

Improvements Required By Graduates and In the Undergraduate Physical Education Programme of University Of Nigeria, Nsukka

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Abstract: *This study established improvements required by graduates, and in the undergraduates Physical Education programme of the University of Nigeria Nsukka. Using the evaluation design, two sets of Questionnaire, Job Performance Questionnaire (JPQ), and Employer's Rating of Employees Questionnaire (EREQ) were used to elicit information needed by the study. (JPQ) was involved in the determination of required level of competence in the world of work on the one hand, and the level of performance demonstrated by the employed graduates on the other. Deficits between levels of required competence in the world of work and level of competence demonstrated by the employed graduates is indicated on the Improvement Required Index (IRI) for the professional areas in the undergraduate Physical Education programme. Above the level of competence performance demonstrated by the employed graduates on the IRI scale, required improvements are indicated for teaching of Physical Education in schools and colleges; administering sports in the field; coaching sports in the field; and providing physical and occupational therapy services. Employer's Rating of Employees Questionnaire sought information on the level of performance of the graduates in their employment. Graduates and employers indicated need for improvement of the graduates for effective performance. Likewise, findings identified relevant curriculum areas to be integrated into the undergraduate Physical Education programme of University of Nigeria, Nsukka.*

I. Introduction

Physical Education programme of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka was established to actualize a goal of higher education in the nation. The goal is that of high level manpower development and economic empowerment through the acquisition of relevant knowledge and skills through education.

In response to the challenge placed on the Health and Physical Education Department to train high level caliber of graduates, to take up job positions in the society thereby their own contribution to economic development and societal growth, the department has worked towards realizing these goals through the teaching of Physical Education courses as approved by the university senate and the National Universities Commission (NUC). The curriculum in the department has its inputs and these inputs are certified through accreditation by the National University Commission as suitable for the world of work.

The process of actualizing the Physical Education curriculum is judiciously guided by the senate of the university's approved admission requirements and academic regulations. The academic programme produces various categories of graduates whose qualities are expressed in terms of class of degrees as contained in the form of graduates whose qualities are expressed in terms of class of degree as contained in the university's academic regulations. The first batch of pure B.Sc. Physical Education students graduated in 1993. Since then, yearly output are released to the labour market from the same programme and through the approved modes of admission.

There appears to have been no information or written record on the performance of the UNN Physical Education graduates since the first batch graduated in 1993 on how satisfactory or otherwise these products have performed their functions to meet the societal needs in Physical Education. Also, there has been no empirical evidence to support need for modification or changes in the undergraduate Physical Education curriculum. The data could provide information on areas of strength and weakness in the programme content. Trends in technological advancement may place challenges on the method of teaching Physical Education activities or changes in the curriculum content of the B.Sc. Physical Education degree programme. These deficiencies can only be ascertained through evaluation of the products of the programme currently practicing the Physical Education profession in Nigeria. Unfortunately, these vital information on the University of Nigeria, B.Sc. Physical Education degree programme is practically lacking and therefore creates a yawning gap in the programme.

A Study designed to evaluate the graduates and the undergraduate B.sc Physical Education programme of the University of Nigeria is the focus of this study.

Using the evaluative design, competences and tasks obtained in each professional area of Physical Education derived through a pilot study in which the academic staff on the undergraduate B.Sc. Physical Education programme of UNN provided information gave direction to the design of the two main instruments involved in the study.

II. Methodology

The study employed a 57 item Job competence required, and Performance Questionnaire (JPQ), and 57 item Employer's Rating of Employees Questionnaire (EREQ) to elicit information needed from the graduates and the employers of the graduates. The two sets of questionnaire were validated by seven experts, four from a contemporary programme, Department of Physical and Health Education, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria, the other three were staff of the Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria Nsukka. Cronbach alpha was used to determine the reliability coefficient of the instruments. The method was applied to estimate the internal consistency of the instruments, and the following coefficient estimates were obtained:

- (i) Job competencies required questionnaire .96
- (ii) Job competencies performance questionnaire .92

Copies of the Job Performance Questionnaire (JPQ) were mailed to the graduates of the undergraduate Physical Education programme. Through their home addresses obtained from their records in the office of the registrar of the University. Also with the help of six research assistants, one for each of the states in the South East of Nigeria, contacts were made with 84 of the employed graduates where they were working other than their home addresses. A total of 139 copies of the JPQ were administered, 99 were retrieved. Further, 94 copies of the retrieved questionnaire were considered valid for purposes of analyse.

Seventeen (17) copies of the Employer's Rating of Employees Questionnaire (EREQ) were administered through personal contacts made by the researcher.

The 57 item Job Performance Questionnaire was used for collecting data from employed graduates (respondents) on improvements required by the programme and the employed graduates. The questionnaire has two categories of responses columns. The first column has 4 point response scales of: Highly Required (HR); Averagely Required (AR); Slightly Required (SR) and Not Required (NR) to determine the clusters or tasks required in each professional area of undergraduate Physical Education programme of UNN. The second column has 4 point response scale of High Performance (HP), Average Performance (AP), Slight Performance (SP) and No Performance (NP) for determining the levels of performance of each clusters/tasks by each respondent.

The 57 item performance rating questionnaire was administered on the employers for rating the competence of their employees. The questionnaire has a 5-point rating scale of Very High Performance (VHP); High Performance (HP), Average Performance (AP); Slight Performance (SP) No performance (NP).

Improvement Required Index (*IRI*) was used for taking decision on improvement required by the employed graduates of the undergraduate Physical Education programme in the professional areas of Physical Education on the field: where $IRI = \bar{X}_R - \bar{X}_P$; where \bar{X}_R = mean required,

\bar{X}_P = mean performance

Improvement Required Index was applied in taking decision on research questions 1 and 3.

- (i) Where $\bar{X}_R - \bar{X}_P > 0$ for any item or area, *IRI* was positive, therefore improvement was required on the item or area.
- (ii) Where $\bar{X}_R - \bar{X}_P < 0$ for any item or area, *IRI* was negative, therefore improvement was not required for that item or areas.
- (iii) Where $\bar{X}_R - \bar{X}_P = 0$, *IRI* were neutral and therefore improvement was not required.

The following is applicable to the mean (\bar{X}) considered for research question 2:

Range	Remarks
4.50 and Above	Very High Performance
3.50 - 4.49	High Performance
2.50 - 3.49	Average Performance
1.50 - 2.49	Slight Performance
0 - 1.49	No Performance

III. Results

Research Question 1

What improvements are required in the undergraduate Physical Education Programme of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka for effective performance of its graduates in the field as perceived by the employed graduates?

The data for answering research question 1 is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Mean Ratings of the Responses of Graduates of Physical Education Programme on Improvement Required for performance on the Job (N = 94)

S/No	Item	\bar{X}_R	\bar{X}_P	IRI	Remarks
1	Teaching	3.53	2.79	.74	Improvement required
2	Administration of sport	3.57	2.49	1.08	Improvement required
3	Coaching of sport	3.29	2.47	.82	Improvement required
4	Physical and occupational therapy activities	2.81	1.96	.85	Improvement required

Data in Table 1 revealed that the Improvement Required Index (IRI) of the graduates of the undergraduate Physical Education programme of University of Nigeria Nsukka ranged from .74 – 1.08. Teaching of Physical Education has an IRI of .74; coaching of sport .82; physical and occupational therapy .85; while administration of sport indicated 1.08.

Generally, the graduates of the undergraduate Physical Education programme require improvement in all four professional areas of the programme for enhanced performance on the job.

Research Question 2

What is the performance of the graduates of the undergraduate Physical Education Programme of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka as perceived by the employers?

The data for answering research question 2 is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Mean Ratings of the Employers on the Level of Competence of the Graduates of Physical Education in Areas of Physical Education (N=14)

S/No	Item	\bar{X}
1	Teaching of physical education	2.52
2	Administration of sport	2.35
3	Coaching of sport	2.17
4	Physical and occupational therapy activities	1.78

Data in Table 2 revealed that the mean ratings of the responses of the employers on the level of competence of the graduates of the undergraduate Physical Education Programme of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka in the field ranged from 1.78 – 2.52. The graduates are perceived by the employers as being averagely competent in teaching (2.52). They are perceived as being slightly competent in administration of sport (2.35), coaching of sport (2.17) and physical and occupational therapy activities (1.78) activities as reflected in Table 2.

Generally, the employers perceived the graduates of the programme as being slightly competent in Physical Education in the field.

Research Question 3

What are the improvements required by the graduates of undergraduate Physical Education programme for enhancing their performance in the field?

The data for answering research question 3 is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Mean Ratings of the Responses of Employed Graduates and their Employers on the essential Curriculum Areas for Integration into Physical Education Programme of UNN (N = 94)

S/No	Item	\bar{X}_R	\bar{X}_P	IRI	Remarks
1	Sport marketing	2.81	2.12	.69	Improvement required
2	Management in sport	3.05	2.65	.40	Improvement required
3	Sport journalism	3.21	2.33	.88	Improvement required

\bar{X}_R is same as mean competence required on the job; \bar{X}_P is same as mean of competence performance; IRI is Improvement Required Index

The data in Table 3 revealed that the Improvement Required Index (*IRI*) of the employed graduates ranged from .40 - .88. The employed graduates though, did not have the benefit of studying those areas while in the University. Therefore, the above courses shall be necessary for future graduates of undergraduate physical education programme of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

IV. Discussion

Findings of the study revealed that the areas which the employed graduates of the undergraduate Physical Education programme of the University of Nigeria require improvements for enhanced performances on the job are in the four areas of the undergraduate Physical Education programme (teaching of physical education, administration of sport, coaching of sport, and physical and occupational therapy activities). Furthermore, there is agreement between the employed graduates and their employers/supervisors on the felt need for improvements in the level of competence of the employed graduates in the four areas of the undergraduate Physical Education programme of the University of Nigeria. This finding indicates that the employed graduates perceived their level of competence acquired while in training as being inadequate to meet very effectively with the challenges and nature of services required of them in the world of work. In consonance with the need for improvement by the employed graduates were the studies of Akpan (1993), Anyakoha (1993) and Sowande (2002) who found out that deficient personnel in the place of work can be remedied through retraining or in-service programme in order to enhance their effectiveness.

Findings from the study showed that the essential relevant curriculum areas to be integrated into the undergraduate Physical Education programme of the University of Nigeria for enhanced effectiveness are; sport marketing, sport management and sport journalism and broadcasting. The findings revealed that the employed graduates of the undergraduate Physical Education programme are experiencing novel challenges in the field which were not catered for by their training programme while in the University. Probably, graduates of the programme could have been efficient and happier on the job if they had acquired sufficient knowledge, skills and attitudes in the above areas. Understanding the effects of their deficiencies in the above areas, they felt that future generation of the graduates of the undergraduate Physical Education programme should be saved of these deficiencies by being exposed to these challenging areas required in the field.

The above claims have been supported by the developments in Physical Education, sports and recreation around the world as evidenced by the Suny Brockport University undergraduate Physical Education programme of 1997 and the Assessment Plan for the department of Health and Physical Education, California State University of 1998. Both programmes emphasized high support for the teaching and learning of sport marketing, sport management, sport journalism and broadcasting to meet the challenges of sport and recreation in America.

It was found out that the level of competence acquired by the graduates of the undergraduate Physical Education programme of University of Nigeria in the teaching of Physical Education in schools and colleges was low. This has implications for interest and the acquisition of skills in Physical Education, sport and recreation in schools where the manpower is extremely low in competence. Physical Education, sport and recreation normally attract interest of children in schools and they normally want to spend most of their time in this area at any opportuned time outside the classroom. The same sport and recreation may create fear and panic in youths and parents because of the hazards involved, if the appropriate techniques and skills are not taught these youths. Susceptibility to injuries and their prevalence rate is high where appropriate techniques and skills are not properly taught. Therefore, teachers or trainers who are in-charge of this vital programme in the school must not only be competent in teaching the skills, they must be recent and familiar with the use of modern technologies in sport to train the youths. They should be highly competent in supervising the students and in the management and security of Physical Education facilities in the schools. Hence, a retraining of Physical Education teachers in the field is necessary in order to keep them abreast with developments in the profession.

It was found out that the level of competence acquired by the employed graduates of the undergraduate Physical Education programme of University of Nigeria in administration of sport was slightly low. This finding has implications for how well the school's sport (intramural and interscholastic) club side sport, community sport and recreational programme are organised and conducted to achieve the desired objectives. High level of effectiveness and efficiency with which the sport administrator attends his duties is important. His level of administrative skills is incumbent on his professional desired and consequently to his level of competence brought to work. High level competence in sport administration touches on: human, facility and finance management, athlete management, sport scheduling, sport organisation and promotion. All of these identified tasks and functions of a sport administrator are products of highly planned, structured, functional, relevant and current Physical Education curriculum. If the level and nature of training of the sport administrator does not reflect on all of these meaningfully, level of competence becomes low.

It was found out that the level of competence acquired in coaching of sport by the employed graduates of the undergraduate Physical Education programme of the University of Nigeria was slightly low. This finding

has implications for the level of sport excellence acquired and demonstrated by the youths in the sport arena. The level of effectiveness with which the coach who is required to plan, direct, instruct and motivate the youths in sport activities operate depends to a great deal on his professional training. The coach must command the respect of the youths in his charge. Apart from being able to demonstrate high level acquisition of knowledge, techniques, skills and the right attitude in his chosen career, he must prove himself to be a seasoned leader. His level of training through appropriate curriculum must have developed in him all of the attributes that make a competent and effective coach. It is in this wise, the goal of the realization of sport excellence can be attained in the South East.

The study revealed that the level of competence acquired in physical and occupational therapy activities by the employed graduates of the undergraduate Physical Education programme of University of Nigeria was slightly low. The interpretation of this finding is that the employed graduates do not have sufficient competence in physical and occupational therapy activities to function very effectively in the provision of the required services in the field. The implication of this is that many of those who train and participate in sport and recreation and who in the process probably suffer some injuries or mishaps used to have trauma in getting some of their handicaps treated. This situation may dampen the interest of these individuals and those associated with them in sport and recreation. If the graduates are improved in physical and occupational therapy activities to enable them provide high level services, participants in sport and recreation will be rest assured of effective assistance and care when accidents or mishaps occur.

V. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study was carried out to evaluate the graduate and the undergraduate B.Sc Physical Education programme of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka with the hope that the information provided will help enhance the quality and effectiveness of the graduate the graduates already in employment, as well as establishing needs in the undergraduate B.Sc Physical Education programme. To this end, the study made the following conclusions:

- i. graduates of the programme in employment require improvement or retraining programmes to upgrade their levels of competences in the various job areas were they function, and
- ii. essential new courses that the undergraduate programme require by way of integration include sports marketing; management in sport and sport journalism and broadcasting.
- iii. Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the researcher recommends:
- iv. retraining needs of the employed graduates of the undergraduate Physical Education programme of the University of Nigeria for enhanced effectiveness in all the four areas of the existing programme require urgent attention. Such retraining needs could be met through short duration in-service programmes that can be facilitated by Physical Education experts in the Health and Physical Education department of the University of Nigeria;
- v. emphases should be placed more on practical activities and the acquisition of high level skills by the students in the professional areas in the undergraduate Physical Education programme to make the graduates more relevant in professionalism in Physical Education, sport and recreation; and
- vi. the essential programmes, such as sport marketing, sport management; sport journalism and broadcasting identified by this study should, as a matter of urgency, be integrated into the undergraduate Physical Education programme. This will make the programme more relevant to the present national needs while at the same time help to reduce the number of graduates sent out by the programme with severe deficiencies in sport marketing, sport management, sport journalism and broadcasting.

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