

## **Admission Procedure and University Governance as Determinants of Graduate Employability in Delta State**

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### **Abstract**

*The study focused on admission procedure and university governance as determinants of graduate employability in Delta State. Two research questions as well as two hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The design adopted for the study was descriptive survey design while the population of the study was 14, 067 which consisted of 12,344 final year students and 1,723 Alumni staff in Universities in Delta State. Similarly, the sample of the study was 1,559 consisting of 325 staff of the Alumni unit as well as 1,234 final year students who were selected through a stratified random sampling technique. The instrument used for collecting data for the study was a 10-item questionnaire titled “Admission Procedure and University Governance for Graduate Employability Questionnaire” (APUGGEQ). The instrument was validated by two experts in Measurement and Evaluation. The reliability of the questionnaire was determined using Cronbach Alpha with a co-efficient of 0.83. Data for the study was collected by the researcher with the aid of two trained Research Assistants. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while z-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study showed that admission procedure was not a determinant of graduate employability while University governance was a determinant factor in Delta State. It was therefore recommended that University administrators should employ transparency and expertise in the process of University governance so as to improve the job prospect of graduate students in Delta State.*

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**Keywords:** Admission, Procedure, University, Governance, Employability

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### **Introduction**

The demand for University education is on the increase among educational stakeholders since it is perceived as a necessity for securing employment. It is therefore important for Universities in the country to expand her capacity to accommodate prospective students who are seeking for admission year-in and year-out. Akindele (2013) pointed out that out of almost two million students seeking admission each year in the country, the Universities in the country only has the capacity to accommodate few thousands. This poses a threat to the prospect of students to secure admission as a pre-requisite for employability.

The procedure used for the admission of students poses as a determinant to the ability of students to be equipped for the labour market. In addition to this, the system of government in the University also plays an important role in preparing students for employment opportunities in the labour market. University governance contributes to graduates employability based on the manner in which human, material and policy resources are being administered in the University for preparing of students for employment opportunities in the labour market.

### **Admission Procedure for University Graduate Employability**

The level of change in the society has given rise to an increase in the number of admission seeking students willing to undergo undergraduate programmes in Universities across the country. There is therefore a high extent of competition among students willing to secure admission into undergraduate programmes across the country for different purposes. Students who are willing to enroll for undergraduate programmes in Universities across Nigeria are expected to meet with certain minimum criteria before they are granted such opportunity. Some of the conditions that must be satisfied include but are not limited to the following:

The O'level result refers to the result acquired after any of the secondary education conducted for graduating secondary school students. There are two major internal public examinations conducted for students graduating from senior secondary schools in Nigeria. They are the National Examination Council (NECO) and the West African Examination Council (WAEC). The result of this examination is crucial for any student who wishes to secure graduate admission into any University in Nigeria. Students are expected to secure credit passes in subject combinations that are closely related to the programme they intend to pursue. There are institutions that permit students to have at least five (5) credit passes in one sitting or six credit passes in two sittings. However, these passes must include Mathematics and English Language which are considered mandatory for all students except in few cases where the students are given waver. Credit passes form an important requirement for admission and students must meet the minimum number of credit passes before they can be given admission.

Students can be given admission into the University when they have completed some preliminary programmes in other institutions. There are registered and professional institutions that have been given authority by the government to issue certificates that must be honored by the Universities as a condition for admission into undergraduate programmes. However, these students must have a satisfactory CGPA. The Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) is very vital for any student who wishes to secure admission for undergraduate programmes after undergoing a diploma programme in any polytechnic or other registered institutions which award lower degrees to students. This is usually referred to as admission by direct entry. In this case, the student is given the opportunity to commence from a higher level such as 200level in the University and course of choice. The scores acquired by students in their previous programmes as letter grades are converted and students are expected to secure a very high margin before they can be considered for admission into undergraduate programmes in the University. Students in most of the Universities are expected to secure about four points on a five point scale or three points on a four point scale before they can be considered for undergraduate admission into the University.

Proficiency in English Language is a vital requirement for admission into undergraduate programmes in Nigerian University. English Language is the official language used for teaching and learning in virtually all Universities in Nigeria. Citizens and foreigners who are willing to gain admission into undergraduate programmes in Nigeria are expected to show mastery in the area of written and oral English. Students whose official language is not English Language are expected to go for an English Language course. This is because this language is the language that will be used for communication in virtually all programmes in the University.

There are interviews that are conducted for incoming undergraduate students in some Universities in Nigeria. There are cases where students are expected to undergo screening or a post-UTME examination before they can secure admission for any undergraduate programme. However, while some departments consider interview as a criteria for admission, others do not.

A panel is usually set up to interview prospective students and find out their level of expertise in the area where they intend to secure admission.

Students who are admitted into the University are expected to also meet the University's condition for graduation. The condition for graduation from an undergraduate programme in the University is similar in virtually all the Universities in Nigeria. Some of the conditions that must be satisfied before a student can graduate from an undergraduate programme especially in Universities in Nigeria include the following:

The courses taught in the classroom are very vital as they serve as the medium for students to acquire the right skills and knowledge needed for them to function in the larger society. There are core and elective courses which students are expected to take which is the primary reason why students are admitted. The core courses are the basic courses which are directly related to the student's area of specialization. Furthermore, the elective courses are provided to give the student an additional knowledge in a related area of specialization. Similarly, students are expected to have at least a pass in the courses offered before they are allowed to graduate. The rating scales are 70-100 (A), 60-69 (B), 50-59 (C), 45-49 (D), 40-44 (E) and 0-39 (F). Student who will graduate from the programme must have at least an E (40-44) before they can be allowed to graduate at the end of the programme.

### **University Governance for University Graduate Employability**

The way the University is managed is one other factor that can determine the employment prospects of graduate students. It is usually said that no education system can rise above the quality of available teachers. However, the system of administration of the school also contributes largely to the educational outcomes in the school. The system of governance in the University can foster or limit the job prospect of students. This therefore plays an important role in students' employment opportunities.

Ekundayo and Ajayi (2009) revealed that the University system today is bedeviled by a catalogue of problems among which is the problem of mismanagement. The rift between the government and the management of the University arising from governments' interference in University administration sometimes result to management crisis which in some cases affect the students. When staffs are being employed for academic and non-academic purposes in the University, cases abound where sentiments are brought into the recruitment processes which makes it difficult for experts to be employed. The implication of this is that students are taught by non-professionals and this leads to the production of unemployable graduates as observed in the society.

The University from time to time also take societal changes into consideration when developing educational programmes. This has given birth to the inclusion of different entrepreneurial and vocational programmes in the University. However, when the right enabling environment is not provided for these programmes to thrive as a result of selfish interest, the programmes which should have contributed to employment opportunities end up being liabilities rather than an asset. When courses, appointments and other social benefits are not structurally and strategically distributed, it becomes a problem for the products of the University to make meaningful impact on their society.

Social interest in the process of University administration has limited the ability of most Universities in performing their prime function of manpower production for the society. The absence of transparency and accountability in the administration of the University by University managers has crippled the opportunities available for being employed among students. This explains why many Nigerian Universities find it difficult to compete with other

Universities abroad and by implication, employment opportunities for Nigerian University graduates within and outside the country; especially with international organizations is limited.

According to Bilyalov (2016), emphases is being laid on decentralization for the purpose of achieving efficiency in University administration and this is essential for producing quality and employable graduates. Similarly, policies developed by University administrators are those that will contribute to the achievement of University goals and objectives which includes producing quality manpower. Furthermore, Bilyalov (2016) stated that in Kazakhstan;

The main strategic document for national education, stipulated that by 2020, 90 percent of all public universities would use “corporate governance mechanisms” and establish boards of trustees. Such boards would include representatives of the wider society: civic leaders, employers, authorities, business, NGOs, and mass media representatives (p. 29).

The incorporation of the various educational stakeholders in the University programme is to provide an enabling environment where students can be groomed based on the needs of the society. In the same vein, this programme or policies are communicated across all faculties and departments to ensure that all University stakeholders including the students are included in the programme of the University. This system of University governance is vital for the employment prospect of University graduates who are transported into the labour market. The objectives of the study were to:

1. Determine how University admission procedure constitutes an impediment to graduate employability into the public service in Delta State.
2. Ascertain how University governance constitutes an impediment to graduate employability into the public service in Delta State.

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. How does University admission procedure constitute an impediment to graduate employability into the public service in Delta State?
2. How does University governance constitute an impediment to graduate employability into the public service in Delta State?

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference between the mean scores of students and alumni staff on how University admission procedure constitutes an impediment to graduate employability into the public service in Delta State.
2. There is no significant difference between the mean scores of students and alumni staff on how University governance constitutes an impediment to graduate employability into the public service in Delta State.

## Methodology

Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. Population of the study was 14,067 which consisted of 12,344 final year students and 1,723 Alumni staff in Universities in Delta State. The sample of the study was 1,559 comprising 325 staff of the Alumni unit as well as 1,234 final year students who were selected through a stratified random sampling technique. The instrument used for collecting data for the study was a 10-item questionnaire titled “Admission Procedure and University Governance for Graduate Employability Questionnaire” (APUGGEQ). The instrument was validated by two experts in the Department of Educational Psychology, Guidance and Counseling specialized in Measurement and Evaluation. The

reliability of the questionnaire was determined using Cronbach Alpha with a co-efficient of 0.83. Data for the stud was collected by the researcher with the aid of two trained Research Assistants. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while z-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

## Results and Discussion

**Research Question One:** How does University admission procedure constitute an impediment to graduate employability into the public service in Delta State?

**Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation on how University Admission Procedure Constitutes an Impediment to Graduate Employability into the Public Service in Delta State**

S/No	ITEMS	Students n= 1,157			Alumni Staff n= 274			Av. Mean	Remark
		Mean	SD	Remark	Mean	SD	Remark		
1	Merit is considered in the process of admitting students into the University	2.24	1.14	Disagreed	3.03	0.74	Agreed	2.64	Agreed
2	The University only graduate competent students into the labour market	2.23	1.14	Disagreed	2.68	0.98	Agreed	2.46	Disagreed
3	Students' skill, knowledge and attitude are considered before admission into University programmes	2.07	1.06	Disagreed	2.07	1.04	Disagreed	2.07	Disagreed
4	Students must meet preliminary requirements before being admitted into the University	2.95	1.07	Agreed	2.88	1.09	Agreed	2.92	Agreed
5	Admission is given to students based on available educational resources	2.01	1.06	Disagreed	2.18	0.94	Disagreed	2.10	Disagreed
	<b>Average</b>	<b>2.30</b>	<b>1.09</b>	<b>Disagreed</b>	<b>2.57</b>	<b>0.96</b>	<b>Agreed</b>	<b>2.43</b>	<b>Disagreed</b>

Table 1 indicated that items 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 had mean scores of 2.24, 2.23, 2.07, 2.95 and 2.01 for students and 3.03, 2.68, 2.07, 2.88 and 2.18 for the alumni staff. The responses of the students showed that items 1, 2, 3 and 5 had mean scores of 2.24, 2.23, 2.07 and 2.01 which implied disagreed while item 4 with mean score of 2.95 showed agreed. The responses of the alumni staff on the other hand showed that items 1, 2 and 4 had mean scores of 3.03, 2.68 and 2.88 which showed agreed while items 3 and 5 with mean score of 2.07 and 2.18 showed disagreed based on their closeness above or below the criterion mean score of 2.50 used for making decision. Conclusively, students sampled for the study revealed that admission procedure constitutes an impediment to graduate employability with an average mean of 2.30 while the alumni staff sampled for the study pointed out that admission procedure constituted an impediment to graduate students employability with an average mean of 2.57 since the mean was above the criterion mean score of 2.50 used for decision making.

**Research Question Two:** How does University governance constitute an impediment to graduate employability into the public service in Delta State?

**Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation on how University Governance Constitute an Impediment to Graduate Employability into the Public Service in Delta State**

S/No	ITEMS	Students n= 1,157			Alumni Staff n= 274			Av. Mean	Remark
		Mean	SD	Remark	Mean	SD	Remark		
6	The administration of the University focuses on meeting national growth and development objectives	2.93	1.07	Agreed	3.17	0.87	Agreed	3.05	Agreed
7	Departments and faculties are managed towards students empowerment	2.81	1.19	Agreed	2.87	0.68	Agreed	2.84	Agreed
8	Competent leaders are put in the position of power for empowering students	2.88	1.16	Agreed	3.04	0.49	Agreed	2.96	Agreed
9	The policies of the University provide room for entrepreneurial programmes	2.95	1.04	Agreed	3.04	1.02	Agreed	3.00	Agreed
10	There is collaboration between staff and students for skill acquisition activities	2.95	1.11	Agreed	2.79	0.94	Agreed	2.87	Agreed
	<b>Average</b>	<b>2.90</b>	<b>1.11</b>	<b>Agreed</b>	<b>2.98</b>	<b>0.80</b>	<b>Agreed</b>	<b>2.94</b>	<b>Agreed</b>

Table 2 showed the responses of the students and alumni staff to items 6-10 for research question two. It was revealed that the mean score of the students for the items raised was 2.93, 2.81, 2.88, 2.95 and 2.95. These items were all agreed since they are above the criterion mean score of 2.50 used for making decision. On the part of the alumni staff, these items showed mean scores of 3.17, 2.87, 3.04, 3.04 and 2.79. These items were equally agreed since the mean scores were above the criterion mean value that is used for making judgment. Conclusively, both students and alumni staff sampled for the study revealed that University governance constitute an impediment to graduate employability with an average mean of 2.90 and 2.98 and this was because the average mean scores were above the criterion mean score of 2.50 used for decision making.

**Hypothesis One:** There is no significant difference between the mean scores of students and alumni staff on how University admission procedure constitutes an impediment to graduate employability into the public service in Delta State.

**Table 3: z-test Analysis of no Significant Difference between the Mean Scores of Students and Alumni Staff on how University Admission Procedure Constitutes an Impediment to Graduate Employability into the Public Service in Delta State**

Variable	n	Mean	SD	df	z-cal.	z-crit.	Level of Decision Significance
Students	1157	2.30	1.09	1,429	4.08	1.96	0.05
Alumni Staff	274	2.57	0.96				Rejected

Table 3 showed the value of the z-cal. and that of z-crit. It was revealed that the value of z-cal. was 4.08 while the value of z-crit. was 1.96. Since the value of z-cal. of 4.08 is greater than the value of z-crit. of 1.96, the null hypotheses was rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted showing that there is a significant difference between the mean opinion scores of students and

alumni staff on the extent to which University admission procedure constitutes an impediment to graduate employability into the public service in Delta State.

**Hypothesis Two:** There is no significant difference between the mean scores of stakeholders of public and private Universities on how University governance constitutes an impediment to graduate employability into the public service in Delta State.

**Table 4: z-test Analysis of no Significant Difference between the Mean Scores of Stakeholders of Public and Private Universities on how University Governance Constitutes an Impediment to Graduate Employability into the Public Service in Delta State**

Variable	n	Mean	SD	df	z-cal.	z-crit.	Level of Significance	Decision
Students	1157	2.90	1.11	1,429	1.37	1.96	0.05	Not Rejected
Alumni Staff	274	2.98	0.80					

Table 4 showed the value of the z-cal. as well as that of z-crit. It was observed that the value of z-cal. was 1.37 while the value of z-crit. was 1.96. Since the value of z-cal. of 1.37 is lesser than the value of z-crit. of 1.96, the null hypotheses was not rejected thereby implying that there is no significant difference between the mean opinion scores of stakeholders of public and private Universities on the level to which University governance constitutes an impediment to graduate employability into the public service in Delta State.

### **University Admission Procedure as Impediment to Graduate Employability in Delta State**

The procedure of admission of students in the University is another important factor that determines graduate students employability. When unqualified students are admitted into areas where they cannot cope, they end up graduating with bad grades and find it difficult to survive in the labour market. The students sampled for the study revealed that students in the University are sometimes not admitted based on merit while the alumni staff sampled for the study agree otherwise. However, if this is the case, it implies that students who are not employed based on merit with struggle through their academic period. They will also not be able to get the certification or skill needed for them to be employed. This is the case of some graduate students who find it difficult to get employment after a long period of graduation simply because they sneaked into the University and studied courses that they are not qualified for.

In the developed countries, students who are not qualified after their level of education are usually prepared for remedial education to prepare them for the labour market. This position is supported by the study conducted by Joe, Kpolovie, Osonwa and Iderima (2014) where it was revealed that students who were admitted through preliminary programmes performed better than those admitted through UTME and PUTME. This position was further emphasized by Emaikwu (2012) who pointed out in the findings of his study that students who have no preliminary skill or knowledge do not differ in their employment prospects after graduation. However, students sampled for the study revealed that the extent to which students who are qualified to graduate are graduated is low while the alumni staff believes that it is a high. Despite the disagreement in the opinion of the respondents, it is also important to know why students who are not qualified will be graduated and made to compete with available job opportunities with those who are qualified. Findings from the study of Aru, Achumba and

Opara (2016) revealed that JAMB and WAEC alone are not sufficient for admission and graduation, the skills and knowledge possessed by the student is also very important. If the University has provided the needed quality of education with the right skills, knowledge and ability as expected and deserved, effort should be made to ensure that only those who are qualified are graduated. However, as revealed in this study, all students are graduated whether they are qualified or not.

The extent to which students skills and abilities are tested before admission appears to also be low. Students are not tested to find out the area of study where they can competently fit into before they are admitted. For example, Okoroma (2008) reported in his study that there are students who are admitted based on catchment policy; these students may not have the basic requirement needed to success in their area of study thereby leading to a reduction in the quality of University education. The implication of this is that skilled and unskilled students are made to compete in the classroom. However, it would have been more appropriate if the skills of prospective students are tested before they are admitted for any programme in the University. This will help to ensure that the right quality of students with the right skills are admitted into the right programmes where they can comfortably graduate and contribute to the labour market by creating jobs or securing the right employment where they can meaningfully contribute to the society. The students and alumni staff however agreed that there are certain preliminary conditions that students must meet before admission and these preliminary requirements are adhered to a very larger extent. This is also fundamental for empowering graduate students and preparing them for the labour market.

The study also has been able to reveal that the extent to which students are admitted based on available educational resources is low. The implication of this is that students are continually admitted whether the facilities are available or not. This is why some students struggle to complete their education and acquire the right education. This has led to the right saying that some students pass through the University but the University does not pass through them because they did not get the opportunity to interact with educational resources in the University which would have made them more competent and employable.

### **University Governance as Impediment to Graduate Employability in Delta State**

University governance is an essential aspect of University administration as it determines the course of the entire activities going on in the University. Series of research conducted by scholars such as Duze (2010) have all reported that the policies and procedures of the University especially on political and social issues has great influence on students smooth graduation. There has been advocacy over the years on the need for the University to improve on her system of governance as it affects teaching, learning and research activities in the University to a great extent. However, in the area of this research, the respondents responded that the Universities in the study area carry out University governance activities in line with national goals and objectives. The students and alumni staff sampled for the study both agreed that the University is managed in line with the goals and objectives of the nation. In a clearer perspective, it means that the objectives of the nation in the area of job creation and manpower development are also part of the focus in the process of University governance in the study area.

The study has further shown that the departments and faculties in the Universities sampled for the study are working towards achieving the goal of student's empowerment. Efforts are being made by various heads and administrators at each level in the University to see that the goal of empowering students for employment opportunities is achieved. This means



that the University is making effort to ensure that all staff whether academic or non-academic are involved in pursuing the goal of student's empowerment for employment generation. Furthermore, students and alumni staff sampled for the study showed that there is a high extent to which competent leaders are put in the position of leadership to ensure that all hands are on deck for students' empowerment. The right people are therefore put in the right position to ensure that students are given the right education that will make them job creators and self-reliant.

The policies made in the University are also very important for the creation of an enabling environment that will lead to job creation and self-reliance. Ojiakwu (2014) revealed that when there is weak internal control in any organization, it becomes difficult for goals and objectives to be achieved and this is not different from the situation in the University system. The policies made in the University helps to enforce on the various University stakeholders the need to work towards meeting the goals and objectives of the University which also includes student's empowerment. The respondents therefore pointed out that effort are being made in the University to ensure that the policies of the University contributes to the development of entrepreneurial programmes which is important for graduate employment in the long run. The policies of the University about entrepreneurial programmes help to ensure that no student is left out in the empowerment effort made by the University. This is a stepping stone towards achieving total graduate students empowerment. It is the existence of these policies that keeps all the faculties and departments up and doing.

The study has also been able to reveal that there is collaboration between University stakeholders for empowering students with employment skills and knowledge. Popoola (2011) in his study identified that some Universities have resorted to partnership with their immediate host community for improving graduate students employment prospects. Even though this has not totally solved the employment needs of graduate students, it has helped to reduce it to an extent. The collaboration between the University and the students and the host community for example is important for equipping students with the right skill which is needed by the modern day labour force. It is only through this collaborative effort that the students can be equipped with the right mix of skills and knowledge that will help them secure the needed employment after graduation.

## **Conclusion**

The study concluded that admission procedure in the University is not a determinant of graduate employment while University governance is a determinant of graduate student's employability.

## **Recommendations**

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study:

1. There is need for the Universities in the state to clearly define and adhere to the procedure for admission in order to improve the prospect of students in securing employment after graduation. The interest and capability of the students should be taken into consideration in the process of admission so as to improve their employment prospects after graduation.
2. University administrators should also ensure transparency and expertise in the process of University governance. This is because the policies and programmes of the University also have impact on the job prospects of University graduates in the state.
3. Students should also be involved in process of developing programmes and policies in the University that has an influence on their job prospects after graduation. This will

help these students to make inputs in to the University that will improve their chances of getting job after graduation.

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