



Perceived Influence of Benchmarking and Customers' Satisfaction on Goals Achievement in Rivers State University, Nigeria

¹Dr. VISIGAH, Dumadi Livinus & ²CHUKU, Christiana Uloaku

Rivers State University, Port Harcourt, Nigeria

visigahdumadi@gmail.com & christychukuuloaku@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The study investigated the perceived influence of benchmarking and customers' satisfaction on goals achievement in Rivers State University, Nigeria. Two research questions corresponding with two hypotheses were used. The study adopted an analytic descriptive research design. The population of the study consisted of 302 staff (192 senior academic and 116 senior administrative staff). The sample size consisted of 212 staff (118 senior academic and 94 senior administrative staff); balloting 7% of the population size. The stratified random sampling technique was adopted. A self-structured questionnaire titled "Benchmarking Customers' Satisfaction Goals Achievement Questionnaire (BCSGAQ)" with 20 questionnaire items on a modified validated four-point rating scales. The Cronbach Alpha value 0.77 was also obtained. Data obtained was analyzed using the mean and Z-test. Specifically, the mean was used to answer the research questions while the Z-test was used to test hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Findings showed that the roles of academic and administrative staff on benchmarking and customers' (students') satisfaction enhanced achievement of goals to a great extent in Rivers State University. Therefore, based on the findings, it was evident that benchmarking and customers' satisfaction are clear road map to institutions' goal achievement. While it was recommended that Rivers State University should encourage positive benchmarking that is students-oriented for goal achievement (promoting students' towards greater performance). Also, customers' (students') satisfaction should be core on academic and administrative tasks without compromise in Rivers State University and to attain expected degrees of educational goal achievement, the institution needs members of proven integrity, meritocracy, and leadership orientation/training on the best leadership style to be maintained; hence such caliber of professionals should be engaged and encouraged for continuous tertiary education improvement for positive impact.

Keywords: Benchmarking; Customers' Satisfaction; Goals Achievement; Academic and Administrative Tasks, Performance, Educational Improvement.

INTRODUCTION

Education plays a vital part in a person's achievement, apart from inborn talent. Education will mold and guide a person to be what they want to be. Management and lecturers play very important roles and responsibilities not only to the students but also to the society. Now in the 21st century, a time when technology is at its peak, education faced a deep challenge to adopt on fast paced world. Changes in global educational settings have compelled the institutions of tertiary learning to revolutionize its activities. Lecturers must follow through in learning new techniques or method in their teaching for the benefit of students and society as a whole. Scharge (2014) regarded education system as a development process consisting of observations of students, instructors, administrative staff, physical facilities and procedures. The procedures compose of teaching, learning, and administration while output consists of examination outcome, employment, profit and satisfaction.

The quality of each education system depends to a large extent on the level of education of lecturers, since no education system can be qualitatively better than the quality and commitment of lecturers. That's why Ukeje (2006) supported this idea when he noted that education opens the door to modernization and that the teacher has the key to this door. Quality could also be used to describe something excellent, good or something that meets or exceeds people's expectations. Quality

management is goodness, excellence, etc. in its totality. It is a state of near perfection. It is a collaborative affair. Quality management in the tertiary schools is concerned with making sure that all activities and functions that will lead to the attainment of quality education as stipulated in the National Policy on Education (2014) are maintained. Quality management can be achieved, in Rivers State tertiary schools, if quality is designed and packaged into the tertiary education services through proper selection and application of QM in the planning, implementation and administration of tertiary schools.

Tertiary education performance and students achievement particularly among the public sector in Rivers State over the years has not been encouraging because of inadequate funds and poor implementation of QM. The principles of QM are found to align with academic performance of students, and as Ajayi (2016) argued, QM is built on a foundation of ethics, integrity and trust. Benchmarking, employee involvement, customers' satisfaction, teamwork, leadership, training, decision making, recognition, creative thinking, continuous improvement and communication are also key components of quality management that enhance academic performance of students (Barry, 2016 and Simon, 2014). Quality management fosters fairness and sincerity, openness and thus allows everyone in school to fully involve in school and other administrations. Vinni (2011) emphasised that QM is a key to opening the ultimate potential of all those involved in its proper implementation.

QM requires that organizations construct their codes of ethics where all personnel must obey (Yowell, 2015). Educational covers the area of behaviour of schools to distinguish between good and evil. Therefore, schools need to define their own work ethics in order to achieve educational goals. Education is for life and not just for life but about gathering information about values, norms, cultures, etc. This orientation of attitudes and values would help students achieve academic performance, openness through new ideas and preparation for learning from others.

Integrity encompasses morals, fairness, honesty and sincerity. The vision and mission of an organization often determine the differential values within individual organizations. Some of these differential values are: benchmarking, achievement, competence, knowledge, creativity, innovation, agility, leading by example, autonomy, teamwork, community, valuing diversity, encouraging others. Organizations (schools) need to define their values operationally through their philosophy and mission; likewise they must define their ethical practices in writing and in verbal communication" (West-Burnham, 2015). It must be noted that trust is a by-product of ethical behaviour and integrity without which the QM framework may not be achieved.

Quality management ensures that managers are responsible for the quality of the organization. Traditionally, employees were accused of organizational problems. However, QM believes that most quality issues are caused by management rather than by employees. According to Asiyai (2014), 85% of quality problems are due to system problems, whereas only 15% of the problems can be attributed to the low performance of employees. Leaders are responsible for transforming the organization through knowledge, personality and persuasive power (Deming, 2016). They should provide clear standards for work, methods of achieving them, and a stress-free work environment for employees (Deming, 2016), and lead the team effectively through a clear vision, goals, measurable goals and assessment methods.

Obi (2014) gave lecturers the status of student leaders. In this way, lecturers have to play the role of leaders. Lecturers are the leaders of all mankind who are faced with the most important processes in human life: socialization, learning, personal development, and how to deal with the challenges of a changing world. As leaders, teachers need to offer their students fair and respectful treatment, providing a comfortable and pleasant environment where their skills and competences can be realized. They should encourage students to cooperate with each other (Salami, 2012). On the other hand, teachers must lead the students. It is important for the school forces to have strong guidance from the administrator. Almost every effective school's basic and causal feature is the vision, the head of energy and dedication, who directs employees and students towards better attitudes and higher performance (Okoro, 2016).

The discovery and recognition of co-workers is an important jobs for the manager both teams and individuals must be offered both proposals and achievements (Ajayi, 2016). This, in turn, increases self-esteem, and the other way round can lead to enormous changes in quality, productivity and efforts to encourage these tasks. In fact, "an employee or team will do a better job if they feel their work is valued. In other words, pay and recognition systems that emphasize the achievement of quality

objectives really motivate the workforce to participate fully in quality improvement activities (Cotton, 2010). When lecturers and students who meet management targets are recognised and rewarded, they are challenged to do even better, and others would join the team of better performers to be recognised and rewarded too.

Spolsky (2006) viewed the aim of the tertiary institution will be derived from and compatible with the vision and mission of the system. The system has established parameters that provide a common understanding of the tertiary institutions and the components part for all relevant constituents. In managing the components of tertiary institution to achieve this aim, educational leaders use this aim as a criterion against which priorities are established, critical progress are addressed and decisions are made. Tertiary education system managers are constantly aware that a system contains interrelated and interactive components that depend upon each other to achieve a common aim. Therefore, decisions about individual components are made in isolation and may be different when working to sub-optimize the system rather than to optimize individual parts. Senge (2015:59) referred to tertiary education as systems thinking as:

a discipline for seeing wholes, it is a framework for seeing Interrelation rather than things, for seeing of change rather than static “snapshots” Systems thinking is a shift of mind from seeing parts to seeing wholes, from seeing people as helpless reactors to seeing them as active participants in shaping, their reality, from reacting to the present to creating the future.

Indeed, Senge (2015) saw tertiary education systems as the cornerstone for the healthy, proactive problem solving and “learning” organization and as a frame work for seeing interrelationship rather than things for seeing patterns of change and not static “snapshots”. Restructuring or redesign of tertiary institution systems must be approached systemically and with a conceptual framework that enables educational leaders to question fundamental assumptions and to move from employing outdated management strategies that focus on managing individuals and functions (controlling, directing, etc., to strategies and understanding that enable the educational leader to manage the educational system in ways that genuinely meet the needs of their clients. In recognizing the changing rules, roles and responsibilities of educational leaders to manage system for quality management, Lewis (2015) identified basic assumptions that must be adopted in managing educational system.

- a) The interrelationships among parts of a system are more powerful than the individual parts.
- b) Improving one part of a system without considering the other parts of the whole system can have devastating effects.
- c) Information that comes back into the system changes the way the system behaves.
- d) A system will resist changes to any of its parts.
- e) How a system handles its problems come from the design of the system.

Quality management does not necessarily challenge the wisdom, creativity and experience of the education process, instead, it seeks to challenge and improve the critical processes that support managerial decision-making and professional achievement. There are many critical processes within the tertiary institution system that need quality improvement, activities such as staff development, payroll, facilities provision and management, purchasing, and strategic planning. In some industrial and service organizations, these processes can (and have) benefited enormously from quality impairment activities.

The Goal Achievement of Tertiary Institution

National Policy on Education is the national plan or guideline for the effective administration, management and implementation of education at all tiers of government. The goals of education as stated in the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2014) are the;

- (a) Development of the individual into a morally sound, patriotic and effective citizen;
- (b) Total integration of the individual into the immediate community, the Nigerian society and the world;
- (c) Provision of equal access to qualitative educational opportunities for all citizens at all levels of education, within and outside the formal school system;
- (d) Inculcation of national consciousness, values and national unity and

- (e) Development of appropriate skill, mental, physical and social abilities and competencies to empower the individual to live in and contribute positively to the society.

Benchmarking

Definitions of benchmarking vary widely, from the practical 'a self-improvement tool for organizations which allows them to compare themselves with others, to identify their comparative strengths and weaknesses and learn how to improve. Benchmarking is a way of finding and adopting best practices; to the participative 'the open and collaborative evaluation of services and processes with the aim of emulating best available practice'; through to the global and ambitious benchmarking is the process of continuously comparing and measuring an institution or organization with business leaders anywhere in the world to gain information, which will help the organization take action to improve its performance (European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, 2003).

Harvey (2007) stipulated that benchmarking is the continuous assessment process of our products, services and methods in comparison to those of our most serious competitors or of an enterprise recognized as being the leader in their field. In the face of such potential confusion, a number of sources have found it easier to describe what processes characterize typical benchmarking rather than trying to define it. Thus it is generally recognized that benchmarking is a means of making comparisons of performance, usually with a view to establishing 'good' - or more ambitiously 'best' - practice methods, and as such it is also used to diagnose problems in performance and to identify areas of strength (European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, 2003). Like the publication of performance indicators, benchmarking does not necessarily provide solutions to problems - it is an aid to judgment rather than a substitute for it.

Benchmarking in Higher Education (2009) referred to benchmarking as a mechanism to learn from one's own experiences and from the experiences of others; learn for a purpose; and be aware of the fact that the organizational learning is a continuous process of systematic proactive continuous improvement, involving a cycle of enquiry, action, feedback and organizational memory. Due to its reliance on hard data and research methodology, benchmarking is especially suited for institutions of higher education in which these types of studies are very familiar to faculty and administrators. Practitioners at colleges and universities have found that benchmarking helps overcome resistance to change, provides a structure for external evaluation, and creates new networks of communication between schools where valuable information and experiences can be shared. Benchmarking is a positive process, and provides objective measurements for base lining (setting the initial values), goal-setting and improvement tracking, which can lead to dramatic innovations (Stensaker, 2017). In addition, quality strategies and reengineering efforts are both enhanced by benchmarking because it can identify areas that could benefit most from TQM (Total Quality Management), and make it possible to improve operations with often dramatic innovations.

Despite the majority of positive recommendations for using benchmarking and successful examples of its current use, there are critics of its applicability to higher education. The stated objections include the belief that benchmarking is merely a strategy for marginally improving existing processes, that it is applicable only to administrative processes (or only to teaching practices), is a euphemism for copying, is lacking innovation, or that it can expose institutional weaknesses (Resnick, Nolan & Resnick, 2009).

The benchmarking concept is also defined in the following ways: the process of measuring and comparing the performances of a business with similar processes extent within the main organizations in order to obtain information which will help the institution to identify and implement improvements or the continuous process of measuring products, services and business methods belonging to your own company, in comparison to the ones of the most powerful competitors and of those institutions which are known as being institutional leaders. Turner (2005) defined benchmarking in the following way: 'The continuous action of comparing a process, a product or a service with a similar activity, known as being the best in that field, with the purpose of establishing ambitious but real improvement objectives and actions so as to become and keep the number one position among the best within a reasonable period of time'. Xerox, the first company that ever used this method, called it 'a continuous search process for new ideas, methods and practices,

for processes and for adjustment of these practices; or the adaptation of some good ideas and their real life application so as to become the first among the best.

So far as types of benchmarking are concerned, Alstete cited in Ellis & Moore (2006) identified four categories based upon the voluntary and proactive participation of institutions:

1. Internal benchmarking in which comparisons are made of the performance of different departments, campuses or sites within a university in order to identify best practice in the institution, without necessarily having an external standard against which to compare the results;
2. External competitive benchmarking where a comparison of performance in key areas is based upon information from institutions which are seen as competitors;
3. External collaborative benchmarking usually involves comparisons with a larger group of institutions who are not immediate competitors;
4. External trans-industry (best-in-class) benchmarking seeks to look across multiple industries in search of new and innovative practices, no matter what their source.

Separate from these types of benchmarking are the methodologies that institutions can adopt, and five main approaches are evident according to Harvey (2007):

1. Ideal type standards (or 'gold' standards) whereby a model is created based on idealized best practice, and then used as the basis to assess institutions on the extent to which they fit that model;
2. Activity based benchmarking is a methodology in which a selected number of activities, which are either typical or representative of the range of institutional provision, are analyzed and compared with similar activities in other selected institutions.
3. Vertical benchmarking seeks to quantify the costs, workloads, productivity and performance of a defined functional area, for example the work of a student admissions department.
4. Horizontal benchmarking on the other hand seeks to analyze the cost, workloads, productivity, and performance of a single process that cuts across one or more functional areas, for example all aspects of student admissions irrespective of their location within an institution.
5. Use by institutions of comparative performance indicators is, as noted above, a highly questionable form of benchmarking, but a number of initiatives are reported below that are extremely important in influencing judgments being made about comparative performance within universities.

In conclusion, benchmarking strengthens an institution's ability to successfully self-assess their institution; better understand the processes which support strategy formulation and implementation in increasingly competitive environments; measure and compare to the competition, i.e. how well are other higher education institutions in the sector performing, which higher education institutions are doing better and why; discover new ideas, looking out strategically; learn from others how to improve; obtain data to support decision-making with new strategic developments; set targets for improvement of processes and approaches in order to increase performance; strengthen institutional identity, strategy formulation and implementation; enhance reputation and better position the Institution; respond to national performance indicators and benchmarks; set new standards for the sector in the context of higher education reforms.

Customers' Satisfaction

Student satisfaction is a result of the perception of service quality delivered by the tertiary institutions. Massification, internationalisation and globalisation in tertiary institutions have contributed to marketization and increased competitiveness in the higher education sector (Brown, 2009). Marketization and competition are expected to contribute to the quality of tertiary institutions following the assumption students make rational and well-informed choices, thereby preferring high quality institutes and rejecting low quality institutes (Lowrie & Hemsley-Brown, 2011). Central to the concept of marketization is the conceptualization of students as customers of tertiary institutions. As such, student satisfaction becomes increasingly important for tertiary institutions to retain existing students and attract new students (Gibson, 2010). These developments have contributed to the development of student satisfaction and its determinants as an academic field of study.

Whereas massification started in developed countries it is now spreading to more developing parts of the world. Historically, in many of these countries, the State was the only provider of tertiary institutions. However, sharply increased demands for tertiary institutions combined with limited

public resources have led to introduction and growth of private higher education institutes (Dickson, 2004). So, competition, the concept of student as customer and student satisfaction has also become relevant for tertiary institutions in developing countries. Student satisfaction is related to perceived quality although the two are not equivalent; according to Sultan & Wong (2013), students perceive quality education from the emotional result of their view on various services that the school provides. They further point out that the two are related and perceived quality leads to satisfaction. A similar view that perception of quality would help in retaining students as it provides them satisfaction. Therefore, one may expect that an institute that provides quality services also ensure satisfaction of the stakeholders. Shanahan & Gerber (2004) defined satisfaction as a consequence of the fulfillment of needs and expectations of a specific service and the perception of the quality of that service. Therefore, an individual would derive satisfaction from the perception of service quality.

According to Fredrickson (2012) customers' satisfaction is largely influenced by the support of faculty, curricular challenge, instruction, and academic advertisement. This opinion is also supported by Purgailis & Zaksa (2012) claiming that quality of academic faculty influences the content received by students hence maximising their satisfaction. They further concluded that "currently the most important elements in the provision of the study process are the academic staff that pass over their knowledge, study content and teaching methods, acquired skills and readiness for labour market" (Purgailis & Zaksa, 2012). A qualified teaching faculty, who have consistency in teaching and demonstrate adequate knowledge and skills, are recognized by students (Douglas, Douglas, & Barnes, 2006) and is highly ranked as a determinant of student satisfaction in their study. The same is suggested in several other studies. Studies also show that curriculum is an important factor in determining student satisfaction; Fredrickson (2012) conceded that when the curriculum is challenging, students perceive positive service quality and thereby gaining satisfaction. Similarly, Purgailis & Zaksa (2012) revealed students expressed that study content results in the perception of quality.

There should be significant positive interaction between students, teachers, and other staff to provide a supportive learning environment. In addition, they stated that courtesy and sincerity can give satisfaction to students without any cost involvement for the institute. Gibson (2010) discussed that students are encouraged to enroll in a particular institute and derive maximum satisfaction when the environment comprises of small group and friendly people. Administrative faculty is the college staff that organises and coordinates teaching and learning sessions. While in view of Purgailis & Zaksa (2012); Fredrickson (2012) and Gibson (2010), lecturers are important in delivering effective lessons in the class and keep in close contact with students, their functioning is conducted by the support of administrative faculty. Research shows that presence of supportive administrative staff may not necessarily lead to satisfaction of students, yet its absence would result in dissatisfaction.

Statement of the Problem

Educational industry operates in environments characterized by accomplishing the master plan of the institution. In order for institutions vis-à-vis the students to succeed in highly dynamic business environment, it is critical that the institution embrace and institutionalize of benchmarking and customers' or students' satisfaction in managing their academic activities. Institutions therefore, need to be cognizant of the factors that influence the success of institutionalization of goals achievement.

However, in Rivers State University, management and lecturers seem not to have the leadership skills needed for academic growth and students' productivity. The problems further include tertiary institutions' policies that negate educational best practices (benchmarking) emanating from politics, ethnicity, mediocrity, etc. Also, customers' dissatisfactions; undergraduates' deficiency in the cognitive, affective and the psycho motive domain. Many of noble professionals equally lack the knowledge of operating the new technological devices needed to transform knowledge for administration. They seem not to continually participate in professional development programmes for benchmarking to meet customers' or students' satisfaction. They also, seem not to engage themselves in mentoring programmes, which affects their improvement negatively; negating quality management rudiments. At the same time, adequate educational facilities in the school system are not readily provided and maintained for quality benchmarking and customers' or students' satisfaction. This study therefore, investigates the perceived influence of benchmarking and customers' satisfaction on goals achievement in Rivers State University, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to examine the perceived influence of benchmarking and customers' satisfaction on goals achievement in Rivers State University, Nigeria. This study, however, aimed at achieving the following specific objectives:

1. Ascertain the extent benchmarking influence goals achievement in Rivers State University.
2. Determine the extent customers' satisfaction influence goals achievement in Rivers State University.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the conduct of the study:

1. To what extent does benchmarking influence goals achievement in Rivers State University?
2. To what extent does customers' satisfaction influence goals achievement in Rivers State University?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study and were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant difference in the means responses of senior academic and administrative staff regarding the extent to which benchmarking influence goals achievement in Rivers State University.
2. There is no significant difference in the means responses of senior academic and administrative staff regarding the extent to which customers' satisfaction influence goals achievement in Rivers State University.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted an analytic descriptive research design. The population of the study consisted of 302 staff (192 senior academic and 116 senior administrative staff). The sample size consisted of 212 staff (118 senior academic and 94 senior administrative staff); balloting 7% of the population size. The stratified random sampling technique was adopted. A self-structured questionnaire titled "Benchmarking Customers' Satisfaction Goals Achievement Questionnaire (BCSGAQ)" with 20 questionnaire items on a modified validated four-point rating scales response options such as: Very High Extent (VHE) = 4 Points; Low Extent (LE) = 3 Points; Low Extent (LE) = 2 Points and Very Low Extent (VLE) = 1 Point. The Cronbach Alpha value 0.77 was also obtained. Data obtained was analyzed using the mean (\bar{X}) and Z-test. Specifically, the mean (\bar{X}) was used to answer the research questions while the Z-test was used to test hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

This section presents data analysis. Research questions are presented first before the hypotheses.

Research Question 1: *To what extent does benchmarking influence goals achievement in Rivers State University?*

Table 1: Mean responses on the extent to which benchmarking influence goals achievement in Rivers State University.

S/N	Statements	Academic (N=118)			Admin. (N=94)		
		M	S.D.	RMK	M	S.D.	RMK
1	Benchmarking promotes quality management in the various tertiary institution	3.41	0.49	GE	3.40	0.49	GE
2	Best practice and creativity in problem solving enhance the staff skills in the institution	3.62	0.49	GE	3.47	0.50	GE
3	It recognizes the personnel as the key asset or quality assurance in the institution	3.55	0.50	GE	3.28	0.45	GE
4	Benchmarking enhances tertiary institutional effective planning with efficient facilitators toward goal achievement	3.61	0.49	GE	3.27	0.44	GE
5	Positive academic and administrative brainstorming is in the equation of best practices of quality management in the institution	3.46	0.50	GE	3.60	0.49	GE
6	Benchmarking do not promote quality management in the institution due to the administrative bottle neck	1.63	0.48	LE	1.51	0.50	LE
7	Benchmarking making enhances management by objective	3.44	0.50	GE	3.30	0.46	GE
8	Benchmarking does foster institution enforcement of law and order	3.38	0.49	GE	3.46	0.50	GE
9	It encourages participants, sharing institutional goals and abiding in collective decisions in the institution	2.99	1.02	GE	3.28	0.83	GE
10	Benchmarking is inactive or ineffective due to it bureaucratic procedure	3.57	0.50	GE	3.50	0.50	GE
Grand Mean		3.27		GE	3.21		GE

Field data, 2019 (GE=Great Extent; LE=Low Extent; RMK=Remark)

Table 1 shows the finding of the extent to which benchmarking influence goals achievement in Rivers State University. As shown in the table, grand mean responses of 3.27 and 3.21 for academic and administrative staff respectively, indicate that both academic and administrative staff in Rivers State University perceived that benchmarking influence goals achievement in Rivers State University to a great extent.

Research Question 2: *To what extent does customers' satisfaction influence goals achievement in Rivers State University?*

Table 2: Mean responses on the extent to which customers' satisfaction influence goals achievement in Rivers State University.

S/N	Statements	Academic (N=118)			Admin. (N=94)		
		M	S.D.	RMK	M	S.D.	RMK
11	Customers' satisfaction promotes tertiary institutional aim and objectives	3.46	0.50	GE	3.47	0.50	GE
12	QM is effective at students' level (customers' satisfaction) in teaching and learning in the institution	3.51	0.50	GE	3.42	0.49	GE
13	Customers' satisfaction do not promotes the operation of QM in the tertiary institution	1.48	0.51	VLE	1.58	0.50	VLE
14	Through customers' satisfaction proper accountability on duties and responsibilities are enhanced in the institution	3.46	0.50	GE	3.59	0.49	GE
15	Customers' satisfaction proffer solution to societal problems	3.49	0.50	GE	3.53	0.50	GE
16	Customers' satisfaction leads to QM in the institution	3.50	0.50	GE	3.47	0.50	GE
17	Customers' satisfaction projects QM in the institution	3.45	0.50	GE	3.56	0.50	GE
18	Customers' satisfaction is not attainable in the various tertiary institutions in Rivers State	1.84	0.78	LE	2.09	0.92	LE
19	Improve customers' satisfaction is the responsibility of the strategic level in the institution	1.64	0.48	LE	1.46	0.50	LE
20	QM effectiveness depends on customers' satisfaction (students) in the institution	3.52	0.50	GE	3.40	0.49	GE
Grand Mean		2.93		GE	2.96		GE

Field data, 2019 (GE=Great Extent; LE=Low Extent; VLE=Very Low Extent; RMK=Remark)

Table 2 shows the finding of the extent to which customers' satisfaction (students) influence goals achievement in Rivers State University. As shown in the table, grand mean responses of 2.93 and 2.96 for academic and administrative staff respectively, indicate that both academic and administrative staff in Rivers State University perceived that customers' satisfaction (students) influence goals achievement in Rivers State University to a great extent.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the means responses of senior academic and administrative staff regarding the extent to which benchmarking influence goals achievement in Rivers State University.

Table 3: Z-Test for senior academic and administrative staff on benchmarking

Staff	N	M	S.D.	α	DF	Z-cal	Z-crit	Decision
Academic	118	3.27	0.17	0.05	210	4.97	1.96	Rejected
Admin.	94	3.21	0.14					

Field data, 2019

The finding of hypothesis 1 is presented in Table 3. As shown in the table, the academic staff have mean and standard deviation scores of 3.27 and 0.17 respectively while administrative staff have mean and standard deviation scores of 3.21 and 0.14 respectively with a degree of freedom of 210 at an alpha level of 0.05. Since the calculated Z-value of 4.97 is greater than the critical Z-value of 1.96 with 210 degrees of freedom at 0.05 level of significance, the hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is no significant difference in the means responses of senior academic and administrative staff regarding the extent to which benchmarking influence goals achievement in Rivers State University.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the means responses of senior academic and administrative staff regarding the extent to which customers' satisfaction influence goals achievement in Rivers State University.

Table 4: Z-Test for senior academic and administrative staff on customers' satisfaction

Staff	N	M	S.D.	α	DF	Z-cal	Z-crit	Decision
Academic	118	2.93	0.14	0.05	210	-2.07	1.96	Rejected
Admin.	94	2.96	0.15					

Field data, 2019

The finding of hypothesis 2 is presented in Table 4. As shown in the Table, the academic staff have mean and standard deviation scores of 2.93 and 0.14 respectively while administrative staff have mean and standard deviation scores of 2.96 and 0.15 respectively with a degree of freedom of 210 at an alpha level of 0.05. Since the calculated Z-value of -2.07 is greater than the critical Z-value of 1.96 with 210 degrees of freedom at 0.05 level of significance, the hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is no significant difference in the means responses of senior academic and administrative staff regarding the extent to which customers' satisfaction influence goals achievement in Rivers State University.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This is based on the summary of findings as provided as follows:

Research question 1 sought to find out the extent benchmarking influence goals achievement in Rivers State University. From the research questions presented in Table 1, it was observed that benchmarking promotes quality management in the various tertiary institutions; benchmarking also promotes creativity and problem solving skills in the institution since decisions are positive and corporately taking; it recognizes the personnel as the key asset or quality assurance in the institution; it enhances tertiary institutional effective planning with efficient facilitators; systematic collective benchmarking in brainstorming is in the equation of best practices of quality management in the institution; benchmarking further enhances management by objective while benchmarking does foster enforcement of law and order; it encourages participants abiding in collective decisions in the institution and benchmarking is inactive or ineffective due to it bureaucratic procedure. While on the contrary, benchmarking does not promote quality management. Hence, to a great extent benchmarking in consonance with QM improves goals achievement of tertiary institutions in Rivers State

Besides, hypothesis 1 is presented in Table 3: revealed that there is no significant difference in the response of senior academic and administrative staff regarding the extent benchmarking enhances goals achievement in Rivers State University.

Ukeje et al, (2016) reaffirmed that the most effective method of benchmarking is consensus before institutional goals achievement can be attained even though it takes a longer time for a good consensus. Also, an emphasized view, also by Markmanuel (2009) that the tertiary administration is carried out by committees, the committee systems' operations afford the academic and administrative

staff an effective benchmarking in policy formulation and decision making processes, taking advantage of the various talents in the departments to ensure a fair degree of democratic system of governance and consensus building.

Research question 2 sought to find out the extent customers' satisfaction with respect to goals achievement in Rivers State University. From the research questions presented in Table 2, it was deduced that customers' satisfaction promotes tertiary institutional aim and objectives to guide academic and administrative actions of the students; QM is effective through customers' satisfaction at managerial and students level and in teaching and learning in the institution; Through customers' satisfaction proper accountability on duties and responsibilities are enhanced in the institution; There is no much improvement about customers' satisfaction to the operation of QM that enhance management by objectives by the type of staff employing; customers' satisfaction leads to QM in the institution; customers' satisfaction projects QM in the institution and QM effectiveness depends on the customers' satisfaction in the institution. Whereas, customers' satisfaction do not promotes the operation of QM in the tertiary institution; improve customers' satisfaction is the responsibility of the strategic level in the institution and customers' satisfaction is ineffective in the various institutions. Hence, to a great extent customers' satisfaction with respect to QM enhance goals achievement of tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Besides, hypothesis 2 Table 4: revealed that there is no significant difference in the response of senior academic and administrative staff regarding the extent customers' satisfaction enhances goals achievement in Rivers State University.

Decosmo *et al.* (2015) established that quality management is dependent on customers' satisfaction for successful administration to take place and that customers' satisfaction promotes needed interactions in teaching /learning situation. This is because students' satisfaction is essential to students' learning and to the overall success and effectiveness of quality education. Recent studies by researchers have confirmed that interaction in learning environment may lead to increased academic achievement and that if customers' satisfaction is effective in schools, work is performed more efficiently and problems solved more quickly. Thus there is positive relationship among customers' satisfaction, good communication, motivation and productivity in any organization (Yate, 2009).

CONCLUSION

The aim of tertiary institutions is structured on quality management for goal achievement (students' high performance). Therefore, based on the findings, it is evident that benchmarking and customers' satisfaction are clear road map to institutions' goal achievement. However, the success of the institution is not the duty of members of the management and the top administrators alone but most centred on the core values (mission statement) in the school system to be executed by all and sundry.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made based on the findings and conclusions of the study.

- 1) Rivers State University should encourage positive benchmarking that is students-oriented for goal achievement (promoting students' towards greater performance).
- 2) Customers' (students') satisfaction should be core on academic and administrative tasks without compromise in Rivers State University.
- 3) To attain expected degrees of educational goal achievement, the institution needs members of proven integrity, meritocracy, and leadership orientation/training on the best leadership style to be maintained; hence such caliber of professionals should be engaged and encouraged for continuous tertiary education improvement for positive impact.

REFERENCES

- Ajayi, K. (2016). Emerging Issues in University Education in Nigeria. A Paper Presented at the Annual Convention of the Nigerian Association for Educational Administration and Planning (NAEP). University of Port Harcourt, Port Harcourt.
- Asiyai, R. I. (2014). *Challenges of Quality Higher Education in Nigeria in the 21st Century. International Journal of Educational Planning and Administration*, 49, 3, 7-8.
- Barry, T. H. (2016) *Managing the Total Quality Transformation*. New York: Mcgraw-Hill.

- Benchmarking in Higher Education (2009). A Study Conducted by the Commonwealth Higher Education Management Service, Paris, available online at: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0011/001128/112812eo.pdf>. (06/03/2010)
- Brown, R. (2009). Role of the Market in Higher Education. Higher Education Policy Institute. *Procedia Journal of Social and Behavioral Science* , 2 (2), 5446 -5450.
- Cotton, K. (2015). Applying Total Quality Management Principle to Secondary Education, Effective Schooling Practices. *A Research Synthesis in Alaska* retrieved April 27, 2020 from <http://www.wmrel.org/Se/pd/sirs/9/5035.html>
- Deming, E. D. (2016). *TQM Arid the Bottom Line. The Total Quality Review: Harvard Business Review*, 45 (2), 42-46.
- Dickson, T. (2004). Globalisation and Higher Education; *the Implications for Private Investment Journal*; 2(9), 45-49.
- Douglas, J., Douglas, A., & Barnes, B. (2006). Measuring student satisfaction at a UK university. *Quality Assurance in Education*, 14 (3), 251 - 267.
- Ellis, R. A. & Moore, R. R. (2006). Learning through benchmarking: Developing a relational, prospective approach to benchmarking ICT in learning and teaching, in: *Higher Education Journal Vol. 21, No. 7, 51: 351–371*.
- European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (2003). Benchmarking in the Improvement of Higher Education, Helsinki, available online at: <http://www.enqa.eu/files/benchmarking.pdf>. (08/06/2020)
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (2014). National Policy on Education. Abuja NERDC. Press.
- Fredickson, J. E. (2012). Linking student effort to satisfaction: The importance of faculty support in creating a gain-loss frame. *Academy of Educational Leadership Journal*, 6 (Special issue), 111 - 124.
- Gibson, A. (2010). Measuring Business Student Satisfaction: A Review and Summary of the Major Predictors. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 32 (3), 251 - 259.
- Harvey, L. (2007). Quality is not Free! Quality Monitoring Alone Will Not Improve Quality, in: *Tertiary Education and Management, Vol.3, No.2, 1997, 133-143*.
- Lewis, T. (2015). Organizational Development and TQM. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Lowrie , A. & Hemsley-Brown, J. (2011). This thing called Marketization. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 27 (11-12), 1081-1086.
- Obi, E. C. (2014). “Communication and the Management of Organizational Behaviour” in Ndu, A., Okeke, R. S. & Ocho, L. O. (Eds) *Dynamics of Educational Administration and Management. The Nigeria perspective*. Awka Meks Publishers.
- Okoro, J. (2016). Application of Total Quality Management in Secondary Schools Administration in Delta State. Unpublished Ph.D Thesis University of Port Harcourt, Port Harcourt: Nigeria
- Purgailis, M., & Zaksa, K. (2012). The impact of perceived service quality on student loyalty in higher education institutions. *Journal of Business Management* (6), 138 - 152.
- Resnick, L. B., Nolan, K. J. & Resnick, D. P. (2009). Benchmarking Education Standards, in: *Journal of Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis. Vol. 17, No. 4, pp. 438-461*.
- Salami, J. (2012). *Attracting talent in a Global Academic World. How Emerging Research Universities can benefit from Brain Circulation. The Academic Executive Brief*, 2(1), 2-5.
- Scharge, P. (2014). TQM: A Pictorial Guide for Managers. Oxford Butterwort
- Senge, S. (2015). Quality Management in Universities. *Journal of Research Studies in Education*, 2(1), 11-24.
- Shanahan , P. & Gerber, R. (2004). Quality in University Student Administration: Stakeholder Conceptions. *Quality Assurance in Education*, 12 (4), 166-174.
- Simon, H. (2014). Administrative Behaviour, New York: Free Press.
- Spolsky, J. (2006). *Three Management Methods. Journal of Quality*, 5(1), 26-29.
- Stensaker, B. (2017). Quality as discourse: An analysis of External Audit Reports in Sweden, available online at: <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/>. (07/03/2020)
- Sultan, P. & Wong, H. Y. (2013). Antecedents and Consequences of Service Quality in a Higher Education Context: A *Qualitative Research Approach. Quality Assurance in Education*, 21 (1), 75 - 95.

- Turner, D. (2005). Benchmarking in Universities: League Tables Revisited, in: *Oxford Review of Education Vol. 31, No. 3, Pp. 353-371.*
- Ukeje, B. O. (2006). Need for Qualified Teachers. *Nigeria Journal of Education, 1(1), 73-75.*
- Vinni, R. (2011) *Total Quality Management and Paradigms of Public Administration. International Public Review, 8, 15-23.*
- West-Burnham, J. (2015). *Managing Quality in Schools.* Harlow: Longman.
- Yowell, K. (2015). Quality Management: System or Philosophy? National Alliance of Community and Technical Colleges, Newsletter Developed with Funding from the Office of Education Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved May, 2020 from HomEnglishPurdue.edu/handouts/pri ntlpdfs/r-apalpcf.

ABOUT THE CORRESPONDING AUTHOR

DR. VISIGAH, Dumadi Livinus

Ph.D (RSU), M.Ed, PGDM (UPH), B.Ed (UI), MNIM

