

*Full Length Research Paper*

# Students' satisfaction with service delivery in federal universities in South-south geo-political Zone, Nigeria

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The study was designed to investigate the level of students' satisfaction with service delivery in federal universities in South-south geopolitical zone of Nigeria in terms of educational, library, security, medical, transport, hostel, and ICT services. Survey design was used to carry out the study, the hypothesis was formulated and literature reviewed. Using the stratified random sampling technique 1,700 students out of a population of 70,808 formed the study's sample. They were Years One, Two, Three and Four regular undergraduate students of the 2008/2009 to 2011/2012 academic years in federal universities in south-south Nigeria. Data collected for this study were obtained through a face-validated Students' Satisfaction with Service Delivery Questionnaire (SSSDQ) which had a test-retest reliability estimate of 0.83. The instrument was administered to the 1,700 respondents, but only 1,450 copies were properly filled and used to assess students' satisfaction with the delivery of the highlighted services in their universities. Data collected were analyzed using both descriptive statistics and a single-mean population t-test. The findings of the study showed that students' satisfaction with educational, security, and medical services was significantly high; while students' satisfaction with library, hostel, transport, and ICT services was not significantly high. Based on the findings, various staff and facilities that contributed to effective service delivery to students were to be made available, adequate and be quality-imbued in universities.

**Key words:** Students, staff, service delivery, educational, library, hostel, transport, medical security, ICT services.

## INTRODUCTION

Going by the sixth edition of the National Policy on Education in Nigeria (FRN, 2013), universities in the country are pivotal to national development. This is based on the fact of their contribution to national development through high level manpower development. To concretize the foregoing, the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2013:27) has it that as a tertiary level of education, universities ought to experience "...high standards in the

quality of facilities, services and resources..."

Universities in South-South Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria are institutions in Nigeria's oil-rich delta region whose contributions to strategic human capital development cannot be overemphasized. However, the optimum of these contributions to Nigeria's economy and today's knowledge economy would be predicated on students' satisfaction with the various service delivery requirements

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within the universities which ought to shape their effective graduation into, and eventual productivity, in the society.

Students' satisfaction, according to Kotler et al. (2009:120), is a person's feeling of pleasure which results from comparing the perceived performance of products/services to their expectation. It means that if the performance matches or exceeds the expectation, customers (i.e. students) would be satisfied. Student satisfaction is defined further by Wiers-Jenssen et al. (2002) as students' assessment of the services provided by universities. These include such services as quality of teaching, supervision and feedback from academic staff; quality of the curriculum, physical support facilities, quality of and access to leisure activities; and the social climate. In this study, generally, students' satisfaction is tied to educational, library, hostel, transport, security, information and communication technology (ICT) and medical service delivery.

Service is an activity rendered by one party to another. The unique characteristics differentiating services from goods are intangibility, perishability, inseparability, simultaneity and variability. These are self-explanatory largely as services are not as touchable or tangible as goods. After being rendered, a service vanishes or perishes. A service is consumed as soon as it is delivered. Production and consumption of services usually take place simultaneously. Each service is unique. It is generated at a particular time, rendered and consumed and can never be exactly repeated as the point in time, location, circumstances, conditions, current configuration and assigned resources are different for the next delivery (Sweanigen, 2002).

The dimensions of service quality is defined by Palmer (2005) as involving the provision of good/services to customers, such as South-South university students, according to a specification that satisfies their needs. Parasuraman et al. (1985) stated five dimensions of quality that customers employed to evaluate the quality of services delivered. They are reliability, assurance, tangibility, empathy and responsiveness. All these conduce to customer confidence and satisfaction.

The paper intended to investigate students' satisfaction with South-South federal universities' quality service delivery. Services delivery can best be understood by its right definition and characteristics, its requirements, its dimensions and what students' satisfaction really amounts to.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Several theories bear applicability to the study. However, the expectancy – discomfiture paradigm by too old is found highly relevant. Zeithaml (1981) pointed out that consumers form satisfaction judgment by evaluating actual product/service performance against their pre-

purchase expectation about the product/service. This expectation forms the anchor for subsequent post-purchase evaluation of satisfaction or dissatisfaction. As applied to this study, South South Nigeria Federal university students come to school with expectations of what they want to get from their institutions. If the educational, library, medical, security, transport, hostel and ICT services rendered to the students meet or exceed their expectations, they will be satisfied but if vice versa then they will be dissatisfied.

## **The problem**

Universities in South -South Nigeria have generated national concern in recent times. Undergraduates in three south-south universities had actually rioted against the authorities because they were not satisfied with the deficient manner in which services were rendered. Documented instances include the cases of Universities of Calabar (in 2011), Port Harcourt (in 2012), and Uyo (in 2013). The students had their grouse against one or more of educational, library, hostel, transport, security, ICT and medical service delivery in these universities. This tends to question the extent to which the students were satisfied with the delivery of the educational, library, medical, transport, security, hostel and ICT services in South-south Nigeria federal universities.

## **Research question**

To what extent are Nigeria's South-south federal universities students satisfied with the delivery of the following services: i) educational services; ii) library services; iii) medical services; iv) transport services; v) security services; vi) hostel services; vii) ICT services?

## **Hypothesis**

Ho: Students' satisfaction with service delivery is not significantly high with regard to: i) educational service; ii) library service; iii) medical service; iv) transport service; v) security service; vi) hostel service; vii) ICT services.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The survey design was used for the study. The population of the study consisted originally of 70,808 regular students in 238 departments in 46 faculties in the 2008/2009 to 2011/2012 academic years in the six federal universities in the South-South geopolitical zone in Nigeria. But this was further limited to 12 faculties in the Universities of Calabar, Port Harcourt and Uyo after using the random sampling technique. The sample of the study was 1700 students. Owing to attrition, 1450 questionnaire copies were returned filled. A four-point likert-type scale questionnaire was used

**Table 1.** Summary of descriptive statistics showing the delivery of student-related services in Nigeria south-south federal universities (n=1450).

| S/N | Variables            | N    | $\bar{X}$ | SD   |
|-----|----------------------|------|-----------|------|
| 1   | Educational services | 1450 | 12.84     | 2.72 |
| 2   | Library services     | 1450 | 11.83     | 2.38 |
| 3   | Hostel services      | 1450 | 12.05     | 2.75 |
| 4   | Transport services   | 1450 | 12.46     | 2.54 |
| 5   | Security services    | 1450 | 11.77     | 2.92 |
| 6   | Medical services     | 1450 | 12.94     | 2.58 |
| 7   | ICT services         | 1450 | 12.87     | 2.75 |

Source: Statistical package for Social Science.

for data collection in the study. It was known as Students Satisfaction with Services Delivery Questionnaire (SSSDQ). It had Parts 1 and 2, While Part 1 concentrated on respondents' demographics which took care of the independent variables, and Part 2 elicited responses on the dependent variables of the 35 item questionnaire. The positively worded items were scored on a scale of Strongly Agree = 20 points; Agreed = 15 points; Disagree = 10 points; and Strongly Disagree = 5 points. This was reversed for negatively worded items. The instrument was face-validated by two experts in Measurement and Evaluation.

To ascertain the reliability of the instrument used for data collection, a trial test was conducted on a sample of 50 students from the University of Calabar. The selection of this sample was from a faculty that was exempted from the main study. The instrument was administered twice to the sample at two weeks interval. Data from the responses were obtained and used in preparing an item-person matrix with which the test-retest reliability estimate was computed. Test-retest reliability estimates ranging from .71 to .83 were obtained for the subsets of the instrument, and therefore considered good enough for data collection.

## RESULTS

### Research question

To what extent are the students satisfied with the delivery of the following services; 1) education; 2) library; 3) medicals; 4) transports; 5) security; 6) hostels; 7) ICT services?

The analysis in Table 1 details the statistical treatment of this question.

Descriptive statistics were used as a basis for computing the population t-test analysis of the hypothesis.

### Hypothesis

Ho: Students' satisfaction with service delivery is not significantly high with regard to: i) educational service; ii) library services; iii) medical services; iv) transport services; v) security services; vi) hostel services; and, vii) ICT services.

**Table 2.** Population t-test of students' satisfaction with service delivery (n=1450).

| S/N | Variables            | $\bar{X}$ | N     | SD   | T       |
|-----|----------------------|-----------|-------|------|---------|
| 1   | Educational services | 12.84     | 12.50 | 2.72 | 4.785*  |
| 2   | Library services     | 11.83     | 12.50 | 2.38 | -10.772 |
| 3   | Hostel services      | 12.05     | 12.50 | 2.75 | -6.264  |
| 4   | Transport services   | 12.46     | 12.50 | 2.54 | -0.673  |
| 5   | Security services    | 12.94     | 12.50 | 2.58 | 6.569*  |
| 6   | Medical services     | 12.87     | 12.50 | 2.75 | 5.103*  |
| 7   | ICT services         | 11.77     | 12.50 | 2.92 | -9.486  |

Sources: Statistical package for Social Sciences.

The hypothesis is analyzed in Table 2. Results of the analysis presented in Table 2 show that the calculated t-values,  $t(1449)$  for satisfaction with educational services is 4.785,  $t(1449)$  for security services is 6.569, and  $t(1449)$  for medical services is 5.103. These were each positive and greater than the critical t-value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance with 1449 degrees of freedom. This means that, in terms of these variables, students' satisfaction with service delivery was significantly high. The null hypothesis was rejected with regards to these sub-variables.

The results also show that the calculated t-values  $t(1449)$  for students' satisfaction with library services is -10.772,  $t(1449)$  for hostel services is -6.264,  $t(1449)$  for transport services -0.673, and  $t(1449)$  for ICT services -9.486. These were each negative meaning that the population means were greater than the sample. This implies that students' satisfaction with these services was not significantly high. The null hypothesis was thus retained for these sub-variables.

## DISCUSSION

This study indicates a significant satisfaction with educational services among students. As pointed out by Peng and Samah (2006), students regard course content and its delivery as the most important factor to their satisfaction. The finding that students' satisfaction with security services is significantly high is at variance with the study by Smah (2001). He reported cultic activities which caused fear and dissatisfaction in university students. However, one can say that in recent years, cultic activities in Nigerian federal universities have drastically reduced. Peace and a relatively greater measure of satisfaction with security are being experienced in federal universities in south-south Nigeria. Varinli and Cakir (2004) in Yesilada and Direktor (2010) in their study found that patients' satisfaction with medical services was influenced by the physicians and nurses in the hospital. Vukmir (2006) also found that waiting time

and the amount of care given to patients determined their satisfaction. Students' significant high satisfaction with medical services in this study could be linked to the care they got from their health-care givers in the universities.

The findings which indicated that students were having significant low satisfaction with library services is in agreement with Nnadozie (2006) in Adeniran (2011) who noted that the inadequate basic tools and facilities for the delivery of qualitative library services caused dissatisfaction or low satisfaction among university students. The students not having a significant high satisfaction with their hostel services could be the result of poor hostel environment as posited by Mohit et al. (2010) who observed that incongruence between housing needs and expectations led to dissatisfaction. Students' satisfaction with transport services was significantly low. This, according to Beirae and Sasfield-Cabral (2007), could be attributed to long waiting time coupled with waste of time at the bus stop as well as overcrowding and the lack of comfort associated with intra-campus transport services. Students' significant low satisfaction with ICT services in this study concurs with the researches of Oyedun (2006) and Okafor (2008) who observed that a greater number of students were either partially satisfied or not satisfied with the provision of internet services in their universities in Nigeria.

## Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it could be concluded that in universities in South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria, students' satisfaction with service delivery is significantly high with regards to educational, security and medical services; whereas their satisfaction with the delivery of library, hostel, transport and ICT services was not significantly high.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusion of this study, it is recommended as follows:

1. Government and federal university authorities in South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria should ensure that the staff that render educational, library, medical, and security services are trained. They should also be provided with the necessary tools and the conducive working conditions to enhance their performance of service delivery to students.

2. Majority of students are not adequately satisfied with services in their universities owing to the inadequacy of such facilities or resources. Hence, funds should be released by the government which should be prudently managed by the institutional authorities to handle this.

3. Out-sourced services, for instance transport and ICT services, should be well monitored by the universities authorities.

4. The staff that render services to students should be well trained, disciplined and dedicated to their duties.

## Conflict of Interests

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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