

Determinants of Enrolment and Problems of the Sandwich Degree Program in Nigeria

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Abstract: This study investigated the determinants of enrolment and problems of the sandwich degree program in Nigeria. The purpose was to find the factors which motivated students to enrol in the sandwich degree program as well as the problems which the students faced in the course of the program. The study employed the descriptive survey research design. The population for the study comprised all the sandwich students of the University of Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria. The sample consisted of 241 sandwich students randomly selected from the population. The Questionnaire for Reasons and Problems of the Sandwich Program was the instrument used to collect the data and the data were analysed using frequency counts and simple percentages. Three research questions were raised and answered in the study. The findings shows that the quest to improve effective performance on the job and the quest for higher income determined the enrolment of sandwich degree students in the program. It was also found that the lack of adequate finance was the major problem faced by the students. Based on these findings, some recommendations were made.

Key words: Enrolment and problems, sandwich degree program, higher education, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

One of the major concerns about higher education in Nigeria in recent times has been the possibility of delivering qualitative education effectively in non-formal settings. This has been due to the emergence of numerous non-formal higher education centres in Nigeria which claim to offer quality education to the daily increasing large number of people needing education beyond the four walls of the University. That same number is increasing partly because the existing public and private higher institutions do not have enough spaces to enrol all eligible and prospective students and also because many who are already working as civil servants and especially teachers and who do not yet have the Bachelors Degree seek for opportunities that would enable them to upgrade their qualifications without having to quit their jobs (Ogunojemite, 2006).

It is, therefore, necessary that opportunities for in-service training exist especially for practising teachers whose activities on the job would have a lot of implications on the overall educational development of the country. This is more important because Nigeria as a nation has its own objectives which the educational system must strive to achieve towards finding solutions to social and economic problems (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004). Ample opportunities for higher education are certainly veritable means of attaining these. Since, it

has been found that it is much cheaper to produce graduate teachers through the sandwich degree program than the regular degree program (Borode, 2003), the former therefore, provides the means for government to produce graduate teachers at optimal level.

Therefore, universities are allowed to run sandwich programs in Nigeria where practising teachers who are non-degree holders are enrolled to study for the Bachelors degree program during the vacation periods of primary and secondary schools. But, there is the need to find how these sandwich programs are faring since they are not without problems (Adeosun, 2006). More important is what problems the recipients of the programs face in the course of their studies.

Moreover, it had been said that the sandwich programs provide opportunity for practising teachers to upgrade their qualifications. In a country where unemployment is rampant (Kpakol, 2004; Shonekan, 2007), why would they want to further their studies? Could it be for job security or to improve academic qualifications?

This pertinent question as to the reasons for studying while working had been the concern of some scholars (Fasokun, 1984; Duyilemi, 1997). In his study of some final year sandwich students, Duyilemi (1997) found improvement of academic qualifications and self-actualization as the most important reasons for students' enrolment in the Sandwich Program. In the

study, job security ranked sixth in position as reason for enrolment and only 53.5% of the respondents claimed its importance as against 85.43 and 76.25% for improvement of academic qualifications and self actualization, respectively. Can the same be said of today, eleven years after? This study therefore sought to investigate the determinants of enrolment and problems of the sandwich degree program in Nigeria.

Research questions: Among questions which arose from the research problem, the following guided the conduct of this study.

- What are the determinants of enrolment in the sandwich degree program in Nigeria?
- What are the problems encountered by sandwich degree students in the course of running the program?
- Will the determinants of enrolment be influenced by sex?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research design: This study employed the descriptive research design of the survey type. This is simply on the fact that the data needed for the study already exist. They were not newly created and neither were they manipulated. The study sought to investigate and describe the existing data.

Sample and sampling technique: The population for the study comprises all the sandwich students of the University of Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria who are spread all over the South-Western part of Nigeria. They are a little above 2,000 in number and most of them are teachers spread all over the 6 states of South-West, Nigeria.

The sample consisted of 241 sandwich student who are practising teachers and who were randomly selected from the population. The stratified random sampling technique was adopted to select the sample. This took

care of the demographic characteristics of the subjects, especially sex and area of specialization. The demographic characteristics are presented in Table 1.

Research instrument: The instrument used for the study is a Questionnaire for Reasons and Problems of the Sandwich Program (QRPSP) which was designed and validated by the researcher. The instrument consisted of three separate parts. Section A, which had 10 items, asked for the biodata of the respondents. Section B, which is an adapted Likert type and which also had 10 items, sought the reasons behind the respondent’s enrolment into the sandwich program while section C asked for information elaborating on problems encountered by the respondents while undergoing the sandwich program.

Research procedure and data analysis: The instrument was administered to the respondents personally by the researcher and three research assistants. Analyses of data were also done by means of frequency counts and simple percentages.

RESULTS

Demographic characteristics of the respondents: A summary of the demographic characteristics of the respondents is displayed in Table 1.

Table 1 shows that out of the 241 respondents 115 were male and 126 were female. Of these also, 79 were single while 162 were married. Moreover, the distribution according to subject specialization shows 106 for Arts, 91 for Science and 44 for Social Sciences. Only 5 of the respondents had access to financial assistance while 236 of them sponsored themselves. Again, 86 of them has had on-the-job seminar experience while 155 of them has never had such experience.

Determinants of enrolment: In order to answer the research question on the determinants of enrolment in the sandwich degree program in Nigeria, the data collected were subjected to frequency counts and simple percentages. The results are displayed in Table 2.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of respondents

	Sex		Marital status		Subject specialization			Access to financial assistance		On -the-job seminar experience	
	Male (1)	Female (2)	Single (1)	Married (2)	Arts (1)	Science (2)	Social Science (3)	Yes (1)	No (2)	Yes (1)	No (2)
(1)		(i) 115 (47.7)	(ii) 79 (32.8)			(iii) 106 (44.0)			(iv) 5 (02.1)		(v) 86 (35.7)
(2)		126 (52.3)	162 (67.2)			91 (37.8)			236 (97.9)		155 (64.3)
(3)		-	-			44 (18.2)			-		-
N	241		241		241			241		241	

Note: Percentages are indicated in parentheses

Merging the Strongly Agree response with Agree Table 2 shows that effective performance ranks highest among determinants for enrolment with 95.4% while the quest for higher income is next with 56.3%. The quest for higher qualification had 48.4 while job security had 43.9% and self-actualisation, which is last, had 27.7%. Therefore, the quest for effective performance on the teaching job and the quest for higher income are the determinants of enrolment in the sandwich program.

It would, however, be noted that the total number of respondents in each of the items is less than 241. This is because a few respondents failed to complete the required information on all the items. The numbers are however too small to affect the results.

Problems of the sandwich degree program: In order to answer the research question on the problems encountered by the sandwich degree students, the data collected were subjected to frequency counts and simple percentages and the results are displayed in Table 3.

Table 3 shows that the major problem faced by sandwich degree students is the lack of adequate finance (80.1%) to undertake the program. This is followed by accommodation problems (38.6%). Other problems mentioned by the respondents but which do not really show any percentage that can be reckoned with include time table (11.6%), water (6.6%), electricity (5.4%), transportation (5.0%) and workload (1.7%).

Gender influence on the determinants of enrolment: In order to answer the research question on the influence of sex on the determinants of enrolment, the data collected were subjected to frequency counts and simple percentages. The results are displayed in Table 4.

Table 4 shows that irrespective of gender, the quest for effective performance and that for higher income determined enrolment among sandwich degree students. The percentages recorded for male and female when the strongly agree and agree columns were merged show 92.8 and 97.6, respectively for effective performance on the job and 51.4 and 60.4, respectively for higher income. they also show 41.4 and 54.4, respectively for higher qualification and 49.6 and 38.9, respectively for job security. It is therefore, deduced that the determinants for enrolment are not influenced by sex.

Table 2: Response pattern on determinants of enrolment

Determinants	N	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
For job security	239	43 (18.0)	62 (25.9)	63 (26.4)	71 (29.7)
Accomplishing self-actualisation	238	25 (10.5)	41 (17.2)	74 (31.1)	98 (41.2)
For effective performance of teaching job.	240	150 (62.5)	79 (32.9)	06 (2.5)	05 (2.1)
For higher income	238	54 (22.7)	80 (33.6)	54 (22.7)	50 (21.0)
For higher qualification.	236	57 (24.2)	57 (24.2)	81 (34.3)	41 (17.3)

Note: Percentages are indicated in parentheses

Table 3: Problems encountered by sandwich degree students

Problem	N	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of finance	241	193	80.1
Accommodation	241	93	38.6
Time table problems	241	28	11.6
Water problems at			
Course centre	241	16	6.6
Electricity problems	241	13	5.4
Transportation	241	12	5.0
Workload	241	4	1.7

Table 4: Gender influence on the determinants of enrolment

Determinants	Male					Female				
	N	Strongly agree	Agree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	N	Strongly agree	Agree	Strongly disagree	Disagree
For job security	113	22 (19.5)	34 (30.1)	27 (23.9)	30 (26.5)	126	28 (16.7)	36 (22.2)	41 (28.6)	21 (32.5)
Accomplishing self-actualization	112	15 (13.4)	20 (17.9)	32 (28.5)	45 (40.2)	126	10 (7.9)	21 (16.7)	42 (33.3)	53 (42.1)
For effective performance of teaching job	112	69 (61.5)	35 (31.3)	4 (3.6)	4 (3.6)	126	80 (63.5)	43 (34.1)	2 (1.6)	1 (0.8)
For higher income	112	20 (17.9)	38 (33.9)	28 (25.0)	26 (23.2)	126	34 (27.1)	42 (33.3)	25 (19.8)	25 (19.8)
For higher qualification	111	19 (17.1)	27 (24.3)	43 (38.7)	22 (19.9)	125	38 (30.4)	30 (24.0)	38 (30.4)	19 (15.2)

Note: Percentages are indicated in parentheses

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study have revealed that the quest for effective performance on the job and that for higher income determined enrolment into the sandwich degree program in Nigeria. This is a clear departure from the findings of Duyilemi (1997), who found improvement of academic qualifications and self-actualization as the major reasons for enrolment into the sandwich program. Actually, Duyilemi (1997) was the report of a study conducted eleven years ago. Since then, many things have changed. The economy has fared better and school enrolment has increased tremendously, creating challenges of effective performance in the teaching profession. In Duyilemi's (1997) study, effective performance ranked fourth while job security ranked sixth. Those were the days when teachers were very poorly paid and they had no motivation on the job. They therefore, did not bother about effective performance.

It is, however worthy of note that the quest for high income which is attendant upon higher qualification is a determinant of enrolment in the sandwich program. This is one reason that was not listed in the instrument used by Duyilemi (1997). With the improvement in the economy and better treatment of teachers, they have come to value good life and the necessity to improve on it through higher income. Little wonder, therefore, that they sought higher income through higher education.

Although, the findings do not show any serious influence on the determinants of enrolment by sex, it is instructive that job security was more important to the male respondents than just securing higher qualification. Almost half of them (49.6%) signified this as against the 38.9% of the female respondents. The female respondents prefer higher qualification (54.4%) to job security. This is also understandable. Culturally, in south-west Nigeria, the man has the responsibility of providing for the family. He, therefore, must be more concerned about job security which the woman may not bother herself about.

The study revealed that lack of adequate resources to finance the sandwich degree program has been the major problem faced by the sandwich students. A total number of 193 (80.1%) of the respondents signified this. The response is corroborated by the data in Table 1 which shows that only 2.1% of the respondents had access to financial assistance to undertake the program. The problem becomes more pronounced when one takes cognizance of the fact that the students enrolled for the program so they could be more effective on the job. This means that they would actually need adequate resources to achieve their aim. To them, whether the program would worth the trouble must depend on the

level of improvement on the job which they have received from the program. This may only be ensured through financial assistance to them for the purchase of materials as well as the provision of adequate infrastructural amenities and instructional materials at their course centres. It, however does not appear that these have been ensured.

CONCLUSION

This study has revealed that the desire to perform more effectively on the job and to earn higher income are more pronounced in determining enrolment into the sandwich degree program in Nigeria. This has brought to the fore the necessity to give financial assistance to sandwich degree students and to make their course centres more conducive to learning as these would translate into higher quality in secondary education in Nigeria. The study also revealed that gender has no pronounced influence on the determinants of enrolment since the improvement of on-the-job performance has been paramount in the hearts of both male and female respondents. The study revealed that lack of adequate finance constitutes the major problem faced by sandwich degree students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- Nigerian Federal and State Governments should regularly provide financial assistance to sandwich degree students who are practising teachers so as to encourage them in their quest to improve their on-the-job performance.
- Nigerian Universities which run sandwich degree programs should make the centres more conducive to effective learning through adequate electricity and water supplies, comfortable accommodation as well as providing modern and effective instructional materials which would ensure that the quest to improve performance is clearly realized by the sandwich degree students.

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