

An Analysis of Problems Encountered by Post-graduate Students in Nigerian Universities

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ABSTRACT This study analyzed the problems encountered by postgraduate students that hindered their studies in Nigerian universities. This was necessitated by the observation that most postgraduate students in Nigeria tend to graduate long after the stipulated time period for their programmes, indicating an apparent disparity between “what is” and “what ought to be” in running postgraduate programmes in Nigeria. It was hypothesized that the problems encountered delayed the timely completion of studies. Literature was reviewed on the Production Theory in Education which rests on the “Input-process-output” model as the theoretical framework for the study, as well as the needs assessment of higher education. The data collection instrument, designated Postgraduate Students Problems Questionnaire (PGSPQ) was developed by the investigator and validated by a jury of experts. The universities were stratified along ownership. The research design was ex-post-facto, no variable was manipulated. The subjects were 438 postgraduate students studying in sixteen Federal-owned and nine State-owned universities in Nigeria. One research question was answered and one null hypothesis tested in the study at the 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that the system is plagued with numerous complex and deep-rooted problems ranging from systems/procedural problems to socio-politico problems and personal/psychological problems, and that these problems actually hindered their studies and contributed to late graduation. Recommendations were made with the intent to attract greater attention from the producers of education in Nigeria if the maximum potentials of scholars at this level must be effectively tapped for greater productivity, and thus, national development.

INTRODUCTION

By the mid-70s, the social demand for education at all levels in Nigeria has become so high that educational expansion at all levels of education became one of government’s priorities. The 1979 Nigerian Constitution included Education in the Concurrent legislative List thus making it possible for State Governments to establish their own universities. This led to the establishment of at least one university in each State of the Federation such that by the new millennium, there were over eighty universities in Nigeria with over 15,000 postgraduate students on enrolment.

The Federal Government controls all the universities through the National Universities Commission (NUC), with a major function of coordinating university administrative and academic programmes and policies to ensure uniformity of standards. The NUC is also responsible for financial allocation to all Federal-owned universities from Federal Government sources, while the State-owned universities are solely financed by their own State Governments.

The growth trend of universities in Nigeria which is expansive rather than developmental in

nature, has resulted in many administrative and academic problems for both government and students. The issue is that apart from the cost of land, buildings and staffing, each university however small, needs its own working materials. Each needs its own machinery and equipment for science laboratories, language studies and technical workshops. Each needs well-equipped libraries, efficient communication and transportation facilities, and qualified and experienced manpower. Each needs its own academic environment that facilitates teaching and learning which should include comfortable accommodation for students and staff, good water supply and regular electricity supply. Thus, the implication of rapid proliferation of universities is the multiplicity in the provision of infrastructures, physical facilities, human resources and quantity of funds required. These consume fat chunks of the nation’s meager and scarce financial resources. The truth is that Nigeria cannot provide these in the magnitudes that they have arisen. Studies and observations of researchers, educators and economists support this truth. (Aghenta 1990; Duze 2005; Ojaide 2005; Okoli 1996; Onilude 1989; Udofot 2002 and Ukoli 1995).

In the universities, the lecturers are the research supervisors/examiners, research fellows, and deans/directors of academic planning and programmes, and besides teaching, some also carry out administrative functions. It is disquieting to observe that in Nigerian higher institutions there still remains an acute shortage of teaching staff. Furthermore, intakes in Nigerian universities are not commensurate with the number of lecturers employed thus further compounding the problem. The unprecedented increase in postgraduate enrolment has probably reduced the already inadequate resources available for post-graduate studies in Nigerian universities. The consequence is that the available human and physical resources in Nigerian universities become increasingly insufficient to meet the educational needs of the students. (Arubayi 1982; Duzé 2006; Ojaide 2005; Ojo 1983; Okoli 1996; Onilude 1989 and Ukoli 1995).

Furthermore, no specific aims and objectives for postgraduate programmes in Nigeria have been defined. Rather, the aims of Higher Education were all lumped together in one piece. The implication is far-reaching. The lack of defined goals for a defined cadre in higher education may likely contribute to the problems encountered in postgraduate studies in Nigeria. It would also be recalled that the Ashby Report (1960) examined the possibilities of postgraduate studies, and recommended that there should be postgraduate studies scholarships for both Nigeria and Oversea graduates. It also recommended that the planners and financiers of university education in Nigeria should provide opportunities for research in both the Sciences and the Humanities.

This has not been evidenced in postgraduate education. It seems that postgraduate studies neither received appropriate attention nor attracted appreciable interest from both the public and the government right from the onset.

It has also been observed that incessant close down of universities have become the order of the day in Nigerian universities due to students' rustications in violent protests for better services on one hand, and, strike actions by the Academic/Non-Academic Staff Unions of Universities on the other hand. While these Unions fought for better teaching/learning facilities and environment, the Government seemed not to be bothered. The Government took its time in reaching and breaching agreements with these Unions at the expense of "study-time." It appears that this country does not place any value on time, which

the industrialized economies have tagged "money". Yet, money constitutes a major resource constraint on the nation's economy.

Time, however, has been identified as a major input factor in any organized system, with Education consuming a great deal of it. In other words, time instead of money has been projected as a measure of a system's efficiency. This is most evident in the educational system. Omoregie (1981) stated that the school system's internal efficiency is often determined through a flow audit of the students. This means that each year a student spends in school represents a student-year investment of time and money in the school system. He emphasized therefore, the validity in using the student-year approach in measuring efficiency of academic plan implementation in the school system. He claimed that this approach enables the magnitude of educational wastage to be expressed as well as to put in proper perspective the contribution which student drop-out is making to the total educational wastage. Thus the speed at which the students pass through an educational system becomes an index for measuring its efficiency. Also, Nwankwo (1981) stated that the relationship between the actual student-year investment and the optimum student-year investment for the output of the educational system is expressed as an input-output ratio, determining its efficiency. Meier (1970) and Nwankwo (1981) stressed the limiting factor of time on the relevance of any course in education to society. Thus, for universities in Nigeria where it could take up to ten years or more in some cases to graduate a doctoral student, the implications are far-reaching. It is a major task of this study to examine this issue empirically.

It is commonly alleged that if one wishes to do postgraduate studies without tears, one should get out of the country to do so. Many affluent parents have preferably sent their children abroad for postgraduate studies, where every facility for study is provided and available for use. Nigerians who are opportune to study abroad at the graduate level usually graduate within the minimum stipulated period. Some people have sworn not to study at the postgraduate level in Nigeria. They claim that the system is bedeviled with all sorts of problems, ranging from socio-political problems (problems outside the institution) through personal/psychological problems (problems within the person) to system/procedural problems (problems within the institution).

In Nigeria, it is common to find postgraduate students who have abandoned the programme alleging frustration and victimization among other reasons. It has also been observed that despite efforts made by those still in the programme, most of them end up making a Ph.D. in a minimum average of seven to eight years, as against the stipulated minimum of two to three years in Nigerian universities. Observation revealed that people are yet to come across that postgraduate student, especially a doctoral one in a Nigerian university, who is not grumbling or complaining about one thing or the other in the system. It therefore seems necessary to investigate the constraints to postgraduate studies in Nigerian universities.

Statistics for Enrolment and Output of postgraduate students in Nigerian universities between 1985 and 1989 (NUC 1994) revealed a staggering disparity between the two. For instance, the data revealed that the 1985/86 academic session recorded a total enrolment of 10,021 postgraduate students, whereas output was only 4,834 students for the 1987/88 session when the students were expected to graduate. This represented an output of 48.24%. In the same vein, the postgraduate output for the 1986/87 intakes was only 42.96% and declined in 1989/90 by about 8% with no session hitting an output of 50%. More revealing was the observable disparity in postgraduate output by Discipline. There was a gradual decline in output, with the lowest record of 38.06% in the 1986/87 academic session. No Discipline made up to 50% output.

This trend has continued in recent times and even appears to be worsening.

The Production Theory portrays a technical relationship between the inputs and the outputs of a production line. The Production Theory in Education, which rests on the "input-process-output" model, forms the theoretical framework for this study. The production function defines a boundary in the input-output space, specifying the maximum physical output that can be obtained from every possible combination of physical inputs, given the existing level of technical knowledge (Blaug 1970). This means that the input/output graph of a given process produces a normal growth curve. The theory highlights two major points. The first is that quality of output is a direct function of quality of inputs. The second is that there is a maximum output that can be obtained from every possible combination of inputs. This implies that it is possible to have

points of diminishing returns, and also points of negative returns. These obviously are "unwanted" developments in any system. This is why every production system must strive to be efficient. Levin (1971) identified two types of efficiency – allocative and technical. According to him, allocative efficiency requires the production unit to choose a combination of inputs in such a way that the marginal product per unit cost of input is the same for all inputs, while technical efficiency requires the organizing of available resources (inputs) in such a way that the maximum feasible output is produced by the enterprise. It is the technical efficiency that is applicable to educational systems since it is difficult to define inputs and outputs in education in any real measurable terms as it is done in profit-oriented ventures. However, education, like other industries, exists to achieve stated objectives, and in performing its functions, it also makes use of resources which include human and physical resources, thus being also a production process. It demands that efficiency in production should be achieved too.

Although these inadequacies, criticisms, and observations seem well meaning, it is not known the extent to which they constitute stumbling-blocks to postgraduate studies in Nigeria. It is against this background that this study was formulated to investigate problems encountered by postgraduate students in Nigerian universities. Specifically this study should bring enlightenment and challenges to policy-makers, university lecturers/supervisors, and directors of Graduate Studies in Nigerian universities. It shall be an indispensable material to all those genuinely interested in quality and functional education at this level in Nigeria, and elsewhere. To guide the investigation, two questions were raised from which one null hypothesis was formulated for testing:

1. What problems of university education can be identified as posing hindrances to postgraduate studies in Nigerian universities?
2. Is there any significant relationship between problems encountered by postgraduate students and the time it takes to complete postgraduate studies in Nigerian universities?

Hypothesis

Ho: There is no significant relationship between problems encountered by postgraduate students and the time it takes to complete postgraduate programmes in Nigerian universities.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design is ex-post-facto. It looked at the facts as they had already occurred and there was no manipulation of variables. The population was all 2,185 postgraduate students studying for the Masters and Doctorate degrees on full-time or regular part-time (not Sandwich) programmes in Nigerian universities during the 1995/96 to 2000/2001 academic period. The study sample for the study comprised 1,752 postgraduate students representing 80.18% of the target population. This was made up of 1,251 and 501 postgraduate students studying in sixteen Federal-owned and nine State-owned universities respectively.

The universities were stratified along ownership. To make up for the differing numerical strengths of subjects involved, a stratified random sample comprising 25% of each group was selected as sample size. This numbered a total of 438, with 313 from Federal and 125 from State universities, comprising 261 Masters and 177 Doctoral students. Data were generated through an instrument designated Postgraduate Students Problems Questionnaire (PGSPQ) developed by the investigator after a careful review of related literature. It has three sections - A, B, and C. Section A elicited demographic information, Section B obtained Ranked Order of problems, and Section C elicited information based on the Likert-type Scale. The Likert-type Scale measured the students' perception of problems encountered at Postgraduate Studies in Nigerian universities. Section C was categorized into Sub-sections I to X which elicited information on problem areas related to Academics, Supervisors, Finance, Accommodation, Personality, Family Background, External Examiners, Lack of Equipment, University Administration and Data Collection respectively.

The Face and Content Validities were established by careful scrutiny and modifications of the instrument by experts in this field, thus ensuring that the questions were relevant, clear, and unambiguous, and adequately covered the prescribed domains for the variables under study. The reliability of the instrument was determined through a pre-test carried out on 40 subjects other than the subjects of the study. The Split-half reliability test was used to compute the correlation coefficient of 0.88 for the instrument duly adjusted by the Spearman-Brown Formula ($r = 2r/1+r$).

In scoring, 10 points were assigned to Rank 1, being the problem area with the highest rating as most critical by the respondents, and 1 point to Rank 10, being the problem area rated lowest as least critical in hindering Postgraduate Studies. For the 4-point Likert Scale used, 4 points were assigned to Strongly Agree (SA), 3 to Agree (A), 2 to Disagree (D), and 1 point to Strongly Disagree (SD) for positively worded items. The reverse was the case for negatively worded items. Scores of 50% and above or mean scores of 2.5 and above were accepted as being positively disposed to the case investigated. The controversial "Undecided (U)" response of the Likert Scale was not used because the investigator considered this study a critical issue and therefore required every respondent to make a "decided" response.

The instrument was administered both in person and through third parties to the postgraduate students in the sampled Nigerian universities. It was most convenient and effective to wait and collect the completed copies from the respondents the same day. Retrieval was 100%.

The statistical methods employed for data analysis were the mean, the mode, the Test of Proportion, the Rank Correlation Coefficient, the Pearson's r and the t -test. Significance was established at the 0.05 level throughout. The data collected was then analyzed according to how they related to the research question and the hypothesis.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Research Question

What problems of university education in Nigeria can be identified as posing hindrances to postgraduate studies in Nigerian universities?

To answer this question, the rankings of respondents to Section B and their responses to Section C of the research instrument were scored and analyzed, and the results presented in tables 1 and 2 respectively.

Table 1 revealed that Academic Problems was rated as the most critical problem area and Personality Problems as least critical, with mean scores of 8.08 and 2.58 respectively. Others fell between these two, with Problems Related to Lack of Equipment ranked as second most critical.

In the same vein, table 2 revealed that Problems Related to Lack of Equipment emerged as most critical while Personality Problems was least

Table 1: Frequency distribution of responses and corresponding scores to Section B of PGSPQ by postgraduate students in Nigerian universities

Ranks	Problem areas																			
	Academic		Supervisor		Accommodation		Financial		Personality		Family background		External examiner		Lack of equipment		University Admin		Data Collection	
	f	x	f	x	f	x	f	x	f	x	f	x	f	x	f	x	f	x	f	x
1	128	1280	106	1060	85	850	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	84	840	63	630	45	450	
2	85	765	84	756	105	945	79	711	-	-	20	180	-	-	123	1107	82	738	48	432
3	68	544	61	488	39	312	44	352	-	-	22	176	19	152	64	512	70	560	37	296
4	42	294	40	280	43	301	45	315	-	-	-	-	21	147	62	434	59	413	87	609
5	81	486	21	126	60	360	19	114	40	240	38	228	20	120	21	126	22	132	60	360
6	34	170	41	205	22	110	8	40	21	105	43	215	18	90	42	210	38	190	77	385
7	-	-	22	88	44	176	9	36	41	164	82	328	66	264	-	-	25	100	72	288
8	-	-	40	120	40	120	110	330	78	234	61	183	111	333	22	66	56	168	12	36
9	-	-	23	46	-	-	60	120	128	256	84	168	105	210	20	40	23	46	-	-
10	-	-	-	-	-	-	64	64	130	130	88	88	78	78	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	438	3539	438	3169	438	3174	438	2082	438	1129	438	1566	438	1394	438	3335	438	2977	438	2856
Mean	8.08		7.24		7.25		4.75		2.58		3.58		3.18		7.61		6.80		6.52	

Table 2: Frequency distribution of the responses and corresponding scores to section C of instrument (PGSPQ) by Postgraduate Students in Nigerian Universities

Items/ sub-sections		SA		A		D		SD		Total scores	Mean
		f	x	f	x	f	x	f	x		
I	1	-	-	100	200	206	618	132	528	1346	3.25
	2	260	1040	160	480	18	36	-	-	1556	
	3	258	1032	180	540	-	-	-	-	1572	
	4	238	952	204	612	-	-	-	-	1564	
	5	366	1464	72	216	-	-	-	-	1680	
	6	-	-	74	148	289	867	75	300	1315	
	7	37	148	284	852	117	234	-	-	1234	
	8	52	208	256	768	130	260	-	-	1236	
	9	202	808	105	315	110	220	21	21	1364	
	10	208	832	210	630	20	40	-	-	1502	
	11	104	416	204	612	130	260	-	-	1288	
	12	77	308	181	543	180	360	-	-	1211	
	13	284	1136	154	462	-	-	-	-	1598	
	14	333	1332	105	513	-	-	-	-	1647	
	15	-	-	78	156	360	1080	-	-	1236	
	16	158	632	258	774	22	22	-	-	1428	
	17	131	524	229	687	78	156	-	-	1367	
	18	182	728	209	627	47	94	-	-	1449	
	Total									25593	1422 2.96
II	19	152	608	156	468	130	260	-	-	1336	
	20	208	832	131	393	77	154	22	22	1379	
	21	28	112	150	450	182	364	78	78	1004	
	22	180	720	206	612	22	44	30	30	1406	
	23	186	744	181	543	71	142	-	-	1429	
	24	156	624	100	300	153	306	29	29	1412	
	25	105	420	79	237	203	406	51	51	1114	
	26	52	204	260	780	99	198	27	27	1209	
	27	-	-	78	156	310	930	50	200	1286	
	28	156	624	202	606	80	160	-	-	1390	
	Total									12965	1297
III	29	182	728	256	774	-	-	-	-	1502	3.27
	30	130	520	308	924	-	-	-	-	1444	
	31	183	732	255	765	-	-	-	-	1497	
	32	80	828	130	390	288	496	-	-	1206	
	33	207	828	231	693	-	-	-	-	1521	
Total										7170	1434

Table 2: Cont....

Items/ sub-sections		SA		A		D		SD		Total scores	Mean
		f	x	f	x	f	x	f	x		
IV	34	53	212	100	300	285	570	-	-	1082	2.90
	35	104	416	232	696	102	204	-	-	1316	
	36	183	652	255	765	-	-	-	-	1417	
	Total									3815	
V	37	260	260	178	356	-	-	-	-	66	2.21
	38	-	-	50	150	232	464	156	156	770	
	39	260	1040	154	432	24	48	-	-	1520	
	Total									2096	
VI	40	26	104	78	234	310	620	50	50	1008	2.48
	41	28	112	153	459	230	460	27	27	1058	
	42	27	108	281	843	104	208	26	26	1185	
	Total									3251	
VII	43	-	-	103	309	311	622	24	24	955	2.32
	44	-	-	130	390	257	514	51	51	955	
	45	52	204	182	546	178	356	26	26	1132	
	Total									3042	
VIII	46	285	1140	153	459	-	-	-	-	1599	3.30
	47	52	208	282	846	104	208	-	-	1262	
	48	155	620	283	849	-	-	-	-	1469	
	Total									4330	
IX	49	157	628	259	777	22	44	-	-	1449	3.10
	50	79	316	333	999	26	52	-	-	1367	
	51	261	1044	177	531	-	-	-	-	1575	
	52	52	208	281	843	105	210	-	-	1261	
	53	207	828	205	615	26	52	-	-	1495	
	54	180	640	236	808	22	44	-	-	1492	
	55	105	420	233	699	100	200	-	-	1319	
	56	-	-	232	696	206	412	-	-	1108	
	57	27	108	230	690	181	362	-	-	1160	
Total									12226	1358	
X	58	107	428	255	765	76	152	-	-	1345	3.21
	59	208	832	230	690	-	-	-	-	1522	
	60	106	424	260	780	72	144	-	-	1348	
Total										4215	1405

critical in hindering postgraduate studies in Nigerian universities. These two recorded mean scores of 3.30 and 2.21 respectively. Other problem areas fell between these two, with Financial Problems as second most critical.

Table 3 showed the rankings of problem areas from Sections B and C of PGSPQ and their mean rankings. The data was subjected to the Rank Correlation statistic. In this case where there were no ties, $r_s = r$, and the computed correlation coefficient was 0.915. The critical value of r at $df = n - 2 = 8$, and $p > 0.05$ was 0.632. Since the calculated r of 0.915 was greater than the table r of 0.632, the null hypothesis that $p = 0$ was rejected. This means that there is a significant positive correlation between the two rankings. The result suggested that the postgraduate students actually knew what their needs were, and knew where they were lacking to the detriment

Table 3: Rankings of problem areas from sections B and C of the research instrument (PGSPQ)

Problem Areas	Ranks section B	Ranks section C	Mean ranks	R
Academic	1	3	2.0	$r_s = r = +0.915$
Supervisor	4	6	5.0	
Financial	3	2	2.5	
Accommodation	7	7	7.0	
Personality	10	10	10.0	
Family Background	8	8	8.0	
External Examiner	9	9	9.0	
Lack of Equipment	2	1	1.5	
University Administration	5	5	5.0	
Data Collection	6	4	5.0	

(1) Problems Related to Lack of Equipment; (2) Academic Problems; (3) Financial Problems; (4) Problems of Data Collection; (5) Supervisor Problems; (6) Problems Related to University Administration; (7) Accommodation Problems; (8) Family Background Problems; (9) External Examiner Problems; (10) Personality Problems.

of their studies. Thus, from the mean ranks of the two ratings, it was revealed that the problem areas which the postgraduate students identified as most critical in hindering their studies in Nigerian universities were as follows in the order shown, 1 to 10:

Hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between problems encountered by postgraduate students and the time it takes to complete postgraduate studies in Nigerian universities.

To test this null hypothesis, the Test of Proportion statistic was applied to analyze the data derived from Section C of PGSPQ and presented on table 4.

Table 4: Data for test of proportion statistic

Decision from Section C	N	%	$P=n/N$
Number Positively Disposed	421	96.12	0.96
Number Not Positively Disposed	17	3.88	
Total	438	100	

Applying the test of proportion statistic for one sample of one proportion, $Z_{cal} = (P - a) / \sqrt{a(1-a)/N}$, where P = sample population, a = hypothesized proportion, and N = sample size, Z_{cal} was found to be 19.20, $Z_{critical} = 1.96$, the null hypothesis was rejected. This means that population proportion was significantly different from 50% as was actually shown by the figures, 421 (96.12%) in table 4. We therefore concluded that the majority agreed that problems encountered delayed their graduation. This means that majority of postgraduate students studying in Nigerian universities shared the view that there is a significant relationship between the problems encountered in postgraduate studies and the time it takes to complete postgraduate programmes in Nigerian universities. Furthermore, analyses of responses to items 12, 13, and 14 of Section A of PGSPQ revealed that 121 Masters and 106 Doctoral students who were on chapters four and five of their dissertations had already spent three and seven years respectively; 54 and 22, who had defended their dissertations four and eight years respectively; and 86 and 49 who had defended their dissertation proposals, two and four years respectively. Extrapolation showed that the lower and higher minimum for Masters were three and four years respectively, while those for

Doctorate were seven and eight years. This implied that it would take a minimum of three to four years and seven to eight years to complete Masters and Doctorate programmes respectively in Nigerian universities, as against the stipulated NUC minimum time of one to two years for Masters and two to three years for Doctorate degrees.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

One research question was empirically answered and one null hypothesis tested in this study. The research question sought to identify the problems of university education in Nigeria that hinder Postgraduate Studies in Nigerian universities. It was alarming to discover that almost every postgraduate student perceived the problems more or less in the same manner, with system/procedural problems (problems within the institution) outweighing personal/psychological problems (problems within the person). Also interesting was the discovery that the ranking of problem areas had an almost perfect positive correlation (+0.915) on comparison with the degree of positive disposal which actually measured the students' perception of problems.

The results showed that the most highly rated Problem Areas were, (in the order given):

(1) Problems related to lack of equipment; (2) Academic problems; (3) Financial problems; (4) Problems of data collection; (5) Supervisor problems; (6) Problems related to University Administration; (7) Accommodation problems; (8) Family Background problems; (9) External Examiner problems; and (10) Personality problems.

Since this study was apparently the first to explore this area of Higher Education in Nigeria, there were really no findings to refer to or compare with. The closest study found outside Nigeria was that of Krom-Braen (1979). She examined whether there were significant differences in the experiencing of problems by adult women who returned to Higher Education as undergraduates in three different types of institutions in New York, U.S.A. Her findings showed significant differences in experiencing of problems in the three different types of institutions. She also found that the frequency in experiencing of the system/procedural problems was greater than that of the personal/psychological problems. Thus the findings of this study that system/procedural problems were rated more than personal/psycho-

logical problems as hindrances to academic studies in Graduate Education agreed with her study.

The null hypothesis states that there is no significant relationship between the problems encountered by post-graduate students and the time it takes to complete postgraduate programmes in Nigerian universities. The result showed that this null hypothesis was rejected, indicating that problems encountered delayed the timely completion of post-graduate programmes in Nigerian universities. This could explain why there are today many postgraduate students, especially doctoral students in Nigeria who had spent over seven years on the programme and were yet to complete it. The National University Commission (NUC) stipulated that post-graduate programmes should last a minimum of one to two years for Masters degree and two to three years for Doctorate degree in Nigerian universities. The estimated minimum from this study was three to four years for Masters degree and seven to eight years for Doctorate degree. This implied that these post-graduate students indeed spend at least twice as much time as was stipulated, thus constituting a huge wastage in the system. Omoregie's (1981) assertion that the school system's internal efficiency is often determined through a flow audit of students becomes relevant here. The implication is that the speed at which the students pass through an educational system thus becomes an index for measuring its efficiency. In this regard, Nigerian universities could not be said to be efficient.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results and findings of this study it was concluded that postgraduate students in Nigerian universities encountered deep-rooted problems which hindered their studies and thus delayed the timely completion of their programmes.

Furthermore, the systems/procedural problems (Institutional problems from within) were more critical in hindering postgraduate studies than socio-political (Institutional problems from outside) and personal/psychological (Individual) problems in Nigerian universities. Problems Related to Lack of Equipment was the most critical stumbling block to post-graduate studies in Nigerian universities, while Personality Problems was the least. Also, Academic Problems, Financial

Problems, Problems of Data Collection, Supervisor Problems and Problems related to University Administration were very critical in hindering post-graduate studies in Nigeria. Others were Accommodation, Family Background and External Examiner Problems.

RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations are intended to maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of studies at the graduate level as well as tap the potentials of graduate students in Nigeria to the fullest.

There is the need that allocation of resources to the universities for plan implementation be made, not only adequately, but as at when due, by the appropriate Bodies. The resource allocation to universities should be reviewed twice a year to reflect the needs of each of the two semesters in each academic session. The Federal and State Governments should desist from their usual manner of slashing down financial allocations that should cover the University Budgets, thus seriously starving universities of funds to run their programmes. They should also provide Grants for research and Scholarship to post-graduate students. These recommendations will help reduce Financial Problems and Problems related to University Administration, which hinder Postgraduate Studies in Nigerian universities.

Standard and modern equipment and facilities should be provided in Nigerian universities and adequate arrangements made for their routine servicing and general maintenance. Accommodation should be provided on the campus for all research supervisors and post-graduate students (on request) so as to improve the interaction between students and their supervisors. The "Data Bank" for Nigerian universities and all Federal and State Bodies responsible for obtaining, organizing and storing information should be restored, revived, up-dated and maintained. This will enable the continuous flow of information and provide statistics necessary for data collection. This would require the adequate provision and maintenance of computers and the necessary software in higher institutions and servicing Bodies in Nigeria. Also, standard libraries, laboratories, and workshops with their attendant staff and stock should be provided.

Enrolment into Post-graduate Schools should match the number of qualified and experienced

lecturers/supervisors available for Graduate Studies so as to make supervision of research work more manageable. The academic calendar for Postgraduate Schools in Nigeria should be run irrespective of undergraduate rustications in the universities. This will help reduce the minimum observed number of years spent in doing Postgraduate Programmes in Nigeria.

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