DEVELOPING POSSIBLE STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IMPROVEMENT OF HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM MANAGEMENT STUDENTS IN NIGERIA A STUDY OF KWARA STATE UNIVERSITY

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Abstract

This paper focuses on developing possible strategies for improving the academic achievement of hospitality and tourism management (HTM) students in Nigeria. The main purpose is to generate a close match between the degree awards of graduating students and the HTM employment available in the country. This participatory action research and survey feedback study was conducted between 2014 and 2018, employing a mixed method approach, consisting of both qualitative and quantitative methods. Quantitative data are presented using bar charts, with the free PSPP statistical analysis software tool being used to analyze the data, providing simple percentages and means. Qualitative data were gathered, presented, coded, and analyzed, using thematic analysis in a Microsoft Excel spread sheet. PSPP linear regression and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were employed to test the hypotheses and analyze the current situation of the education system using a SWOTAR analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats, aspirations and expected results), while a strategic agenda and guide list served as a compass during the study. The study discovered that the teaching environment, inputs (human resources), processes (teaching-learning objectives), and feedback, all have significant impacts on the output (academic achievement). The strategies developed predict that providing more conducive lecture rooms, allocating a moderate number of students to each classroom, improving the facilities and study environment, and interactive and participatory teaching strategies, are critical to the training and preparation of HTM students in Nigeria. If implemented, the strategies can enhance the

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achievement of academic grades, such that it is suitable for filling employment vacancies in the HTM sector of the country.

Keywords: Hospitality and tourism management education system, Nigeria, performance achievement, planned change, strategy development

INTRODUCTION

A mismatch exists between the various employment opportunities available in Nigeria and the successful graduation of bachelor's students as a result of graduates not meeting up with the academic grade standard set by employers (Abiodun, 2010; Akinyemi et al., 2012; Asuquo & Agboola, 2014; Vanguard, 2018). This study, therefore, develops possible strategies for the improvement of academic achievement among hospitality and tourism management (HTM) students, in order to produce a closer match between the set standard for degree awards and HT employment in the country. The study digresses from relying on models and personal efforts. It involves the participation of HTM stakeholders and collaboration with students and staff using an action research approach (Blankenstein, 2004; Durlak et al., 2011; Khairuddin et al., 2014; O'Day, 2002; Pupat, 2009; Quereshi & Afzal, 2008). The need for action research is pertinent to changing academic performance achievement (improvement) in higher level HTM programs offered by education institutions in the country. The perspectives of the authors, Cummings and Worley (2009), Margerison (1978), and Mayaka and Akama (2007) provide the information and rationale for this action research and survey feedback study which was conducted to complete a doctoral research dissertation.

Research Questions

1. What is the current status and impact of the HTME open system in terms of the teaching environment, inputs (human resources), processes (teaching learning objectives), and academic achievement, in relation to output (students' academic achievement)?

2. What are the possible strategies for improvement of academic achievement in terms of the teaching environment, inputs (human resources), processes (teaching learning objectives) and outputs (academic achievement), regarding the generation of a close match between the degree awards of HTM graduates and their future employment requirements?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review focuses on traditional organizational theories based on the attributes of teleological tradition and the philosophical