



**PERCEPTION OF ACADEMIC STAFF ON REASONS FOR LOW PATRONAGE OF NIGERIAN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES BY INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

*Niyi Jacob Ogunode*

*University of Abuja, Nigeria*

*Tope Gloria Olatunde-Aiyedun*

*tope.aiyedun@uniabuja.edu.ng*

*Ruth Ibukun Mcbrown*

*ruthmcbrown510@gmail.com*

**Abstract:** The objective of this study was to study find out the perception of academic staff on the reasons for low patronage of Nigerian public universities by international students. Specific objectives include: to find out the reasons for low patronage of Nigerian public universities by international students; and to identify the implication of low patronage of Nigerian public universities by international students. Quantitative research design was used in this study. Three hundred respondents were used for the study. Proportional random sampling and Stratified random technique was used to select sample of 300 academic staff from the three public universities in the North-Central. A self-structured questionnaire titled “Perception of Academic Staff on Reasons for Low Patronage of Nigerian Public Universities Questionnaire” (PASRLPNPUQ) was the instrument used for data collection. A Four (4) point Likert-type scale as follows: Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2) and Strongly Disagree (1) were used in the instrument. Instrument reliability was ensured by using Cronbach’s alpha. The instrument reliability index was .88. The criterion mean depicts that any item that is above or equal to the criterion mean value of 2.50 is agreed while the one below the criterion mean value is disagreed by the respondent. The result collected showed that centralized administration system, poor marketing, insecurity problem, unconducive learning environment (inadequate infrastructural facilities, and learning materials), unstable academic calendar, poor development of public universities (leadership problem and autonomy problem) and lack of policies to encourage international students in Nigeria are the reasons for low patronage of Nigerian public universities. The result also revealed that poor ranking, reduction of income and low international outlook are the implication of low patronage of Nigerian public universities by international students. Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended among others that Government should increase its total expenditure on education to meet up with the UNESCO specification so as to attract international students all over the world to study in Nigerian universities.

**Keywords:** Academic staff, low patronage, public universities, international students.

### **Introduction**

Public universities are universities owned by the government. Many public universities abroad are sustained through the high patronage they enjoy from Nigerian students. Public universities are established to provide post-secondary schools for Nigerians. These universities are established by act of parliament to serve the interest of the general public, to deal with the provision of teaching, research and community services (Olatunde-Aiyedun, 2021a). The objectives of the universities in Nigerian Higher education, including professional education has the following aims: the acquisition,

development and inculcation of the proper value orientation for the survival of the individual and societies; the development of the intellectual capacities of individuals to understand and appreciate the environment (Ekpo & Aiyedun, 2019); the acquisition of both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to develop into useful members of the community (Ojelade, Aiyedun & Aregebesola, 2019); the acquisition of an overview of the local and external environments (FRN, 2013). Public universities in Nigeria are grouped into federal and state owned universities. The federal universities are owned by the federal government of Nigeria while the state universities are owned by the state government. The total number of public universities the country has is 206 (NUC, 2022).

It was observed that in the 1960, 1970 and 1980's Nigerian universities were home to many international students from across the World. Nigerian universities not only can boast of international students but also had enough international lecturers. However, Nigeria currently scores low on the internationalisation index. In a survey of August 2019 by a committee on tertiary institutions in Nigeria, it was reported that of the 194 institutions that responded, there were 1,856 foreign students out of the total 1,132,795 students. There was 437 foreign academic staff from a total of 5,604 academic staff in these institutions. Foreign students make up 0.18% in universities, 0.29% in polytechnics and 0.04% in colleges of education. The percentage of all foreign students in Nigeria's tertiary education system as at 2018/2019 session was 0.16%. With regard to academic staff, the percentage of foreign academics in Nigerian universities is 0.008%, 1.64% in polytechnics and 0.18% in colleges of education (Abolade, 2019). This is an indication that many public universities in Nigeria cannot boast of international students.

The performance of Nigerian public universities has not been encouraging as regards enrolment of international students. There are many reasons why Nigerian universities are not being patronized by international students. International students are students schooling in another country. They are students that are on educational tourism in another country. The inadequacy of public universities in the country has been said to be one of the factors that compelled Nigerian parents to send their children to foreign public universities (Olatunde-Aiyedun, 2021b). Musa (2018) identified inadequate infrastructural facilities, cultism, insecurity, unstable academic calendar and academic corruption as reason for low patronage of Nigerian higher institutions. Mark (2014) listed factors such as poor branding, poor management, strike actions and unconducive learning environment thereby preventing international students from patronizing Nigerian universities.

Newata (2022) stated that there is only one gateway into Nigerian universities: students must pass Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB). JAMB forms are sold online but payment must be in Naira and Naira is not an international currency. All the cyber cafés accredited by JAMB to register students on their website are all in Nigeria. If one wants to apply to any Nigerian universities, such a person must buy return ticket to fly into the country, stay in a hotel, register for JAMB and then go back to their country. When its time to sit for JAMB, the individual would have to pay for another return ticket to come and sit for the exam, lodge in an hotel during that period before returning to their country. The same procedure is being repeated when it comes to checking of result and eventually when the individual is being offered admission.

Aiyedun, Olatunde-Aiyedun & Ogunode (2021) stated that Nigeria, among other countries, subject students in writing local examination which result in poor ranking of Nigerian universities. For instance, JAMB admission quotas of 40% merit, 35% catchment area, 25% Educational, only focuses on indigenous students in Nigerian states such as Ebonyi, Cross Rivers, Bayelsa and all the 19 states in the North. No provision is made for international students in the quota. Lecturers, students, staffing are all from neighbouring communities and at best neighbouring states (Ogunode, Iyabode & Olatunde-Aiyedun, 2022). This makes our university students confined without national or international outlook. How can an international university have 40% of its admission on merit and 60% not on merit?

### **Objective of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to study find out the perception of academic staff on the reasons for low patronage of Nigerian public universities by international students. Specific objectives are to:

- I. To find out the reasons for low patronage of Nigerian public universities by international students; and
- II. To identify the implication of low patronage of Nigerian public universities by international students

**Research Questions**

1. What are the reasons for low patronage of Nigerian public universities by international students?
2. What is the implication of low patronage of Nigerian public universities by international students?

**Methodology**

Quantitative research design was used in this study. This study focused on public universities in Nigeria. Three hundred respondents were used for the study. Proportional random sampling technique was used to select sample of 300 academic staff from three public universities in North-Central. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select from each faculties and departments from the sample universities. This was to ensure that academic staff were given an equal chance of being selected. A self-constructed questionnaire titled “Perception of academic staff on reasons for low patronage of Nigerian public universities Questionnaire” (PASRLPNPUQ) was the instrument used for data collection. The instrument had two sections; Section A elicited personal information of academic staff, while Section B elicited information concerning the perception of academic staff on reasons for low patronage of Nigerian public universities. A Four (4) point Likert-type scale as follows: Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2) and Strong Disagree (1) were used in the instrument. To ensure content validity of the instrument, draft copies of the instruments were given to four experts in educational management and two experts in measurement and evaluation. Relevant corrections and adjustment were made based on their observations and recommendations. Suggestions made were corrected appropriately before sending out final copies. Instrument reliability was ensured by using Cronbach’s alpha; the instrument reliability index was 0.88. The corrected questionnaires were distributed with the help of seven research assistants to the academic staff. The criterion mean is given thus:  $4 + 3 + 2 + 1 / 4 = 2.50$ . The criterion mean depicts that any item that is above or equal to the criterion mean value of 2.50 is agreed while the one below the criterion mean value is disagreed by the respondent.

**Data Analysis**

**Reasons for Low Patronage of Nigerian Public Universities by International Students**

S/N	Reasons for low patronage	X	SD	Decision
1	Centralized administration system	2.89	0.943	Agree
2	Poor marketing	2.85	0.933	Agree
3	Insecurity problems	2.94	0.951	Agree
4	Unconducive learning environment (inadequate infrastructural facilities and learning materials)	2.78	0.939	Agree
5	Unstable academic calendar	2.77	0.933	Agree
6	Poor development of public universities (leadership problems, autonomy problem)	2.89	0.937	Agree
7	Lack of policies to encourage international students	2.67	0.927	Agree
	<b>Grand Mean</b>	<b>2.83</b>		

Result from research question two on table two indicated that item 1 to 7 obtained had the following mean scores 2.89, 2.85, 2.94, 2.78, 2.77, 2.89 and 2.67 with a cumulative score of 2.83. This means that the respondents agreed that centralized administration system, poor marketing, insecurity problem, unconducive learning environment (inadequate infrastructural facilities and learning materials),

unstable academic calendar, poor development of public universities (leadership and autonomy problems) and lack of policies to encourage international students in Nigeria are the reasons for low patronage of Nigerian public universities.

**Research Question Two:** What is the implication of low patronage of Nigerian public universities by international students? 2.95 .954 2.98 .931

S/N	Implication	X	SD	Decision
1	It leads to poor ranking	2.95	0.954	Agree
2	Reduction of income	2.98	0.931	Agree
3	Low international outlook	2.92	0.955	Agree
<b>Grand Mean</b>		<b>2.78</b>		

Result from research question two on table two indicated that item 1 to 3 obtained had the following mean scores 2.95, 2.98, and 2.92 with a cumulative score of 2.78. This means that the respondents agreed that poor ranking, reduction of income and low international outlook are the implication of low patronage of Nigerian public universities by international students.

**Discussion**

The result collected showed centralized administration system, poor marketing, insecurity problem, unconducive learning environment, unstable academic calendar, poor development of public universities and lack of policies to encourage international students in Nigeria are the reasons for low patronage of Nigerian public universities. This result agrees with Olatunde-Aiyedun (2021); Ogunode, Eyiolorunse-Aiyedun and Olatunde-Aiyedun (2021); and Ogunode, Somadina, Yahaya & Olatunde-Aiyedun (2021) noted that a conducive learning environment should be provided for national and international students to achieve a desired learning outcome and attract more students globally to the Nigerian universities.

The result also revealed that poor ranking, reduction of income and low international outlook are the implication of low patronage of Nigerian public universities by international students. This is in agreement with Aiyedun et al., (2021); Ajemba, Ahmed, Ogunode and Olatunde-Aiyedun (2021); and Orji, Ogar and Aiyedun (2018).

**Conclusion**

The objective of this study was to study find out the perception of academic staff on the reasons for low patronage of Nigerian public universities by international students. Specific objectives include: to find out the reasons for low patronage of Nigerian public universities by international students; and to identify the implication of low patronage of Nigerian public universities by international students. The result collected showed that centralized administration system, poor marketing, insecurity problem, unconducive learning environment (inadequate infrastructural facilities, and learning materials), unstable academic calendar, poor development of public universities (leadership and autonomy problems) and lack of policies to encourage international students in Nigeria are the reasons for low patronage of Nigerian public universities. The result also revealed that poor ranking, reduction of income and low international outlook are the implication of low patronage of Nigerian public universities by international students.

**Recommendations**

- I. Government should increase its total expenditure on education to meet up with the UNESCO specification so as to attract international students all over the world to study in Nigerian universities.
- II. Government should begin the process of reviewing the university curriculum to meet industry standard.

- III. Nigerian universities should explore other models being adopted in the developed countries and seek alternative sources of funding i.e. through endowment from alumni, private individuals and corporations. This will help solve some of the funding problems which obviously are the foundation of all the other problems
- IV. Universities should create a learning environment where every student matters.
- V. Government should imbibe the culture of the proprietor/founder of private universities in area of aligning learning with living and entrenching it in their policy

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