

The Discernment of Students' Participants in Sandwich Education Programme in Some Nigerian Universities

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Abstract: Semi-structured questionnaire matrix was used to assess the discernment of participants of sandwich education programs on the programs in five of Nigerian universities. Results revealed that the sandwich system was readily accepted. Participants were of diverse socio-economic classes thus suggesting that the program is accessible to all. Employment was the dominant factor that deprived respondents from regular studentship. The mode of operations and quality of lecture delivery in the programs were comparable to those of the regular programs. The same entry requirements, curricula and personnel, assessment methods, disciplinary measures, welfare services and certificates were awarded. Same recognitions were accorded to the degrees awarded. The tuition fees paid by the sandwich students were higher than those of the regular programs, learning was more stressful and hostel accommodations were indecent and costly. Interactions with other students were poor due to gross lack of time. However, the program constitutes an avenue for self improvement as it offers opportunity to combine work with study. It also offers opportunity for provision of fund to finance the study and enhance participant personal traits such as time management skills, goals setting and hard working abilities.

Keywords: Sandwich education, socio-economic, welfare services, management skills

INTRODUCTION

The emergence of university education in Nigeria dates back to 1948 when the University College, Ibadan, an affiliate of the University of London, was established. But following the recommendation of the Ashby Commission set up by the British Colonial Government to study the necessity of university education for Nigeria; four additional universities were established [1, 2]. 12 additional universities were established in various parts of the country between 1970 and 1985. The Federal Government established 10 additional Universities between 1985 and 1999. Also since 1980 State Governments have started to invest in the establishment of Universities in the country [3, 4] and in 1993 the Federal Government established a law allowing private sectors to establish universities following guidelines prescribed by the Government. Presently, over 100 universities abound in Nigeria.

The universities were established primarily to meet the need for qualified personnel in the country whose population is projected to increased by 5,190,383 people and reach 199,805,437 in the beginning of 2019 [5]. Despite the proliferation of universities in the country, Abdullahi and Abdullah [6] asserted that the

country still possess the largest population of out-of-school youths in the world. Thus, various educational programs were set up to cater for this trend. These include the sandwich program, a post-independent adult education programmes.

The sandwich program offers candidates who are not privileged to pursue full time university education programme the opportunity to do so as the programme is usually held during school breaks and long vacations. At present, 13, 18 and 8 Federal, States and Private Universities respectively are offering sandwich education programme in the country [7, 8]. Also, the programme is limited to education courses and is regulated by the National Universities Commission. The objectives of the sandwich programme are to produce teachers at graduate and post-graduate levels, who have the mastery of various subjects, combined with a sound academic and professional training in education [9]. The study being reported here aimed at evaluating the discernment of the students' participants in the program, identify the deficiencies in its operation and proffer sustainable solutions to the identified problems.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Twenty (20) each of alumni and current students of sandwich education programs who were domiciled in Ekiti State were identified and interviewed with the aid of semi-structured questionnaire matrix. The interviews were focused, conversational and two-way in communication. The discernments of these respondents on sandwich programme were documented. Data obtained were expressed in frequencies and percentages.

RESULTS

The results obtained revealed that respondents in this study were associated with sandwich programmes of five universities in Nigeria. The Institutions were Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba- Akoko, Ondo State (AAUA), Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo State (AAU), Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State (EKSU), Olabisi

Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye, Ogun State (OOU) and University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Enugu State (UNN). Table-1 shows the distribution of the respondents according to their institutions. Most of the respondents were alumni and current students of EKSU, an institution located in the study area. While most of the alumni respondents were in the age group of 20-50 years, 50% of the current students' respondents were below 20 years in age (Table-2). The respondents were adherents of the two major religions in the country. While male dominated the alumni respondents, female dominated the current students. All the alumni respondents were employed while 80% of the current students' respondents were employed (Table 2). The results also revealed that 60% of the alumni were teachers and 44% of the employed current students were teachers. Others were involved in other white collar jobs, trading, bricklaying and tailoring. 20% of the current students' respondents were unemployed.

Table-1: Distribution of the respondents according to their institutions

Institutions attended by respondents	Respondents			
	Alumni		Current Students	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
AAUA	5	25	4	20
AAU	1	5	1	5
EKSU	11	55	12	60
OOU	1	5	1	5
UNN	2	10	2	10

Table-2: Socio-economic classification of respondents sampled

Feature	Description	Respondents			
		Alumni		Current Students	
		<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Age	< 20	-	-	10	50
	20-50	19	95	9	45
	>50	1	5	1	5
Sex	Male	11	55	8	40
	Female	9	45	12	60
Religion	Christian	12	60	14	70
	Muslim	8	40	6	30
Employment	Employed	20	100	16	80
	Teaching	12	60	7	(44% of the employed)
	Other White Collar job	5	25	5	(31% of the employed)
	Trading	2	10	2	(13% of the employed)
	Artisans	1	5	2	(13% of the employed)
	Unemployed	-	-	4	20

The examination of the primary factors that deprived respondents from regular attendance at the traditional universities by the respondents (Table-3) ranked employment highest. 45% of the respondents claimed to be employed as at the time they were ripped for admission into tertiary institution. 13% got married while another 13% were yet to obtain the minimum entry qualifications when their peers were offered

admissions into tertiary institutions. 10% each of the respondents lacked the required financial resources due to their family commitments and limited admission vacancies in the traditional universities respectively. Similarly, 5% each were deprived due to their physical abilities and the remoteness of their locations respectively

Table-3: Depriving factors to full time attendance of traditional universities by the respondents

Rank	Primary Factor	Respondents	
		f	%
1	Employment	18	45
2	Marital Issue	5	13
	Ineligibility (in term of qualification)	5	13
3	Family commitments	4	10
	Limited offer in the traditional universities	4	10
4	Physical disabilities	2	5
	Remoteness of localities	2	5

The mode of operations and quality of lecture delivery in the sandwich programs were comparable to those of the regular programs of the universities examined. The results obtained (Table-4) revealed that the entry requirements used, the curricula and personnel used were the same. Also, the assessment methods, disciplinary measures, welfare services and certificates awarded were the same. Same recognitions were accorded to the degrees awarded by the employers in both private and public sectors.

Table-4 also revealed that dissimilarities, however, abound in the fees paid by the sandwich

students. The tuition fees were higher than those of the regular programmes. Also, while regular programs were held on semester bases, those of sandwich were on contact bases. Two semesters constituted a season for the regular programs while a contact period constitutes a season in the sandwich programs. Thus while two sets of examinations were conducted in the regular programs in a session, a set is conducted in the sandwich programs hence the program is more stressful than those of the regular. 5 % of the respondents each were deprived of attendance at regular programs due to physical disabilities and remoteness of their places of abode respectively.

Table-4: Comparison between sandwich and full time programmes by respondents

Feature	Description
Entry requirements	Identical
Learning quality (Curricula and Personnel)	Identical
Assessment methods	Identical
Disciplinary measures	Identical
Certification	Identical
School fees	Different
Duration of Programs	Different
Stressfulness	Higher
Teaching delivery	Clumsy
Students' interaction	Low

Respondents identified a number of disincentives to participation in sandwich program. Most of the respondents (95%, Table-5) were of the opinion that most of the available accommodations were indecent and costly. Sandwich students were mostly adult that require decent accommodations with requisites conveniences and privacies. The costs of these accommodations were exploitative. School fees were often beyond the reach of the resource poor who might wanted to improve on their academics (Table-5). The program, during contact session, is perceived to be laden with crowded activities that leave little or no time for the students to be engaged in other activities or rest. Most respondents (80%) considered the exclusion of graduates of sandwich programs from the Nigerian National Service as a serious disincentive to the program hence many youths were not willing to

embrace the program. Similarly, the phobia of unemployment is being considered a disincentive as efforts and resources invested into the program are considered as wastes when economic returns are not forthcoming at the completion of the program.

However, all the respondents (Table-5) considered participation in sandwich programs as avenue for self-improvement. The fact that the program offers opportunity to combine work with study is considered an important attribute as provision of fund to finance the study is attainable. Also, the system enhanced improvement in the acquisition of job experience during the study. Similarly respondents reported that participation in sandwich program enhanced their personal traits such as time management skills, goals setting and hard working abilities.

Table-5: Respondents' perception on sandwich education program

Feature	Description	
	<i>f</i>	%
Disincentives		
Inadequate decent accommodation	38	95
High cost of accommodation	38	95
High school fees	36	90
Time management	35	88
Exclusion from National Service	32	80
Unemployment rate in the country	30	75
Incentives		
Avenue for improvement	40	100
Ability to combine work with study	37	93
Acquisition of job experience while study	37	93
Access to fund to finance study	36	90
Enhancement of personal traits development	36	90

DISCUSSION

This study revealed that the sandwich system is a form of western education that was readily accepted in the study area. Previous study by Jayeola-Omoyeni and Omoyeni [10] asserted that western education was widely accepted in southern Nigeria. The sandwich alumni and current students' respondents were of diverse socio-economic classes thus suggesting that sandwich program is an accessible program to all. It equally asserts that features such as age, sex, marital status, physical disability and employment status were not regarded as barriers to the acquisition of university education (Tables-2 & 3). Similarly, the aged assumption that one of the most common outcomes of marriage, especially early marriage, is the withdrawal of girls from formal education is now outdated and speculative as sandwich is providing the necessary antidote.

The present sandwich students in this study are made up of employed and unemployed individuals thus suggesting that sandwich offer the acquisition of knowledge to individual irrespective of their employment status. While the physically challenged individuals were usually scared of the ridiculous treatments they received from the young and relatively inexperienced youths that dominate the regular studentship in the traditional universities, sandwich students were dominated by mature and experienced individuals. OHRC [11] observes that students with disabilities encounter physical barriers to educational services, such as a lack of ramps and/or elevators in multi-level school buildings, heavy doors, inaccessible washrooms, and/or inaccessible transportation to and from school and difficulty in securing accessible students housing. Mature students of the sandwich program offer relieves that ameliorate these problems to the disables.

Information from the respondents also revealed the potentials of sandwich program in caring for the residents in remote locations who quite often are

deprived of information on the acquisition of university education. Over 70% of Nigeria population live in remote areas [12]. Before the advent of sandwich, many intending seekers of university education dwelling in the rural areas often give up after two or three trials. The sandwich program is now seen as a relive particularly as residency in the program is limited to the holiday most of which fall on off-farm periods.

The study received at the sandwich is comparable to those received by the regular students. The same admission requirements were used. They were being taught by the same set of lecturers, assessed in same manner and earring sandwich students are subjected to the same punishments. These tend to suggest that the quality of education delivered and received were similar to both sandwich and regular students. However, the results obtained revealed that a lot of disincentives still abound that could hinder patronage of the sandwich program (Table- 4 &5). The contact period is short hence time utilization is hectic and stressful. Students interaction is low, decent hostel accommodations are scarce and existing accommodations are expensive, service charges including the university fees are higher than those of the regular programs. The problems of hostel accommodation are further compounded by the fact that AAUA, EKSU and OOU were non-residential universities. Also, the exclusion of graduates from sandwich and other part-time programs from the Nigerian Youth Service Corps renders the program unattractive to the youths who indeed take pride and fulfilment in participating in the service.

The relationship between the respondents and the universities identified in this study was a 'win-win' situation. While the respondents acquired knowledge through the sandwich programs, the universities derived considerable revenue from the program. Nigerian universities lack adequate and regular funding [13]. The lack of funding has significantly hindered the quality, and implementation of literacy programs [14]. Thus, it

appears as if the primary aim of offering sandwich programs by these institutions is purely economic. The program therefore possessed enormous potentials to alleviating the economic problems of the participating universities.

In conclusion, the author asserts that sandwich program is a viable approach to disseminating knowledge, especially at the university level. Efforts should be made to address the identified disincentives established in this study. Universities can collaborate in public-private ventures to provide descent hostel accommodation for the mature students of sandwich programs. The defunct Students' Loans Board should be resuscitated and made to offer low interest loans to students in the sandwich programs. The possibilities of extending sandwich program to other disciplines, such as the social and management sciences, law and humanities should be considered. Universities should be adequately funded as this will enable them play their traditional roles of ensuring equity and equality of opportunities in education, provide wider access to flexible and qualitative education for all.

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