Evaluation of Students’ Satisfaction with Instructional Facilitation of a Technology Management Programme

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ABSTRACT

Attaining student satisfaction is one of the most critical objectives in all higher educational institutions. This study presents the opinions of students on the evaluation of their satisfaction with the instructional facilitation of a postgraduate diploma in technology management programme in Nigeria. Data was collected with a modified version of the standardised Evaluation of Educational Quality Questionnaire (SEEQ) and analysed, using item mean rating. The survey which was undertaken in October, 2014 evaluated six out of the fifteen facilitators engaged for second semester of the 2013/2014. The objective of the study was to determine the effectiveness of facilitation of the programme based on students’ viewpoints. Overall ratings from the grand mean score of 4.67 indicated “very good” performance. Students also rated facilitators higher than teachers/lecturers they had encountered in their previous studies which is an indication of their level of satisfaction with instructional facilitation at the Study Centre.

Keywords: Instructional Facilitation, NACETEM, Nigeria, Quality Assurance, Rating Scales, Student Evaluations, Teaching Effectiveness, Technology Management

INTRODUCTION

Historical Background

Students’ evaluation of teaching effectiveness (SET), also called students’ evaluation of instruction (SEI) or students’ ratings of instructions (SRI) is said to have been in use since eight decades ago. The earliest recorded case of such rating instrument referred to as the Purdue Rating Scale

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was said to have been developed by Remmer in 1928 (Ansari et al., 2000). Further historical insight on SRIs can be found in Ansari et al. (2000).

SETs are proposed as one of the means of evaluating quality teaching in higher educational institutions (HEIs) (Emery et al., 2003; Keane and Mac Labhrainn, 2005; Sulis et al., 2011). Such students’ evaluations are seen to be serving three distinct interested parties – teachers, administrators and students, and with equally three distinct purposes – summative or diagnostic, administrative, and informative purposes respectively (Kelly, 2012; Spencer and Schmelkin, 2002; Warmbrod, 2006). However, a forth purpose – a source of data for research on teaching is mentioned in some studies (Keane and Mac Labhrainn, 2005; Abedin et al., 2014; Longu and Moraru, 2014). But besides serving those purposes, SETs are also said to stimulate teachers to reflect on their teaching practice and plan concrete actions for improvement as part of a faculty development programme (Seldin, p. e615 in Boerboom et al., 2011).

Kazár (2014) confirmed that by making course evaluations lecturers can get an overview on their role and then take actions to improve on the evaluations and students’ attitudes towards the course. Consequently, examples of the applications of SET and its usefulness nearly cut across every field of study and equally serve different purposes. For instance, a study on a statistics course (Kazár, 2014); teaching clothing and textile (Arubayi, 2009); clinical and medical education (Boerboom et al., 2011; Elzubeir and Rizk, 2002); university English language preparatory schools in Turkey (Lidice and Saglam, 2013); pharmacy and pharmacology (Sánchez, 2014) and even in other non-formal training programmes. However, such ratings are said to have been used in a systematic way at HEIs in Northern America (Balam, 2006). They are also commonly used by universities in the United Kingdom (UK) and are a mandatory task for each public university in Italy (Sulis et al., 2011). Even though no clear policy on teaching effectiveness exists in Malaysia, Abedin et al. (2014) claims that almost all universities in Malaysia use students’ evaluations as a measure of lecturers’ performance. The same authors also mention that in the Irish context, the 1997 Universities Act provides the legislative framework for the use of a system of student feedback in higher education. Not only that, SETs have equally wider applications in HEIs in Spain, Iran, Australia, etc. (Corbalan et al., 2013).

Wilson, p. 1 in Warmbrod (2006) talks about a writer in the Chronicle of Higher Education claiming that nearly 2,000 studies have been completed on the topic making it “the most extensive area of research in higher education”. Warmbrod further asserts, “it is only those who earned undergraduate and graduate degrees prior to the late 1960s probably rarely, if ever, were given the opportunity to provide written evaluations of professors or courses.” Surprisingly, even today, many students do not have that opportunity as it is rarely done in most Nigerian universities. Likewise, while there is a well-developed literature addressing the construction of the SET effectiveness, as well as extensive amount of research undertaken in the efficacy of same, not much was written about SETs in the context of Nigerian HEIs until lately (see for instance, David and Adebowale, 1997; Iyamu and Aduwa-Oglebean, 2005; Yusuf et al., 2010; Inko-Tariah, 2013). Even at that, nearly all of them only investigated the lecturers’ perceptions of acceptance of SETS. Nevertheless, standard instruments for assessing SET are growing in popularity and use and have become an increasingly important component of institutional reports as a means of accountability to educational stakeholders (Sánchez, 2014). Conversely, as earlier indicated, less than 5% of the over the 300 HEIs in Nigeria admit undertaking SET annually. The generally low perception of lecturers for the need to conduct SETs (Yusuf et al., 2010) and the low level of acceptance of SETs by lecturers for summative assessments (Iyamu and Aduwa-Oglebean, 2005) may be responsible for the near absence of SETs within Nigerian universities. Lastly, some universities that undertook SETs in the past have since stopped, citing dwindling finances as reason.
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