

Appraisal of Quality Assurance Measures in Tertiary Distance Education Programmes in South East Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study appraised the quality assurance measures in Distance Education (DE) programmes of Tertiary Distance Education Institutions in South- East, Nigeria. The study was guided by six research questions and three null hypotheses. A descriptive survey design was adopted for the study, while the population of the study was 9578 made up of 9081 students and 497 facilitators in the tertiary institutions currently running distance education programmes in South East Nigeria. The sample size of 1206 respondents was used (this comprised 908 students and 298 which is 60% of the facilitators). The simple random sampling technique by balloting was used to select the facilitators, while the multi stage sampling procedure was used for the students. Two sets of instrument titled 'Quality Assurance in Tertiary Distance Education Questionnaire (QATDE) was used to obtain data for the study. The instrument was face validated by three experts. The reliability index of 0.97 was obtained using Cronbach Alpha method. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation, while the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using analysis of variance (ANOVA). Findings revealed that the extent to which quality is measured through DE admission criteria, school examination and staff development was high. The findings further showed that the extent quality is measured through media facilities and students' support services was low, but high for accreditation of academic programme. With regard to the null hypotheses, findings indicated that significance difference was not found in the mean ratings of learners and facilitators on the extent quality is measured through students support services of tertiary distance education programme. Significant difference was however found in terms of admission of students, and media facilities in tertiary distance education programme in South East Nigeria. Based on the findings, some recommendations were made that institutions should admit qualify candidates, infrastructure should be adequately provided by the government to ensure hitch-free conduct of examination among others.