



# Institutional Activities and Accreditation of Higher Education Academic Programmes in the Era of Economic Recession in Cross River State, Nigeria

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## Abstract

This study investigated Institutional Activities and Accreditation of Higher Education Academic Programmes in the Era of Economy Recession in Cross River State. To facilitate this, three research questions and correspondents hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. Literature review of the institutes were based on convocation, annual award ceremony and alumni support. The design adopted for the study was correlation design, and the population comprises of 82 Heads of Department, 12 Deans of Faculties, and 1 Coordinator of programmes, 2 Directors. Population census was employed to select the sample size of 132 respondents. The instrument used for the study was a modified four point Likert scale questionnaire titled (Institutional Activities and Accreditation of Higher Education Academic Programmes Questionnaires "IAAHEAPQ") was used to elicit information. Data were analyzed using Standard Deviation to analyzed data, and was tested at 0.05 level of significant and conclusion was made according to the findings that institutional activities such as: Donations from convocation ceremony, Support from Alumni, and Donations from Annual award relate significantly with the accreditation of academic programmes in the era of economic recession in universities in Cross River State.

**Keywords:** Institutional activities, Accreditation, Higher education, Academic programmes, Economic recession.

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## INTRODUCTION

Academic programmes are situated in between the university management and service consumers; they are the directing force use in stratifying students in various universities in Nigeria. No institution can function effectively without streamlining the academic structure for the institution to follow in other achieve its' goals. Institution of higher learning is solely dependent on academic excellence but the probability of applauding success is on credibility of these programmes in various universities. The challenges of accreditation of various programmes in the universities especially in the era of recession is alarming hence, institutions managers' needs to bring out various strategies and modules in arresting the persistent and alarming challenges in the area of poor funding that leads to non-availability of facilities like; equipment, lecture halls, competent teaching personnel, availability of resource room, laboratories to mention but few. This has in other way round hinders the smooth accreditation of academic programmes in various universities in Cross River State. Accreditation of academic programmes in the universities has to do with the universities management acceptable standard and recommended process, principles and practices in running programmes.

In Nigeria, accreditation programmes for higher education is handled by National University Commission (NUC) to ensure that all universities are fully participated in the accreditation exercise for procurement of standard maintenance of quality services. According to Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA, 2012), postulates that many of the universities have faded away from their previous glory and as such the nature of graduates they produce, do not match with others graduates from other institution when placed in competitive market. This may be as a result of inadequate funding to compete favourably with others universities in the world. Accreditation of academic programmes in various institution were meant to help university's' management plan of action, this is because it gives management bearings and choice of selection of discipline by students. The accreditation is an important exercise that helps in directing students' programmes and instilled professional skills. This could be achieved through quality evaluation in Higher education to ensure effectiveness of an accreditation programme in bridging the gap between quality skills development and quality service delivery. This is in congruent with the federal government's objective with the introduction of single treasuring account aimed ensuring that funds is appropriately spent to carter for the purpose. Many universities in Nigeria are faced with the challenges of funding. Probably, this may be why Daily Trust Paper (2016) lamented on the accreditation crisis faced by Nigerian universities by listing the names of Nigerian Universities and courses that has not been accredited accumulating up to 150 in 37 universities in Nigeria.

Universities academic programmes may said to be functional, if required standards of management running of academic programmes in various universities are being met. It is an avenue aimed at structuring procedures and practices to attain quality process in other to ensure smooth running of higher educational institutions. Many universities also could not maintain the service quality, and as such faces declined in the students' enrolment (NUC, 2009). During accreditation period, facilities are assessed and inspected, programmes are keenly observed and evaluated by accreditation team to ascertain if the existed procedures and standards are met and then accreditation status is issued and granted by the agency. In recent past, Government of Federal Republic of Nigeria (2012) initiated (TET Funds) in assisting higher institutions in ensuring that quality services are provided to suit with the demand for manpower in the labour market. This measure is to ensure quality service delivery and development of skilled graduates.

It is also to help various universities during accreditation exercise, yet the accreditation challenges in the Nigerian universities still persist. The management still finds it difficult to make adequate provision for needed facilities and this may lead to why Universities finds it difficult to meets the basic requirement on accreditation exercise (NUC, 2009)especially, during the economic recession round the globe.

### **Statement of the Problems**

In recent past, accreditation of academic programmes has become a major challenge in universities system. As pointed out by the Daily Trust (2016) about 150 programmes in 37 universities have not been accredited. This may be connected with the economic recession in the country round the world, and as a matter of fact causing spontaneous increase in the price of goods and services, and affecting national budgets as well as causing a reduction in budget. This specifically affects accreditation of universities, hinders smooth running of higher education by thwarting adequate provision of adequate funds and facilities both in teaching/learning aspects and causes a declined in students' enrolment in various universities.

Despite the effort by the Federal Government in instituting TET-Fund to assist higher educational institutions in ensuring provisions of quality service delivery, the challenges of accreditation still persist. It is against these backdrop, the researcher intent to examining some of the avenues in which institution and their various managers could use in order to conquer accreditation challenges such as; Convocation activity, Alumni meeting, and annual award.

### **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were used to guide the study:

- There is no significant relationship between free donations from Convocation ceremony and accreditation of higher education academic programme in the era of economic recession.
- Support from Alumni does not significantly relate with accreditation of higher education academic programme in the era of economic recession.
- Donations at annual award Ceremony does not significantly relate with accreditation of higher education academic programme in the era of economic recession.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Institutional activities are those academic and non-academic programmes organize by an institutions as to create and demonstrates quality evidence of excellence service delivery, and sometimes an avenue use in sourcing for funds from corporate organisation, companies, Government and well-meaning individual. During these time, it is expected that management of the institutions develop and keep relationship with individual and host communities in order to attend to some issues affecting the institutions in terms of facilities and other related issues regarding co-existent of academic programmes which has become a major challenge according to Daily Trust (2016) who eluded on the Accreditation crisis in universities. According to the paper, pointed out the failure of some Nigerian universities academic programmes in receiving accreditation status, has gotten to riot equilibrium scale with those with accreditation status. The

report further buttress that more than 37 universities are currently running 150 unaccredited academic programmes or courses.

Convocation ceremony have to do with activities organize by the institutions for the purpose of presenting her skillful and develop manpower products to the labour market. During these time, the university management addresses challenges and other related issues affecting the institutions in terms of contributions of the universities to the nations as it was said by Chief Obasanjo during in his lecture at the 41st Convocation Ceremony of the University of Nigeria, University of Nsuka (2017) stated that education as the major agency for both personal and national socio- economic development. He opined that investing in human capital development is critical to the long term productivity and growth at both micro and macro levels. He asserted that the state of education in Nigeria continues to dominate our national discourse. Education plays pivotal role as well funded in terms of provision of adequate facilities. According to Thomas (2011) Different institutions of learning, like universities use convocation ceremony to send forth graduates from their respective institutions and also to source for funds through free will gifts from well-meaning personalities .Ahmed(2015)in a study on public and private higher education financing in Nigeria, stress at the financial status of the universities to examined whether there is adequate or inadequate funds to Nigerian universities using secondary data from 2019-2011 session, inferential and descriptive statistics. According to the researcher, the study revealed that higher institution education not adequately funded. This implies that accreditation of academic programmes in Nigerian universities is thwarted because ill-funded institutions lack facilities, experts and action plan guiding the various programmes.

Support from Alumni is a group of people who have graduated from school or university coming together to form a formidable body or a strong union with the aim of helping an institution to grow. Wikipedia.org/wiki/Alumni-association(2017).This group of people or association often organize events, call for newsletters, magazines and raise funds that helps the institutions to manage her affairs in achieving their respective purpose. They are often organized in the universities, departments and Faculties levels.

Annual award Ceremony refers to programmes often organize by the institutions to showcase their outstanding achievement with staff and students, alumni, friends, industry partners and host communities. It has to do with institution showcasing of her proud heritage and celebration of anniversary. In centenary celebration, performance, displays and installations, art and history are often displayed at the event and the contributions of different persons and recognitions of personalities (University of Western Australia, 2013). During this time, issues affecting smooth running of the institutions effectiveness such as factors hindering accreditation of academic pgrammes are discussed

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study on Institutional Activities and Accreditation of Academic Programmes in Higher Education was conducted in Cross River State Nigeria. Geographically, Cross River States in among the 6<sup>th</sup> state in south-south geo-political zone. Specifically, there are two universities in Cross River States namely; University of Calabar, Calabar which is owned by Federal Government and Cross River University of Technology owned by State. Population census was employed to select the sample size of 132 respondents' which comprises of head of departments, deans of faculties, coordinator of programmes and directors of institutes made up the population of the study of which 96 from university of Calabar (UNICAL) and 36 from Cross River

University of Technology, (CRUTECH). Descriptive research design was adopted. Data was collected using a questionnaire titled “Institutional Activities and Accreditation of Higher Education Academic Programmes Questionnaires (IAAHEAPQ)” was used for data collection. The instrument had two parts A and B part. Part A comprised of demographic variables such as; name of institution and type of programme, while part B contained 24 items 4 of each measuring the three independent variables and dependent variable. Expert in measurement and Evaluation validated the instrument, while Cronbach alpha reliability test was used to carry out trial testing, the result ranged from 0.71-0.89 coefficient which was taken to be reliable. Collection of data was done by the researchers. The total of 120 questionnaires were retrieved representing 91%. Data collected were analyzed using Standard Deviation.

Table 1: Description Statistics of the Total Respondents Used for the study, minimum scores, maximum scores, mean and standard deviation

Variables	N	Min	Max	Mean	Standard Deviation
Convocation Activities	120	5.00	24.00	17.8500	3.41930
Alumni Support	120	8.00	24.00	17.5000	3.78631
Annual Award Ceremony	120	10.00	24.00	17.6167	2.86733
Accreditations of Academic Programmes.	120	9.00	24.00	18.9917	3.12619

## RESULTS

The result of the three hypotheses tested in this study is presented below.

### Hypothesis 1

There is no significant relationship between free donations from Convocation Ceremony and accreditation of higher education academic programme in the era of economic recession.

Table 2: Summary of Mean difference on the differences between Free Donations from Convocation Ceremony and Accreditation of Higher Education Academic Programme in the Era of Economic Recession

Variable	N	X	SD	r	P-value
Convocation Ceremony	120	17.8500	3.41930	.242	.008
Accreditation of Academic Programmes	120	18.9917	3.12619		

\*P< .05. df =118

The result of the table above indicates that the calculated r-value of .242 representing the observed relationship between free donation from convocation ceremony and accreditation of academic programmes in universities in Cross River State was significant at p-value of .008 at .05 level of significance with 118 degree of freedom. With this outcome, the null hypothesis was rejected. Thus, there is a significant influence on free donation from Convocation Ceremony and Accreditation of Academic Programmes in universities in Cross River State.

## Hypothesis 2

Support from Alumni support does not significantly differ with accreditation of higher education academic programme in the era of economic recession.

Table 3: Summary of Data of Means difference on the differences between Support from Alumni Support and Accreditation of Higher Education Academic Programme in the Era of Economic Recession

Variables	N	X	SD	r	P-value
Alumni support	120	17.5000	3.78631	.369	.000
Accreditation of Academic Programmes	120	18.9917	3.12619		

\*P<. 05, df = 118.

The result of the table above indicates that the calculated r-value of .369 representing the observed relationship between supports from Alumni and accreditation of academic programmes in universities in Cross River State was significant at p-value of .000at .05 level of significance with 118 degree of freedom. With this outcome, the null hypothesis was rejected. Thus, there is a significant influence on support from Alumni and Accreditation of Academic Programmes in universities in Cross River State.

## Hypothesis 3

Donations at annual award ceremony does not significantly differ with accreditation of higher education academic programme in the era of economic recession.

Table 4: Summary of data and Means differences on the differences between Donations from annual award Ceremony and accreditation of higher education academic programme in the era of economic recession

Variables	N	X	SD	r	P-value
Annual Award Ceremony	120	17.6167	2.86733	.456	.000
Accreditation of Academic Programme	120	18.9917	3.12619		

\*P<. 05, df = 118.

The result of the table above indicates that the calculated r-value of .456 representing the observed relationship between Donations from annual award ceremony and accreditation of academic programmes in universities in Cross River State was significant at p-value of .000 at .05 level of significance with 118 degree of freedom. With this outcome, the null hypothesis was rejected. Thus, there is a significant influence on donations from centenary ceremony and accreditation of academic programmes in universities in Cross River State.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The outcome of hypothesis one showed that, there is a significant influence on free donation from Convocation Ceremony and Accreditation of Academic Programmes in universities in Cross River State. This facilitates the rejection of null opinion in favour of alternate hypothesis.

The finding from hypothesis one showed that free donation made from convocation significantly influence accreditation of academic programmes in an era of economic recession in universities in Cross River State. This indicated that universities who gives cognizant to schools activities such as convocation ceremony, stand a chance of receiving more supports that will aids accreditation of various academic programmes in various universities around the globe if manage properly. In a competitive world of today, institutions of higher learning needs to streamlines structures in harmonizing real live situation to different schools programmes, embed practical solving paradigm in various programmes , make provision for adequate facilities, make provision for skills/ experts in the respective fields. These parameters can only be conquer only by funds either from federal government or with funds generated from schools activities like convocation ceremony.

The findings are supported by the study of Ahmed (2015) public and private higher education financing in Nigeria, when the researcher stress at the financial status of the universities can affect the success of the academic programmes. The study revealed that higher institution education was found not adequate funded. This leads to non-competitiveness of Nigerian universities in the international level. This is because the funding system of universities in Nigeria is poor, hence leads to poor outlook, and non-accreditation of Academic progrmmes. Funding of universities in Nigeria will help increase the number of academic programmes in various universities and also carter for illiteracy.

The study also revealed that support from Alumni significantly influence accreditation of academic programmes in the era of economic recession in Cross River State. This is in agreement with Wikipedia (2017) and business dictionary (2017), who sees alumni as a group of people who have graduated from school or university coming together to form a formidable body or a strong union with the aim of helping an institution to grow. This will help universities in achieving their predetermined objectives and also meet the basic requirement of accreditation team.

The result of the last findings revealed that donations from annual award ceremony significantly influence the accreditation of academic programmes in the era of economic recession in Cross River State. This implies that universities with the supports from donations during annual award programs, universities stand a chance of yielding a better outcome during accreditation exercise. The inability for academic programmes not to be accredited by Nigerian Universities Commission is also dependent on the various universities to stand a test of universities bench mark in terms of facilities, student performance and experts' competency. This findings is in line with the reports from Daily Trust (2016)who eluded on the Accreditation crisis in universities. According to the paper, lamented on the failure of some Nigerian universities academic programmes in receiving accreditation status, has gotten to riot equilibrium scale with those with accreditation status. The report further buttress that more than 37 universities are currently running 150 unaccredited academic programmes or courses. This may be as a result of inadequate facilities and non-availability of funds and needed man-power resources. The implication of this study is that institutional activities may be of important when management

attach keen interest on convocation ceremony, support from alumni and annual award ceremony, these will go a long way in helping accreditation of academic programmes.

## CONCLUSION

Drawing from the findings of the study, it was reached to the conclusion that institutional activities such as: Donations from Convocation Ceremony, Support from Alumni support, and Donations from Centenary ceremony relate significantly with the accreditation of academic programmes in the era of economic recession in universities in Cross River State.

## Recommendations

- University management should give adequate attention to institutional activities. The parameters will assist greatly in helping institutions to achieving institutional objectives.
- Accreditation of academic programmes has become more challenging in the competitive economic recession, hence institutional managers should endeavor to beam their searching light towards building their relationship with well-wishers and host community, as these will fastened the rate of growth and development in institutional needs and during accreditation of Programmes.
- Convocation ceremony, Alumni and Centenary Ceremony should be considered as medium through which academic programmes objectives can be actualize. This is because Fund realize from these activities may also help the universities management in solving such alarming challenges without the intervention from government.

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