



Internal Quality Management Strategies of Universities in Kwara State, Nigeria: A Comparative Approach

Awodiji, Omotayo A.*

Department of Educational Management and Counseling, Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin, Nigeria

Ijaiya, Nike Y. S.

Department of Educational Management, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria.

Akinnubi, Olaolu P.

Department of Educational Management and Counseling, Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin, Nigeria

* tayojss@gmail.com

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Abstract: Internal Quality Management (IQM) is a process of enhancing and ensuring quality teaching-learning, research, and community service in the university system to attain quality graduates and satisfied consumers. This study, therefore, compared the IQM strategies practised by the universities (private, state and federal) in Kwara State, Nigeria. A descriptive survey design of comparative type was used. The proportional stratified sampling technique was used to select 261 lecturers out of 2,306 academic staff. The research question was answered with the adoption of frequency, percentage, and mean ratings. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and t-test was adopted to test the research hypotheses at 0.05 significant level. Findings revealed that IQM strategies were moderate at 61.9 %. Also, a significant difference at the $p < .05$ was found in the IQM strategies among universities $F(2, 223) = 27.62, p = .000$. The study concluded that Universities are different in IQM strategies. It was recommended that the implementation of IQM strategies should be improved upon by the management of both private and public Universities in Kwara State in order to enhance the attainment of vision and mission statements.

Keywords: Internal quality, management, strategies, administrative, academic

Paper type: Research paper

1. Introduction

Universities are increasingly saddled with the responsibilities of managing change, controlling finance and ensuring the quality of service that will promote national and global development. Change is a constant variable that occurs in day-to-day affairs of human endeavour. Change occurs as a result of technological advancement, 21st century development, globalisation, internalisation, climate change among others. Globalisation has put universities all over the world to become a think-tank institution in addressing global issues such as the production of graduates with critical thinking skills, good communication skills, employability skills, and digital skills. Rapid changes propel the university to build a closer connection to its environment, a quicker reaction and higher flexibility in meeting the community and global expectations. University as a system accepts inputs (human and material resources) to attain specific educational goals (graduates, research and development). Between the inputs and products lies the process. Regardless of the quality of the inputs, the process has a great influence on determining the quality of the products (outputs) (Martin and Nguyen-Thi, 2015).

A University is charged with the role of developing the capacity to generate new knowledge and adapt the same to local and global use. It becomes highly imperative for Nigerian universities to increase their commitment to internal quality management. This will give them an opportunity to bridge every gap and meet up with globalisation in the attainment of university goals (Awodiji, 2018). The development in the 21st century is putting increasing force on higher institutions in Nigeria to ameliorate on the products and service quality to meet the challenges of the rapid changing world. This pressure is partly epitomised by the University ranking system (Ijaiya, 2019).

2. Literature Review

Quality in terms of customer satisfaction is central to the attainment of any university education system (Kayode, Yusoff and Veloo, 2016). Quality is a concept that has been a widespread discourse among stakeholders in university education (Kayode, Yusoff and Veloo, 2016). Ijaiya, Sheu and Akinnubi (2018) opined quality as the degree of excellence in the service process in conformity with prescribed standards and laid down procedures towards the attainment of customers' satisfaction. Globally, Universities have been charged to be more proactive and committed in the production of quality which has brought about a renewal of their management practices and process (Abdous, 2011, Kayode, Yusoff and Veloo, 2016). Alabi, Akinnubi and Taiwo (2014) describe quality management as an act of checking and rechecking all components in the production process to ensure outcomes or services based on the prescribed standard. Internal Quality Management (IQM) in the university refers to the process of enhancing and maintaining the quality of teaching and learning in various programmes of study (Internal Quality Management-Higher Education (IQM-HE), 2016). It is a system that focuses on sustaining quality in the teaching-learning, research and publication process in relation to the students' competences and quality services to meet with societal demand or yearning.

In the university management, IQM involves all processes and activities put in place by the university administration in the attainment of quality service vis-à-vis accountability. It is a management strategy put in place so that the system (university) and its processes are capable of delivering products and services that meet customers' expectations and satisfaction. It is a process of ensuring that the products are actually good and satisfy the demand of society. The commitment of the university management to detailed process improvement for strategic planning towards customer satisfaction could be regarded as IQM (Lyberg,

2009). The IQM stems from Quality Assurance (QA) which is a management strategy that involves all systematic activities required to ensure confidence that the university output will meet up with given requirements and expectations. International Standard Organisation (ISO) regarded IQM as the total activities targeted towards attaining the expected standard of university's products and services (Storey, Briggs, Jones and Russell, 2000).

If quality university education is about getting it straight at the first instance, on time, every time, and continuous development of teaching-learning activities in the university, then it would be absolutely necessary that universities in Nigeria create enabling academic environments as sure foundations for quality among fresh undergraduates (Ijaiya, 2001). Consequently, it has become imperative for universities to adopt and inculcate a quality improvement approach to address present and future educational challenges and prepare students for global competitiveness.

The IQM in the university education system entails a process of quality planning, implementation, and improvement strategies that focus on producing quality educational products and services. This process requires a transformational institutional leadership structure to communicate organizational vision and goals, equip and train employees, prioritize students' affairs, and benchmark activities and programmes against universal standards.

However, the strategy of IQM in universities varies with respect to the type, structure, ownership, size and quality culture of the institution in which an IQM framework is implemented. To some extent, similarities and divergences in the pattern of IQM implementation exist among the federal, state and private universities in Nigeria. These critical factors include top management commitment and leadership strategy, employee participation and teamwork, commitment to students' satisfaction, and benchmarking for continuous improvement (Onuka, 2003). Internal Quality Management (IQM) is a process of enhancing and ensuring quality teaching-learning, research and community service in the university system to produce quality graduates and satisfy consumers. Quality administrative strategies connote quality in the staff recruitment process, student in-take, and supportive environment/facilities. In contrast, quality academic strategies focus on quality in instruction and assessment, curriculum, service learning, research, and community service.

There is existing literature on IQM such as Agasisti, Barbatob, Dal Molinc, and Turri (2017) who studied whether New Public Management (NPM) matters in the internal quality assurance of Italian public universities. A qualitative approach was used to established core variables that enhance the effective QAC implementation and ultimately support the overall QA policy in the italian public universities. Odukoya, Chinedu, George, Olowookere and Agbude (2015) carried studies on the practice of quality assurance in African private universities. The study focused on the quality assurance models in the private universities, in terms of meeting the international standard, the implementation of these models, the challenges in the course of quality assurance models implementing, and the level of success in sustaining quality in the private universities in Nigeria. It was revealed that a high standard of quality assurance practices exists in Nigerian private universities. On the contrary, Nkang (2013) research on the state of quality assurance management in Nigerian universities, it was revealed that the quality of Nigerian university (public or private) is low and could not measure up to global standards. Obikeizie, Nwadiaro, Timothy, and Essien (2016) in a study of lecturers' perception of academic quality assurance variables in Nigerian universities showed that the availability of an adequate number of qualified staff, students' attitude to study, early publication of students' examination results, availability of well-equipped laboratories and workshops, and

funding of tertiary education, as the most important variables in academic quality assurance. Of all these existing literature, none has compared the IQM at universities in Kwara State Nigeria. This necessitates the gap in this study.

A. Objectives

This study intends to compare the IQM strategies practiced by the universities (private, state, and federal) in Kwara State, Nigeria. To be specific, the following objectives will be addressed:

- To investigate the level of IQM strategies adopted by the universities as assessed by lecturers;
- To investigate differences in the IQM strategies among universities in Kwara State;
- To determine if there is any difference in the administrative strategies among universities in Kwara State;
- To establish if there is any difference in the academic strategies among universities in Kwara State;
- To investigate if there is any difference between public and private universities in Kwara State in terms of IQM strategies.

B. Research questions

- What is the level of IQM strategies adopted by the universities in Kwara State?

C. Research hypotheses

- IQM strategy is no significant difference among universities in Kwara State.
- Significant difference does not exist in the organizational strategies among universities in Kwara State.
- Significant difference does not exist in academic strategies among universities in Kwara State.
- Significant difference does not exist between public and private universities in Kwara State based on the IQM strategies.

3. Methodology

A descriptive survey design of comparative type was adopted for the study. There are six universities in Kwara State two public and four privately owned. Three universities were selected using a purposive sampling technique based on their ownership, school type and years of establishment. These universities are the University of Ilorin, Ilorin (Federal-Owned), Kwara State University, Molete (State-Owned) and Al-hikmah University, Ilorin (Private-Owned). These three universities are most sought in Nigeria specifically, the North-central geo-political zone where they are located in terms of admission by students due to interruption in the academic calendar. The study population comprised all 2,306 lecturers of the selected universities. A stratified sampling approach was adopted to select 261 lecturers across the selected universities in Kwara State. An adapted questionnaire tagged “Internal Quality Management Strategies Questionnaire” (IQMSQ) was used to elicit information from the participants. The instrument was adapted from Kayode, Yusoff and Veloo, (2016) and modified to suit the present study. Cronbach Alpha was used

to ascertain the internal consistent of the instrument used. It was found reliable at 0.85 coefficient. The research question was answered using frequency, mean and percentage while inferential statistics of one-way analysis of variance and t-test were used to test the hypotheses formulated.

4. Result

This section presents the results of the data obtained from the selected universities in Kwara State on Internal Quality Management (IQM) strategies. The sample responses were collated, analyzed and the results were presented as follows:

Research Question One: What is the level of IQM strategies adopted by the universities in Kwara State?

To answer research question one, data based on sample responses on internal qualities were collated described as shown in Table 1 using the descriptive statistic of Mean rating.

Table1. Level of IQM strategies adopted by the Universities in Kwara State

Level	Frequency	Mean Score Range	Percentage
Low	15	1.00-1.99	6.6
Moderate	140	2.00-2.99	61.9
High	71	3.00-3.99	31.4
Total	226		100

Table1 shows the level of IQM strategies adopted by the universities in Kwara State is moderate at 61.9 %. The range was determined by the frequency of the mean response. Hence, the data was recorded to 1.00-1.99 = 1, 2.00-2.99 = 2, and 3.00-3.99 = 3. Thus, the frequency was used to determine the level. This means IQM strategies (administrative and academics) adopted by the Universities in Kwara State are moderate based on the data gathered from the sampled lecturers of the Universities.

H₀₁: IQM strategy is not a significant difference among universities in Kwara State.

To examine if there is any significant difference in the IQM strategies among universities, responses from the lecturers' assessment were collated and analysed using a one-way analysis of difference as revealed in Table 2.

Table 2. One-way analysis of the difference in the IQM strategies among universities in Kwara State

Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	11.146	2	5.573	27.62	.000
Within Groups	44.995	223	.202		
Total	56.140	225			

One-way between-groups analysis of variance was carried out to determine if the significant differences exist among the universities in terms of IQM strategies based on the data obtained. Universities in Kwara

State were categorised into three groups according to their ownership (Federal, State and Private). There was a statistically significant difference at the $p < .05$ of universities in the IQM strategies among universities $F(2, 223) = 27.62, p = .000$.

table 3. comparison of the iqm strategies among federal, state and private universities

(I) School Type	(J) School Type	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Federal	State	-.31145*	.06972	.000
	Private	.32811*	.10437	.005
State	Federal	.31145*	.06972	.000
	Private	.63956*	.09441	.000
Private	Federal	-.32811*	.10437	.005
	State	-.63956*	.09441	.000

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 3 reveals the post-hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test that the mean score for Federal ($M = 3.46, SD = .742$) was significantly different from both State ($M = 3.84, SD = .676$) and private ($M = 3.66, SD = .972$) respectively. Thus, the mean difference was significantly different between Federal and State Universities, in favour of State University, between Federal and Private Universities in favour of Federal University, and between Private and State Universities, the favour of State University.

Ho2: Significant difference does not exist in the administrative strategies among universities in Kwara State.

To investigate if there is a significant difference in the administrative strategy among universities, responses from the lecturers' assessment were collated and analysed using a one-way analysis of difference as indicated in Table 4.

Table 4. One-way analysis of the difference in the administrative strategies among universities in Kwara State

Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	12.065	2	6.033	29.483	.000
Within Groups	45.629	223	.205		
Total	57.694	225			

One-way between-groups analysis of variance was carried out to investigate if significant differences exist among the universities in terms of administrative strategy based on the data collected. Based on the three categories of the universities (Federal, State, and Private), there was a statistically significant difference at the $p < .05$ in the administrative strategy among universities $F(2, 223) = 29.483, p = .000$.

Table 5. Comparison of the administrative strategies among federal, state and private universities

(I) School Type	(J) School Type	Mean Difference		
		(I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Federal	State	-.32608*	.070	.000
	Private	.33791*	.105	.004
State	Federal	.32608*	.070	.000
	Private	.66399*	.095	.000
Private	Federal	-.33791*	.105	.004
	State	-.66399*	.095	.000

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

The result presented in Table 5 shows the post-hoc comparisons of administrative strategy using the Tukey HSD test that the mean score for Federal University ($M = 2.65$, $SD = .422$) was significantly different from both State University ($M = 2.97$, $SD = .455$) and Private University ($M = 2.31$, $SD = .498$) respectively. Hence, the mean difference was significantly different between Federal and State Universities, in favour of State University, between Federal and Private Universities in favour of Federal University, and between Private and State Universities, in favour of State University.

H03: Significant difference does not exist in academic strategies among universities in Kwara State.

To determine if there is a significant difference in the academics strategy among universities, responses from the lecturers' assessment were collated and analysed using a one-way analysis of difference as indicated in Table 6.

Table 6. One-Way Analysis of the difference in the Academics strategies among universities in Kwara State

Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	10.263	2	5.131	18.370	.000
Within Groups	62.294	223	.279		
Total	72.557	225			

One-way between-groups analysis of variance was carried out to determine if significant differences exist among the universities in terms of academic strategies based on the data collected. Based on the three categories of the universities (Federal, State and Private), there was a statistically significant difference at the $p < .05$ in the academics strategy among universities $F(2, 223) = 18.370$, $p = .000$.

Table 7. Comparison of the Academics Strategies among Federal, State and Private Universities

(I) School Type	(J) School Type	Mean Difference		
		(I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Federal	State	-.29682*	.082	.001

	Private	.31831*	.122	.027
State	Federal	.29682*	.082	.001
	Private	.61513*	.111	.000
Private	Federal	-.31831*	.122	.027
	State	-.61513*	.111	.000

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

The result presented in Table 7 shows the post-hoc comparisons of academic strategies using the Tukey HSD test. The mean score for Federal University ($M = 2.64$, $SD = .584$) was significantly different from both State University ($M = 2.93$, $SD = .520$) and Private University ($M = 2.32$, $SD = .434$). Thus, the mean difference was significantly different between Federal and State Universities, in favour of State University, between Federal and Private Universities, in favour of Federal University, and between Private and State Universities, in favour of State University.

HO4: Significant difference does not exist between public and private universities in Kwara State based on the IQM strategies.

In order to test HO4, respondents' perceptions on IQM strategies were collated and analysed. The data collected was tested to find out if there is a significant difference between public and private Universities in the IQM strategies, as shown in Table 8.

Table 8. Difference between public and private universities in the IQM strategies

Type	N	Mean	SD	SEM	t	df	P	Decision
Public	119	2.86	.47	.033	5.70	224		Rejected
Private	27	2.31	2.31	2.90			.000	

Significant @ $p > .05$

Table 8 reveals that there is a statistically significant difference between public and private universities in terms of IQM strategies $t(224) = 5.70$, $p .000 < 0.5$. Since the calculated significance (.000) is less than the critical alpha level of significance (0.05), it is shown that public universities are significantly difference from private Universities in terms of IQM strategies. Thus, the hypothesis is rejected. These differences are in favour of public universities.

5. Discussions

Table 1 indicated that the IQM strategies (administrative and academics) adopted by the Universities in Kwara State are moderate at 61.9 % based on the data gathered from the sampled lecturers of the universities. This implies that the universities' level of IQM strategies remains at a moderate level. This could be as a result of the leadership styles of these universities. Also, another factor that could warrant a moderate level of internal quality management process in these universities could be funding, culture or climate, among others. This is relation to Ebisine (2013) submission that low academic quality assurance in Nigerian universities is a product of variables such as an explosion in the population, inadequate

educational physical facilities and equipment, malpractices in an examination, quality of students' intake, res inadequate staffing, poor funding, societal factors (corruption and nepotism) and parental influence.

The hypothesis one tested revealed that IQM strategies were significantly different among universities (Federal, State, and Private) university ($F(2, 223) = 27.62, p = .000$). Thus, State University demonstrated better IQM strategies than their counterparts from Federal and Private Universities. The reasons for State University been favoured over Federal university in terms of IQM could include years of establishment, where State University is much younger than Federal university. Also, an estimated population of about 50,000 students and staff of Federal University could be accounted for State University with a lesser population having an edge in terms of IQM.

On the other hand, Federal University was found better in IQM strategies than Private University. The difference could be as a result of factors such as management styles, ownership, institutional structure and policy, vision and mission statement, funding among others. Kayode, Yusoff & Veloo, (2016) advocated the need for internal quality supervision in the university system due to students' enrollment increment, restricted resources utilisation, low staff commitment and answerability among the stakeholders. Regardless of university type/ownership internal quality management will not only improve quality products (graduates) but will increase the university's productivity and development to have a competitive advantage (Trapitsin, Krokinskaya, and Timchenko, 2015).

Furthermore, a significant difference was statistically found among the universities in forms of administrative strategies at $F(2, 223) = 29.483, p = .000$. This implies that universities are not similar in their administrative process (staff recruitment, students' admission, and infrastructure facilities). The State University was favoured in the administrative strategies over Federal and Private Universities. This could be informed by differences in their ownership, the mission statement and customer's demand among others. The size of the Federal Universities with several programmes could induce the challenge of management over State University. Moreover, between Federal and Private Universities, administrative strategies were favourable to Federal University. This could have been because private universities are profit making institutions hence, admission and recruitment process will be geared toward attracting students (customers), enhance students' retention and patronage. Motwani (2001) opined that the administrative process of an institution emphasises on the value added to the policy, lecturers' job performance and enhancing the institutional quality outputs. Asiyai (2015) stated that the university's quality has linked with the quality of student intake and staff appointment. Ibara (2015) attributed the increase in students' enrolment without a corresponding increase in instructional resources to low quality in university products.

Moreover, a statistically significant difference was established in the academic strategies among universities at the $p < .05, F(2, 223) = 18.370, p = .000$. This means universities are different in the academics process towards quality and accountability. The difference is favoured to State-Owned University over Federal and Private Universities. A further investigation revealed that State University practice of writing examination for a week which caused failure among students and led to programmes called summer/ make-up examination could have been viewed as an academic strategy in attaining quality. Also, is the advantage of the number of students/ class size and emphasis on entrepreneur and professional skills by State University to be acquired by students could have informed the difference over Federal University. In the academic strategies, Federal University has an edge over Private Universities. The differences could have emanated from the ownership and vision and mission statement. Osuntokun (2017) argued that the roles of IQM in the Universities should go beyond accreditation of academic programmes

but should also ensure quality instruction and supervision, integrity and fairness in assessments.

Table 8 revealed that a statistically significant difference existed between public and private Universities based on the IQM strategies $t(224) = 5.70$, $p .000 < 0.5$. This indicates that public Universities are better in IQM strategies compared to Private Universities. The different in the IQM strategies could be as a result of ownership, years of operation, a number of professors, availability of resources, management structure and goal of the establishment. Ani (2010) opined that student's performance improvement depends mainly on the availability of adequate educational resources, robust school administrative and academics processes, clear job descriptions and responsibilities, which are the foundation for University's quality products regardless of the ownership or types.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

The conclusion was drawn from the findings that the Universities in Kwara State are different in internal quality management strategies. Also, the level of IQM strategies adopted in the Universities was moderate. It was recommended therefore based on the findings of the study that the National Universities Commission and Joint Admission Matriculation Board should strict on the admission process of private universities to ascertain that students with qualified requirements are admitted. Also, staff recruitment and supportive environment/facilities should be given priority in the university system. Furthermore, lecturers in the universities should be encouraged by the university management to be actively involved in community service as part of the mandates of the university. Last, implementation of IQM strategies should be improved upon by the universities' management regardless of the ownership to enhance the attainment of their vision and mission through continuous re-orientation and establishment of quality assurance units in the university.

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Appendix (Questionnaire)

Internal Quality Management Strategies Questionnaire

Type of Institution: Federal () State () Private ()

Gender: Male () Female ()

Kindly indicate your level of agreement to these statements as applied in your institution in ensuring quality of education.

Strongly Agree (4) Agree (3) Disagree (2) Strongly Disagree (1)

SN	Items	1	2	3	4
	ADMINISTRATIVE STRATEGY				
A	Staff Recruitment Process				
1	The laid down staff employment policies are strictly followed in my institution				
2	The appointment policies in my school ensure that the most qualified candidates are appointed into the university system				
3	The various demands of the academic departments are always considered in the staff appointment process				
4	Adequate number of lecturers are recruited in the institution				
5	Only lecturers who are ready to impart knowledge are recruited by my school				
B	Student Admission Process				
6	The student admission criteria are strictly followed by institution				
7	The admission criteria ensure that the most qualified students are admitted into the institution				
8	The various academic departments are involved in the admission process				
9	My school admits students in line with the national labour market demand				
10	Number of students admitted is in line with the capacity of the school in terms of staff strength and facilities				
C	Supportive Environment/ Facilities				
11	The physical environment of the classroom aid learning				
12	There is adequate mentoring for newly employed staff				
13	Lecturers' professional development is encouraged and promoted by the school authority				
14	Conditions of service for staff are very encouraging				
15	Staff welfare is of paramount importance to my institution authority				
16	Student support services are adequately provided				
	ACADEMIC STRATEGY				
A	Assessment				



1	The assessment process at my institution enables students to demonstrate the achievement of all the intended outcomes				
2	There is full confidence in the integrity of assessment procedures in my school				
3	The external examiner enhances quality assessment process in my school				
4	Good procedures are put in place for recording and verifying marks by the school				
5	The assessment strategies adopted in my school have an adequate formative function in developing student abilities				
B	Curriculum				
9	The curriculum enhances a high programme graduation rate.				
10	The curriculum leads to a high quality of instruction within the programme.				
11	The present curricular reflect what the students will come across after graduation				
12	The curriculum is well designed and up to date				
13	The curriculum integrates subject matter and high critical thinking skills				
14	The curriculum content and process objectives are situated in real world tasks				
15	The curriculum is designed based on a variety of research				
C	Instruction				
16	Students are encouraged to make the learning themselves				
17	Most lecturers bring reality to the classrooms				
18	Instructions are electronically integrated				
D	Service Learning (SIWES, IT, Practicum, Teaching Practice, Internship)				
21	Service learning gives students practical experience				
22	Service learning exposes students to diverse stakeholders				
23	Service learning exposes students to complex organisational problems				
24	Service learning allows students to gain advocacy and problem solving skills				
26	Through service learning, students commit themselves to become involved in new post university community life				
E	Research				
27	The lecturers' research activities envisage the students' needs and expectations				
28	The lecturers' research activities envisage the companies' needs and expectations				
29	The academic research activity envisages the needs and expectations of the society as a whole				
F	Community Service				
30	Lecturers educate the community based on their research outcome				



31	Universities have a closer relationship with their host community				
32	Community development programmes are anchored by the university to improve on the quality of service				