

## A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE PROBLEMS OF POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS OF THE FACULTY OF EDUCATION IN UNIVERSITIES IN EDO AND DELTA STATES

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This study was designed to carry out a comparative study of the problems of Postgraduate students in the faculty of education in universities in Edo and Delta states. The study employed a descriptive survey research design. The population consisted of one thousand two hundred and forty-seven (1,247) post graduate students and sample size of three hundred and four (374) which is 30% of the population was used in the study. Five research hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. Questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. The data were analyzed by use of Z- Test of significant (to test the formulated hypotheses). The results of the data analyzed revealed that there is no significant difference between male and female postgraduate students in Edo and Delta states with respect to the problems they encountered in their postgraduate study. Postgraduate students in both federal and State universities experienced the same problems in their studies. It was discovered from the study that there is no significant difference between postgraduate students in Edo-Delta in the problems they faced during the course of their programmes. Students of P.G.D.E and M.Ed also encountered the same problems in the course of their programmes. The study revealed that the students of M.Ed. and Ph.D in universities in Edo-Delta experienced similar problems in their studies. Based on the findings, it was recommended that Universities administrators and other relevant bodies should organize training for inexperience and newly employed academics, especially in the area of research and supervision.*

## INTRODUCTION

After Nigerian independence in October 1st, 1960, there was increased social and industrial demand for education. This scenario resulted in the expansion of the Nigerian Educational System at all levels to meet the yearnings of the people, particularly at the tertiary cadre for the production of high man power to Mann various offices where vacuums have been created following the colonial masters evacuation and hand-over of power to Nigerians (Itedjere, 2005). Before this time, it was recorded that there were only two notable tertiary institutions in Nigeria called Yaba Technical College, Lagos; and the other, known as University College, Ibadan (UCI), now the University of Ibadan (UI) which was even an affiliate of the University of London at that time it was established in 1948 by the British Government (Okiy, 1998). According to Itedjere (2004), few Nigerians were absolved and trained in these institutions. It was immediately after October 1st, 1960, that this bondage got broken following the establishment of the University of Nigeria, Nnsukka (UNN) in the eastern region on October 7th, 1960 and several others in various regions of the country by the Federal Government. This growth trend went on and on, such that in 1972 the Mid-Western region now Edo Delta was remembered following the establishment of the University of Benin (Uniben) that metamorphosed from the Midwest Institute of Technology (MIT) that was established in 1970 (Yamah, 1995) to cater for its high educational needs. Fortunately, it was the last among the so classified first generation universities in the country today (Duze, 1997).

The growth pattern also continued till now through the second and the third generation in the 80s and 90s in which State Governments were involved in the establishment of Universities to cater for her/ their teaming citizens needing higher education. It was at this period that the Bendel State University, Ekpoma now Ambrose All University, Ekpoma was established that later gave birth to Delta State University, Abraka, following the split of the then Bendel State into Edo-Delta in August, 1991 by the then Babangida's regime (Delta State University Post — Graduate School Prospectus, 2005). Dramatically, the growth trend has today extended its tentacles into the private sector across the country, wherein private individuals or bodies have embarked on the establishment of Universities at their own capacity, such that today we now have over 92 Universities in Nigeria (Olukotun, 2007). The universities are under the approval and coordination of the National Universities Commission (NUC) to ensure uniformity of standards. Although, this status of the NUC s questionable today across the country, as it is often allege that University Education Standard is continuously falling. Today, we now have several private Universities in Edo-Delta such as Benson Idahosa University, Benin City, Edo State; Igbenedion University, Okada, Edo State; Novena University, Amai, Delta State, and Western Delta University Oghara Delta State etc. (Jamb Brochure, 2008; and Itedjere, 2005).

These universities run various programmes at different modes ranging from Diploma Certificate through First Degree to Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D) and Cutting across Regular full-time, Part-time, Sandwich and Weekend among others. However, three, out of the existing eight (8) Universities in Edo-Delta offered Postgraduate programmes in like manner to those of their counterparts across the country and beyond. Postgraduate programmes are often handled in Universities because of their research oriented nature (Igun&Adogbeji, 2007). In spite of the availability or provision of the postgraduate programmes in our universities, many Nigerians including the Edos and Deltans prefer to study abroad (Duze, 1997, cities Onilude, 1989). This scenario must have resulted from numerous problems plaguing the educational system in Nigeria at the University level in which Postgraduate programmes or courses are offered. Such problems according to Koen (2007) are weaknesses in higher education research based studies that are capable of distorting Postgraduate programmes. He mentioned that perhaps not surprising, since opportunism and a “publish to advance” and “come to work to teach” mentality is more visible than a “research and learn” mentality. Moreover, Fanthrome (2007) is of the opinion that Postgraduate studies are academic; and that academic work is about discourse, you need to discuss your own work as well as take part in the discussion of other’s work, that it is only in this way you will benefit from the criticisms of your students, peers and academic mentors and learn the conventions of academic life. Koen (2007) however emphasized that salvaging such problems would go a long way to better position postgraduate practices; structures and institutional culture and consequently help master’s students and their counterpart to pursue their studies creatively.

In this ambience, Duze (1997) earlier stressed that the growth trend of Universities in Nigeria is however expansive rather than developmental in nature; hence some critics have referred to some of these Nigerian Universities as merely “Glorified secondary schools”. One of such critics in recent time is Rotimi (2007), who described most of our universities as “Glorified Nursery Schools”. It is also observable that most of the Universities in Edo —Delta are not far from this form of criticisms or claims due to several reasons relating to inadequacy of human and material resources needed for functional and efficient production of high “human capital development” of our national labour force. To further confirm the above claims, it was just recently that some opportuned Nigerians described “Nigeria” as a foolish country at 48 years of independence. They contend that only about 40% of Nations’ building has been achieved since independence, and so or through open air radio programmes (Voice of Delta Radio, under the Frank Talk” programme of 30th September, 2008 at about 12:15pm and October 1st, 2008 Network News Commentary, 7:00am). To this end, poor educational system was mentioned as a paramount factor, in which postgraduate studies have been described as “organizational vehicle” for knowledge production necessary in nations building (Keen, 2007). What a nation whose educational system

has been bedeviled with a lot of problems? No wonder most opportunists have chosen to leave the shores of this country to study mostly at the postgraduate level, and even preferred to stay back abroad (Duze, 1997).

Relatively, and without doubt, several problems have been involved and still plaguing the educational system in Nigeria including those in Edo-Delta at the University Cadre. Such problems range from students personal ones, through institutional and societal problems.(Holderness, 2000). Others noticeable problems are inadequate administrative building, lecture halls and Hostels; machinery and equipment for science laboratories, workshop and lack of well stock libraries. Also, problems of electricity, good water, immorality, non-conformity with postgraduate academic calendar, commodification and commercialization of postgraduate programmes, funding, staffing, planning and implementation among other infrastructures without: an attempt of forgetting the issue of corruption in the educational system and the country at large (Awhefeada, 2007; Olukotu, 2007; Rotimi 2007).

The consequence of these anomalies is negatively high on part of their products or postgraduate students. The implications must have been the reasons why some critics alleged/described postgraduate programmes in Delta State University “as an everlasting type”. For instance, the Postgraduate school of the University of Lagos recently published a handbook on its activities that in 30 years period, not up to 20 Ph.Ds graduated in any one of the social sciences. For Mass Communication for example, only one Ph.D was produced in that 30 years period (Olukotun, 2007). The situation might not be different of those in Edo-Delta.

Deductively, there is great gap between “what is on ground” and what ought to be on ground” in facilitating the achievement of the aims and objectives of postgraduate studies in Nigeria to include those in Edo-Delta. Although, there was no specific definition of the aims and objectives of postgraduate studies in Nigeria, rather the aims of higher education were all lumped together in one piece in the 1981 National Policy on Education. This scenario might have far reaching implications on the postgraduate programmes that could be of elongated duration of courses, frustration, abandonment of programmes by students and ill-prepared graduates from the programmes. It could be recalled that the Ashby Report (1960) as cited by Itdejere (2005), examined the possibilities of postgraduate’ studies and recommended that there should be postgraduate studies scholarships for both Nigerians and overseas graduates. It also recommended that the planners and financers of University education in Nigeria should provide opportunities for research in both the science and the humanities.

Today however, Nigeria’s educational structure is 6-3-3-4 system (National Policy on education (NPE), 2004) with a current proposal of the 9-3-4 system under the Universal Basic Education (UBE) system in 2008.

Earlier, and according to Duze (1997), there was yet a mention of postgraduate education in these structures. It seems that postgraduate studies neither receive attention nor attracted appreciable interest from both the public and the government since inception. This inadequacy may likely have contributed to the problems encountered by postgraduate students in Nigerian Universities including those in Edo- Delta states. For instance, Peretomode (2008) in his inaugural lecture entitled “What is higher in higher education”, highlighted some relative problems such as shrinking institutional budgets, lecturer’ teaching style, and other necessary infrastructures such as substandard library, science laboratory, as well as problems of corruption, dishonesty, students’ behaviour, lack of committed books publishers and high cost of publishing/ publication among others have also contributed to weaknesses in postgraduate programmes. This situation is worsened by the persistent pressures and challenges from the outside (Foreign countries) environments (Duze, 1997). Although these inadequacies, criticisms and observations seem well- meaning, it is not known the extent to which they constitute stumbling - blocks to postgraduate students in universities in Edo- Delta.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Learning and teaching are interdependent and complementary experience. Good learning environment encourages good study habit and consequently strengthens the ability to research in which postgraduate programme basically rest its weight. Results from surveyed postgraduate studies abroad indicated student’s satisfaction. It was reported that students surveyed feel that the learning experience is stimulating, prompt, encourages students’ questioning, reasoning, critical thinking, as well as ability to participate actively in the investigation and analysis of problems (University of Birmingham Report, 2007). The case seems different in Nigerian Universities including those in Edo-Delta following several criticisms and observations. Hence, it is commonly alleged in Nigeria today that if one wishes to undergo postgraduate studies without tears, one should get out of the country to do so. Some people have even sworn not to study at the postgraduate level in Nigeria. They claim that the system is bedeviled with all sorts of problems ranging from institutional, through students’ personal/psychological to socio-political/societal problems. It is against this background that this study attempts to carried out a comparative analysis of the problems of postgraduate student’s of the faculty of education in universities in Edo- Delta states.

## **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The main purpose of the study is to carry out a comparative study of the problems of Postgraduate students in the faculty of education in universities in Edo and Delta states. Other specific purposes are:

- i. To identify the problems of postgraduate studies between male and female University students in Edo – Delta states
- ii. To determine problems of postgraduate studies between Federal and State University in Edo – Delta states
- iii. To reveal the problems of postgraduate studies between postgraduate studies in Universities in Edo and Delta States.

## RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The study will be guided by the following null hypotheses:

- i. There is no significant difference between problems of male and female postgraduate students in Universities in Edo- Delta.
- ii. There is no significant difference between problems of postgraduate studies in Federal owned Universities and State owned Universities in Edo and Delta State.
- iii. There is no significant difference between problems of postgraduate studies in Universities in Edo and Delta States.
- iv. There is no significant difference between problems encountered by students of Master’s Degree (M.Ed.) and those of Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) in the course of their study.
- v. There is no significant difference between problems encountered by students of Ph.D and those of M.Ed in the course of their study.

## METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive design to examine or analyse the problem of postgraduate student in universities in Edo-Delta states. A descriptive survey was considered appropriate in this study, because it is capable of bringing out the current status of an event (Egbule&Okobia, 2001). In this case, it would be able to give the current status of postgraduate students’ problems in Universities in Edo-Delta. The population of this study consists of students undertaking Ph.D, Master Degree in Education (M.Ed) and Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) Programmes in three Universities in Edo-Delta. The Universities therefore are: University of Benin (Uniben), Ambrose All University, Ekpoma; and Delta State University, Abraka. They are 1,247 students in number (students’ statistics for 2016/2017 academic year record obtained from the respective Academic planning/Department office). The sample for the study was drawn from the population of the different Departments existing in the three Universities undertaking the Ph.D, M.Ed and PGDE Programmes in Edo-Delta.



The sample size for the study was put at 30% (374) and was considered adequate. The 30% sample size chosen conforms to the recommendations of Ama (2004), who asserted that if the population is about 1,000, then 30% sample ratio will be adequate as shown. The sample is drawn through the systematic sampling techniques using the nth number (n representing approximately 4 in the sample frame) of the respective universal population of the study. This systematic sampling technique was employed in order to avoid drawing a biased sample i.e. to ensure that the different groups (Universities programmes) under study are adequately represented in the sample (Egbule&Okobia, 1998). The questionnaire was the instrument use for data collection in this study. The questionnaire was administered to the respondents (students) in their respective institutions and in lecture halls through the assistance/permission of course lecturers/coordinators. The data obtained from the copies of questionnaires retrieved from respondents were analysed using Z- Test of significant (to test the formulated hypotheses). The Z-test statistical technique was chosen because the population sample size was more than 120 respondents (Egbule, 2003). The subsequently calculated Z —test values were tested at 0.05 level of significant. The formula for calculating the Z-test is shown as:

$$Z = \frac{\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2}{\sqrt{\frac{S_1^2}{n_1} + \frac{S_2^2}{n_2}}}$$

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

**Table1: Response Rate of the Respondents**

Institutions of the respondents	Category	Administered copies of the Questionnaire		Number Returned Completed and Used	Percentage %	Rank	Number lost or Uncompleted	Percentage %	Rank	Total Percentage %
		Program	Total							
University of Benin (Uniben)	Federal	PhD(Ed)10	156	152	97.4%	1	4	2.6%	3	100%
		M.Ed 61								
		PGDE 85								
Ambrose Ali University	State	PhD(Ed)7	88	82	93.2%	3	6	6.8%	1	100%
		M.Ed 55								

Ekpoma		PGDE 26								
Delta State University Abraka	State	PhD(Ed)9	130	126	96.9%	2	4	3.1%	2	100%
		M.Ed 79								
		PGDE 42								
<b>Grand Total</b>	-	-	<b>374</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>96.3%</b>	-	<b>14</b>	<b>3.7%</b>	-	<b>100%</b>

Data presented in Table1 above, shows that out of the 156 copies of distributed questionnaires to University of Benin, 152 (97.4%) that rank (1) on the table were retrieved completed and 4 copies lost; while 82 (93.2%) was returned as Against 88 distributed to Ambrose All University, Ekpoma. Also, out of the 130 copies administered to Delta State University, Abraka, 126 (96.9%) were returned completed, both having ranked numbers 3 and 2 respectively on the table. It implies that the rate of return of administered questionnaire is high in the institutions sampled as can be seen from their insignificant margin or differences in percentage. This may be due to the common factors surrounding the region and the nation at large in which they are located as well as the trend in their historic development.

**Table2 Gender Distribution of the Respondents**

Gender	Number of Respondents	Percentage	Rank
Male	168	47%	2
Female	192	53%	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>100%</b>	-

Source: Fieldwork (2007/2008)

Table 2 reveals the gender distribution of the respondents that shows 192 (53%) females with rank number (1) and 168 (47%) of males that ranked number (2) on the table. It shows that there are more female students in the postgraduate programme than their male counterparts in the study.

**Table 3 Respondents' Programme of Study**

Programme	Number of Respondents	Percentage	Rank
PGDE	148	41%	2
M.Ed	186	52%	1
Ph.D	26	7%	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>100%</b>	-



Table 3 shows the respondents programme of study. Master's in education (M.Ed) 186 (52%) ranked highest or first. Followed by Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) with 48 (41%) and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) came last with 26 (7%). This is an indication that more students enrolled into M.Ed Programme than other levels in postgraduate programmes of universities in Edo- Delta states.

## TESTING OF FORMULATED HYPOTHESES

**H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant difference between problems faced by male and female postgraduate students in Universities in Edo and Delta states.**

Analysis of null hypothesis one (1) is shown or summary table 4

**Table 4: Z-Test Summary Table Show Whether Difference Exists or Not between Male and Female Postgraduate Students in the Problems They Encountered in their programme.**

Gender	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Df	Z cal	Z Critical	Level of Significant	Remark
Male	168	1.56	0.54	358	1.75	1.96	0.05	Not significant Accepted
Female	192	2.15	0.35					
<b>Total</b>	<b>360</b>							

The result presented in Table 4 shows that calculated (Z) is 1.75 and (Z) critical is 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance. This means that the null hypothesis of no significant difference tested is accepted because the calculated (Z) (1.75) is less than the (Z) critical (1.96). It therefore implies that there is no significant difference between male and female postgraduate students on the problem they encountered in the programme. This means that the same problems such as poor supervision, lack of facilities and poor relationship between supervisors and students militate against both genders in their postgraduate studies. This finding is in conformity with the study of Olukotu (2007) who pointed out some of the problem facing postgraduate programmes to include: electricity, immorality, non-conformity with postgraduate academic calendar, commodification and commercialization of postgraduate programmes, funding, staffing, lack of infrastructure development and the issue of corruption.

**Hypothesis II**

**There is no significant difference between problems of postgraduate students in Federal owned Universities and State owned Universities.**

Analysis of null hypothesis two (II) is shown on summary table5

**Table 5: Z-Test Summary table showing whether difference exist or not between problems of Postgraduate Student in Federal owned Universities and those of State owned Universities**

Category of Universities	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Df	Z cal	Z Critical	Level of Significant	Remark
Federal	152	2.34	0.12	358	1.75	1.96	0.05	Not significant Accepted
State	208	2.13	0.64					
<b>Total</b>	<b>360</b>							

From the result in table 5, the null hypothesis of no significant difference is accepted. This is because the (z) calculated of 1.05 is less than (z) critical of 1.96. This implies that there is no significant difference between postgraduate students in Federal and State Universities on the problems they faced in their postgraduate programme. This is an indication that the same problems affect both Federal and State Postgraduate students in universities in Edo Delta State, These problems have succeeded in reducing our universities to “gloried secondary schools”. This Finding support the work of Rotimi (2007) who described most of our Universities as “Glorified Nursery schools” due to the numerous and unaddressed problems militating against smooth learning and completion of postgraduate programmes in our Universities.

**Hypothesis III**

**There is no significant difference between problems of postgraduate students in Universities in Edo State and those in Delta State**

Analysis of null hypothesis three (III) is shown on Summary table 6.

**Table 6: Z — Test Summary Table Showing whether difference exist or not between problems of Postgraduate Students in Universities in Edo State and those of their Counterparts in Delta State**

State	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Df	Z cal	Z Critical	Level of Significant	Remark
Delta	126	28.18	2.22	358	1.75	1.96	0.05	Not significant Accepted
Edo	234	28.41	4.48					
<b>Total</b>	<b>360</b>							

The analysis presented in Table 6 shows that the null hypothesis tested was accepted. This is so because the Z-Calculated value of 1.36 is less than the Z-critical value of 1.96. This shows that the problems militating against postgraduate students in the universities in Edo and Delta State are not significantly different. These problems are Obvious and conspicuous in our universities today. This finding complements the study of Duze (1997) who opines that in spite of the availability or provision of the postgraduate programme in our universities, many Nigerians including the Edos and Deltans prefer to study abroad.

**Hypothesis IV**

**There is no significant difference between problems encountered by students of Master’s Degree (M.Ed) and those of postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) in the course of their study**

Analysis of null hypothesis four (IV) is shown on table 7 below

**Table 7: Z — Test summary table showing whether difference ex or not between problems of Masters Students and those of their PGDE counterparts.**

Programme	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Df	Z cal	Z Critical	Level of Significant	Remark
M.Ed	186	23.16	6.52	332	1.85	1.96	0.05	Not significant Accepted
PGDE	148	24.04	7.21					
<b>Total</b>	<b>334</b>							

Table 7 revealed that the null hypothesis of no significant difference tested is accepted. This is so because the calculated (1.85) is less than the (z) critical (1.96). This implies there is no significant difference in the problems both Masters (M.Ed) and Postgraduate Diploma in education (PGDE) students experience during the course of their programme. The simple reason for this is that the two programmes are run in the same institution of higher learning and as such, they suffer the same setback limitations. This finding corroborates the study of Holderness (2000) who emphasized the said problems range from student personal problems, institutional and societal problems.

**Hypothesis V**

**There is no significant difference between problems encountered by students of Ph.D and those of M.Ed in the course of their study.**

Analysis of null hypothesis five (v) is shown o table 4.15 below.

**Table 8: Z- Test summary table showing whether difference exist or not between problems of Ph.D students and those of their M. Ed Counterparts in their Course of Study**

Programme	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Df	Z cal	Z Critical	Level of Significant	Remark
Ph.D	26	3.34	1.73	210	0.53	1.96	0.05	Not significant Accepted
M.Ed	186	3.11	1.23					
<b>Total</b>	<b>212</b>							

Table 8 reveals that the null hypothesis of no significant difference tested is accepted. This is because the (z) calculated of 0.53 is less than the (z) critical of 1.96. This simply shows that there is no significant difference between Ph.D and M.Ed postgraduate students on the problems they faced in their programme. These problems have brought about high dropout rate and delay in completing postgraduate programmes in universities in Edo and Delta State. This finding complements that of Olukotum (2007) who reports that University of Lagos recently published a handbook on its activities and that in 30 years period, not up to 20 Ph.D students graduated in any one of the Social Sciences, and for mass communication, only one Ph.D students was produced in that 30 years period. The problems of postgraduate studies cut across all universities in Edo and Delta states of Nigeria.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- i. The study disclosed that there is no significant difference between male and female postgraduate students in Edo and Delta states with respect to the problems they encountered in their postgraduate study.
- ii. Postgraduate students in both federal and State universities experienced the same problems in their studies
- iii. It was discovered from the study that there is no significant difference between postgraduate students in Edo-Delta in the problems they faced during the course of their programmes.
- iv. Students of P.G.D.E and M.Ed also encountered the same problems in the course of their programmes.
- v. The study revealed that the students of M.Ed. and Ph.D in universities in Edo-Delta experienced similar problems in their studies

## CONCLUSION

The study indicated that postgraduate studies in Edo-Delta universities are bedeviled by several problems. The problems are similar irrespective of sex, state, status of the university and programme. These problems that plagued postgraduate programmes in universities in Edo and Delta states resulted to prolonged study duration and sometimes abandonment of programmes. Postgraduate programmes in Edo-Delta therefore appear discouraging and disheartening. No wonder, most intending postgraduate students prefer to study abroad if opportune.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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

- i. Universities administration and other relevant bodies should organize training for inexperience and newly employed academic, especially in the area of research ad supervision.
- ii. Universities' management should at least provide the basic facilities that will enable students to carry out their studies in a conducive environment.
- iii. The government and other university stakeholders should provide/implement scholarship and research grants policies for postgraduate students as means of financial supports.

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