes which have voluntarily undertaken explicit activities directed at improving the quality of the institution and its professional programmes and are carrying them out successfully;
- c. an improvement in the professional services available to the public, as accreditation programs modify their requirements to reflect changes in knowledge and practice generally accepted in the field; and
- d. a decreased need for intervention by public agencies in the operations of educational institutions, since their institutions through accreditation are providing privately for the maintenance and enhancement of educational quality.

In actualizing all these, accreditation in the Nigerian universities has these stated objectives. To

- a. ensure that at least the provisions of 'MAS' (Minimum Academic Standard) documents are attained, maintained and enhanced;
- b. assure employers and other members of the community that Nigeria graduates of all academic programmes have attained an acceptable level of competency in their area of specialization; and
- c. certify to the international community that the programmes offered in Nigerian universities are of high standards and their graduates are adequate for employment and for further studies, (NUC, 2009).

**Process and criteria for programme accreditation and monitoring** involves a periodic assessment of performance of universities involving their administrative offices, staff, facilities, students and others appropriate to the process through an internal mechanism. Okojie (2009) speaking on the process of accreditation of universities in Nigeria emphasized that when a programme is due for accreditation, the National Universities Commission (NUC) gives at least three months notice to the concerned university of an accreditation visit to the particular programme, discipline or sub-discipline to be accredited. Continuing, he explains

that on the receipt of the completed form, the NUC constitutes an *Ad-hoc* Accreditation panel which consists of a chairman and four other persons from the academic, professional association and regulatory boards or councils.

However, Okojie stated that panel membership is limited to full professors in a discipline who have a track record of objectivity, integrity and of not compromising standards. He also noted that university vice chancellors make nominations to complete selection from the NUC database of experts; professional bodies and registration to serve on the accreditation panels. The leader of each panel is elected from among members. He/she is usually the most senior professor with accreditation experience. With the panel in place, a coordination meeting is held to induct new members and refresh former ones regarding accreditation process mechanism. The exercise begins with presentation on the philosophical and procedural framework for accreditation and continues with sessions where the assessment instruments are discussed. Commenting more on this, Okojie (2008) emphasized that step by step accreditation are taken through each of the assessment instrument items (accreditation criteria). The meaning of each item, the minimum standard to be measured and the scoring procedure are explained in detail. Once panel members are well versed in using the instrument, simulation exercise are carried out. During such exercises, hypothetical case scenarios concerning what may be encountered during actual accreditation visits are presented for scoring. Panel members' scores are discussed and harmonized. The simulation exercise continues until the differential number on each item in the assessment is reduced to zero. Impetus behind the entire exercise is designed to enhance inter-rater reliability. At the end of the coordination meeting, the panel leaves for the accreditation sites. For cogent results in education accreditation and monitoring, finance is involved.

Finance in education refers to the income and expenditure of authorities of educational institutions. Adequate funding is necessary for the universities to function effectively. Programme accreditation looks into the extent to which funds are made available to universities and how they are disbursed. Amadi (2007) sees funds as one of the basic requirement for the achievement of goals stated for each level of education Universities as well as other institutions in the country have as their major sources of funding grants from the government. These grants fall under two categories namely *capital* and *recurrent grants*.

The *capital grants* are for projects based on approved expansion plan and permanent infrastructure while *recurrent grants* include regular facilities such as payment of salaries. Both state and federal governments allocate money to their various universities. The financing of higher education in the world has seen dramatic changes in both the 20<sup>th</sup> and in the first 21<sup>st</sup> century (Okunamiri 2009). These changes are in response to increase enrolment more than the government's capacity to maintain its proportional financial support. This again is in response to worldwide phenomenon of higher education cost in relation to available funds at the disposal of the operators of the sector, be they government or private individuals and corporate bodies (Adeniyi and Taiwo, 2011).

Accreditation of Nigerian universities by the National Universities Commission (NUC), presents funding of universities programmes as indispensable. Prior to the take-over of existing regional universities in 1975 by the Federal Government of Nigeria, the National Universities Commission (NUC) was established in the year 1962 as an advisory agency to ensure adequate funding of universities in Nigeria. It was reconstituted through Decree No.1 of 1974, as a statutory body for receiving block grants from the Federal Government and allocating them to federally controlled universities in accordance with such funding formula or parameters as may be laid down by the National Council of Ministers or Federal Executive Council, and performing other related functions. The block grants are separated into capital and recurrent grants. Comprehensively, the funding mandate of NUC is in three dimensions. The dimensions are

- a. enquiring into and advising the Federal Government on the funding needs, both recurrent and capital, of university education in Nigeria and in particular, to investigate and study the financial needs of universities in order to ensure adequate provision;
- b. receiving block grants from the Federal Government and allocating them to federal universities in accordance with such formula as may be laid down by the Federal Executive Council; and
- c. taking into account in advising the Federal and State Governments on university finances, such as grants that may be made available to universities by corporate bodies or institutions and institutions both within and outside Nigeria. (NUC, 2011).

The funding parameters instituted by the Federal Government and directed to NUC for implementation could be viewed as a policy or control measure to direct the affairs of these federally controlled universities in terms of financial issues. This funding formula is usually initiated by the NUC in consultation with the universities based on financial needs assessment of universities and later being forwarded to the Federal Government for approval. Okojie (2010) provided the current approved funding criteria used by NUC to disburse funds to universities to include

- a. capital grants on the basis of generation (year of establishment) of the university; sustainable development - education, business and management - architecture and building construction - agriculture and food security-30
- b. ratio of personnel costs to overheads- 60:40;
- c. library 10%, research costs 5%, capacity building 1% of the total recurrent-minimum;
- d. academic to non-academic funding 60:40;
- e. expenditure on central administration - 25% maximum; and
- f. internally generated revenue - 10%.

Fafunwa (1991) was of the opinion that finance causes the biggest headache for every Nigerian university administrator. Funds are needed for the salaries of academic and non-academic staff, to build and maintain infrastructures, conduct research and sponsor seminars and conferences. However, accreditation makes it possible for National Universities Commission to normally coordinate request for funds from federal universities, prune such requests and

make appropriate recommendation to what it regards as 'reasonable levels' to the federal government.

### **Statement of Problem**

Universities programme accreditation is a process of NUC granting departments and faculties in the universities the full power and privilege to offer certain programmes and to award degrees on such programmes. On the other hand, monitoring entails actual supervision of the universities running the accredited programmes by the NUC to ensure the benchmark for such programmes are followed and maintained. Most times both the accreditation and monitoring of these programmes have been greeted with serious politicking. This makes it difficult to accredit as and when due some programmes in some universities, either due to tribal sentiment, ethnocentrism, location of institution or others. Most times universities who have not met the NUC benchmarks for some programmes have their courses accredited due to the same reasons outlined above. Federal University of Technology, Owerri and Imo State University Owerri all in Imo state seems to have suffered a great deal based on this. It is, therefore, obvious that fund allocation by the government via her agencies like TETFUND is dependent on the accredited programmes in the universities. This inadvertently makes proper funding of some universities especially in Imo State to be lopsided leading to poor quality education in the universities.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The general purpose of the study is to ascertain the influence of politics of programme accreditation and monitoring on the effective funding of the universities in Imo State, Nigeria. Specifically the study will seek to

- a. find out the extent to which politics of programme accreditation influences effective funding of the universities in Imo State.
- b. to find out the extent to which politics of programme monitoring influences effective funding of the universities in Imo State.

### **Research Questions**

Two research questions are formulated to guide this study viz:

- a. To what extent does politics of programme accreditation influence effective funding of the universities in Imo State?
- b. To what extent does politics of programme monitoring influence effective funding of the universities in Imo State?

### **Hypotheses**

Two hypotheses are also generated to further serve as compass to the study

- a. There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of staff of Imo State University and the staff of Federal University of Technology Owerri (FUTO) in the extent to which politics of programme accreditation influences effective funding of the universities in Imo State.
- b. There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of staff of Imo State University and the staff of FUTO on the extent to which politics of Programme Monitoring influences effective funding of the universities in Imo State.

## Method

The study area is Imo State. Imo State has two universities namely Federal University of Technology and Imo State University. The two institutions have a staff strength of 1, 439 both academic and non-academic. The entire population is manageable hence there was no sampling. Questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. The instrument is a four point modified Likert Scale of Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE) and Very Low Extent (VLE). Out of the entire population only 1400 were returned and used for the study. Mean was used to answer the Research Questions while Independent t-test statistics was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 significant alpha level. 2.5. This means that any score not below 2.5 is taken as low extent while any point from 2.5 and above is taken as high and very high extent respectively.

## Data Analysis

**Research Question 1:** *To what extent does politics of programme accreditation influences effective funding of the universities in Imo State?*

### **Influence of Politics of Programme Accreditation on the Effective Funding of the Universities in Imo State**

S/N		VHE 4	HE 3	LE 2	VLE (1)	Total	$\bar{x}$
1	National Universities' Commission accrediting programmes in universities mainly situated in the North influence funding of universities in Imo State.	501 2004	350 700	346 692	303 303	1400 3700	2.64
2	National Universities' Commission accrediting programmes in the universities from the zone of president of FRN influence funding of universities in Imo State	570 2280	320 960	241 482	269 269	1400 3991	2.85
3	National Universities' Commission being composed of mainly people from the Northern side of Nigeria makes them to concentrate accreditation in the North which influence funding of universities in Imo State	600 2400	350 1050	231 462	219 219	1400 4131	2.95
4	Marginalization of the Eastern zone affects the programme accreditation of the universities in it which inadvertently influences negatively funding of the universities in the area.	700 2800	250 750	230 460	220 220	1400 4230	3.02
5	Power tussle between the North and South in Nigeria negates programmes accreditation and possible funding of the universities in the South especially Eastern part.	651 2604	350 1050	271 542	128 128	1400 4324	3.09
<b>Grand Mean = 2.91</b>							

Since the calculated mean is greater than the decision rule of 2.5, it means that the rate by which politics of programme accreditation influences funding of universities in Imo State is to a very high extent.

**Research Question 2:** *To what extent does politics of programme monitoring influences effective funding of the Universities in Imo State?*

**Influence of Politics of Programme Monitoring on the Effective Funding of the Universities in Imo State**

S/N		VHE 4	HE 3	LE 2	VLE (1)	Total	$\bar{x}$
6	Structures in the monitoring of accredited programmes in the Eastern Nigeria influences funding at such programmes especially in Imo State.	717 2868	501 1503	106 212	76 76	1400 4659	3.33
7	Fault finding system of monitoring of accredited programme in the universities in Eastern part of Nigeria affects the funding of such programmes which leads to poor education output.	379 1516	341 1023	209 418	471 471	1400 5428	3.88
8	Poor monitoring of the accredited programme in the university in the Imo State dwindles their funding to a great deal.	532 2128	400 1200	329 658	139 139	1400 4125	2.95
9	Bias report of monitoring bodies of NUC for the accredited programmes of the Eastern universities especially in Imo State affect the funding of such programmes.	487 1948	395 1185	278 556	240 240	1400 3929	2.81
10	Doctored reports of monitoring team of NUC for the accredited programmes of the universities in Imo State hinders effective funding of such programmes.	591 2364	420 1260	315 630	74 74	1400 4328	3.09
<b>Grand Mean = 3.21</b>							

Since the calculated mean of 3.21 is greater than the decision rule of 2.5, it is an indication that the extent at which politics of programme monitoring influences funding of universities in Imo State is to a very high extent.

**Analysis of Hypothesis One:** *There is no significant difference between the means ratings of staff of both Imo State University and Federal University of Technology Owerri on the extent to which politics of programme accreditation influences effective funding of the universities in Imo State.*

**Table One**

S/N	Subject	N	$\bar{x}$	t-cal	A	t-crit
1	Imo State University	5	2.7	0.069	0.05	2.306
2	Federal University of Technology Owerri	5	2.5			

Since the t-calculated is less than the t-critical at 0.05 alpha level we therefore accept the  $H_0$  which states that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of staff members of both Imo State University and Federal University of Technology Owerri on the extent to which politics of programme accreditation influences effective funding of the universities in Imo State, Nigeria.



**Hypothesis Two:** *There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of staff of both Imo State University and Federal University of Technology Owerri on the extent to which politics of programme monitoring influences effective funding of the universities in Imo State.*

**t. Table Two**

S/N	Subject	N	$\bar{x}$	t-cal	A	t-crit
1	Imo State University	5	12.4	0.12	0.05	2.306
2	Federal University of Technology Owerri	5	12.6			

Since the t-calculated is less than t-critical at 0.05 alpha level we therefore accept the  $H_0$  which states that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of staff of Imo State University and Federal university of Technology Owerri on the extent to which politics of universities accreditation programme monitoring the Nigeria University Commission influence the funding of the universities in Imo State, Nigeria.

### Discussion

This work has examined the influence of politics of universities programme accreditation and monitoring on the effective funding of the universities in Imo State Nigeria. Two research questions and two hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. Analysis of the **Research Question 1** indicates that the extent to which politics of programme accreditation by the National Universities' Commission influences funding in the universities in Imo State is very high. The analysis of **Hypothesis 1** also indicated that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of Imo State University and Federal University of Technology Owerri staff on the extent this influence occurs. The reason for this result may not be far from the cries of marginalization by the people at South East in general. This cry is over constant neglect and rot of infrastructural development in the areas which cut across every sector of the economy especially education. Despite some faculties reaching the benchmark and NUC score cards for accreditation, unnecessary delays in the accreditation of such faculties will definitely affect government funding of such programmes. In fact, until such programmes are accredited, the universities running such programmes via internally generated revenue which in most times are very meager puts students in such faculties at risk. This finding agrees with Uchendu (2004) who noted that the politics of education involve complex inter-relationship among interest groups/ politicians etc.

The analysis of **Research Question II** also indicates that the extent to which politics of universities programme monitoring by the National Universities' Commission influences funding of the universities in Imo State is very high as shown on **Table II** above. Also the analysis of **Hypothesis II** indicates that staff of Imo State University and Federal University Of Technology Owerri do not differ in their opinions on this result since there is an indication of no significant difference in their means ratings. The reason for this kind of result is not far-fetched. As earlier mentioned, states in the South-Eastern part of Nigeria have suffered a lot setbacks due to what they constantly tagged "marginalization". Roads are not maintained, infrastructure are abandoned to rot. In terms of appointments to federal positions and

recruitment in the federal ministries, agents, and government organizations have been relegated to the background. The education sector suffers worst of this neglect. For whatever may be the Federal Government reason for this kind of politics, universities funding and quality products have been sacrificed. It is obvious that in order not to attract funding, strict monitoring, doctored reports and censorship of reports of National Universities' Commission visitation panels to these universities may be associated with a lot of politics. Due to such ill reports submitted at the end of each visit, withholding of funds from the funding agents may be the lot of such programmes.

### Conclusion

The politics of programme accreditation and monitoring is bent on ensuring quality and attainment of minimum academic standard in universities. A number factors and situation presented in this work show that adequate funding of universities remain an indispensable factor in the attainment of the above goal.. Therefore the need for effective funding of programmes and policies of universities to achieve quality and minimum academic standard should be emphasized.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following are recommended. That

- a. National Universities' Commission (NUC) should endeavour to have a level playing ground to treat all universities in the country fairly and equally in terms of programme accreditation especially those in Imo State;
- b. NUC should always use men and women of integrity in monitoring the accredited programmes of the universities to avoid adulterating the report of the monitoring panel. Such reports should not be censored before implementations irrespective of where such institutions are situated;
- c. NUC should always make use of universities bench mark and minimum academic standard which emphasize on quality in their programmes accreditations and monitoring; and
- d. quality and equal fund should be injected into university programmes accredited by NUC across board in the whole country for the purpose of equity and fair play.

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