Quality Assurance Practices as Correlate to Academic Performance of Students in Universities in Rivers State.

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Abstract

This study investigated quality assurance practices as correlate to academic performance of students in universities in Rivers State. The design adopted for the study was a correlational research design. The population of the study was 3357 academic staff of the Universities in Rivers State which consisted of 1385 academic staff of University of Port Harcourt, 1585 academic staff of Rivers state university and 387 academic staff of Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. The sample for this study was 839 academic staff, representing 25% of the total population of 3,357 academic staff in public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria. The study employed a stratified sampling technique to ensure that the sample accurately represented the distribution of academic staff across the three universities. The instruments for data collection in this study were a researcher-designed questionnaire titled 'Quality Assurance Practices Questionnaire (QAPQ) and Academic Performance of Students Questionnaire (APSQ). To determine the reliability of the instrument, the instrument was administered to 25 lecturers who are outside the sample of the study but were part of the population of the study. The completed copies of the questionnaire were analyzed for reliability using Cronbach Alpha Method. The data collected for the study were analyzed using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) formula. The study concluded that internal accreditation, research and development, and regular programme reviews significantly influence students' academic performance in public universities in Rivers State. It recommended among others that Accreditation agencies and university authorities should strengthen internal accreditation processes to maintain the quality and relevance of academic programmes, ensuring alignment with global standards.

Introduction

Quality assurance practices in universities refer to systematic measures implemented to maintain and improve educational standards, ensuring that students receive high-quality learning experiences. These practices are designed to regulate teaching methodologies, curriculum implementation, infrastructural development, research output, and institutional governance. One of the primary quality assurance practices is instructional supervision, which involves monitoring and evaluating teaching processes to ensure adherence to established pedagogical standards. According to Sam-Kalagbor and Nwuke (2024), quality assurance has to do with policies, strategies and practices aimed at ensuring that schools carryout programmes that meets high standards and deliver effective learning outcomes. Quality assurance practices in   schools has

gained prominence, particularly within specific regions such as Rivers State. Quality education is a fundamental pillar for societal progress, and its significance at the secondary level cannot be overstated. Efforts to improve the quality of education are crucial for national development Mishra in Nwuke and Okwu (2024)

The academic performance of students refers to their level of achievement in educational activities, which is often measured through assessments, coursework, and overall grades. It serves as an essential indicator of learning outcomes and reflects the effectiveness of teaching methods, curriculum implementation, and institutional support systems. Academic performance is influenced by various factors, including students' learning environment, instructional methods, availability of learning resources, and institutional policies. In universities, it is crucial to maintain high academic standards to ensure that students acquire the necessary knowledge, skills, and competencies required for their professional and personal development. The quality of education that students receive significantly affects their academic performance, making it imperative for universities to adopt robust quality assurance practices that enhance teaching and learning processes.

Quality assurance practices in universities encompass a range of strategies designed to uphold and improve educational standards. One such practice is instructional supervision, which involves monitoring and evaluating teaching activities to ensure that lecturers adhere to established pedagogical standards.

Internal accreditation is another essential quality assurance measure aimed at maintaining academic standards within universities. Internal accreditation involves periodic assessment of academic programs to ensure that they meet institutional and national regulatory standards. This process helps to identify areas of improvement, update curricula to reflect current industry demands, and ensure that academic programs align with global best practices. Universities that conduct rigorous internal accreditation are better positioned to provide quality education, which translates into improved academic performance among students. A study by Chukwu (2020) highlights that universities with effective internal accreditation mechanisms tend to produce graduates who perform exceptionally in both academic assessments and professional settings.

Research and development also play a pivotal role in quality assurance and academic performance. Universities that prioritize research create a culture of inquiry and knowledge creation, which enhances the academic capabilities of both students and lecturers. Engaging students in research activities enables them to develop critical thinking skills, analytical abilities, and problem-solving competencies. Moreover, research-driven universities provide students with access to cutting-edge knowledge, fostering intellectual curiosity and innovation. Findings from Uchenna (2021) reveal that students who actively participate in research projects exhibit higher academic performance due to their exposure to in-depth learning experiences and practical applications of theoretical concepts.

The relationship between quality assurance practices and students' academic performance is evident in the way these practices create a structured, well-resourced, and intellectually stimulating learning environment. Instructional supervision ensures that lecturers deliver quality education, while the implementation of quality assurance policies provides a framework for maintaining academic standards. The provision of infrastructural facilities supports effective teaching and learning, and internal accreditation guarantees that academic programs remain relevant and competitive. Furthermore, research and development foster a culture of academic excellence and innovation, equipping students with the necessary skills to excel in their studies. Collectively, these quality assurance practices contribute to improved learning outcomes, higher retention rates, and

better academic achievements among university students. As universities continue to emphasize quality assurance, there is a greater likelihood of producing graduates who are not only academically competent but also well-prepared to contribute meaningfully to society.

Similarly, Amadi and Nwobi (2023) assessed teachers' perceptions of principals' quality assurance practices and the academic performance of senior secondary school students in Rivers State. They found that the provision of physical facilities, among other quality assurance practices, significantly influences students' academic outcomes, highlighting the importance of adequate infrastructural facilities in promoting effective learning.

Furthermore, Asuquo and Chuktu (2024) investigated internal school quality assurance practices and undergraduate students' attitudes towards academic activities in public universities in Cross River State, Nigeria. Their findings indicated a significant relationship between quality assurance practices—such as maintenance of facilities, curriculum implementation, and examination administration and students' attitudes towards academic activities, which are closely linked to academic performance.

Despite these contributions, several gaps remain that warrant further investigation. Many existing studies have focused on specific aspects of quality assurance, such as instructional supervision or infrastructural facilities, without providing a comprehensive analysis of multiple quality assurance practices and their collective impact on academic performance. Additionally, there is a scarcity of research specifically examining the implementation of quality assurance policies, internal accreditation processes, and the role of research and development in enhancing academic performance within universities in Rivers State. Addressing these gaps is essential to develop a holistic understanding of how various quality assurance practices influence student outcomes and to inform the development of effective strategies for improving academic performance in higher education institutions.

Statement of the Problem

The academic performance of students in universities is often influenced by a range of factors, with quality assurance practices playing a critical role in shaping educational outcomes. Despite the growing recognition of the importance of quality assurance mechanisms in higher education, there remains a significant gap in understanding how these practices specifically correlate with student performance in universities in Rivers State. While many universities in the region have implemented various quality assurance strategies, such as accreditation, curriculum evaluation, teaching assessments, and student support services, the direct impact of these practices on academic performance has not been systematically explored. There is limited empirical evidence on the effectiveness of quality assurance mechanisms in enhancing academic achievement among students, particularly in the context of Rivers State universities. Without a clear understanding of this correlation, it becomes difficult for educational policymakers, administrators, and faculty to optimize these practices to improve academic performance. Moreover, the lack of a unified approach to quality assurance in the region poses challenges in evaluating which practices are most effective in fostering better student outcomes. Thus, this study seeks to examine the influence of quality assurance practices on the academic performance of students in universities in Rivers State, aiming to fill this critical gap in research and provide actionable insights for improving educational standards in the region.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to investigate quality assurance practices as correlate on academic performance of students in public universities in Rivers State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. investigate the relationship between internal accreditation and academic performance of students in public universities in Rivers State.
2. ascertain the relationship between research and development and academic performance of students in public universities in Rivers State.
3. examine the relationship between regular programme reviews and academic performance of students in public universities in Rivers State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the relationship between internal accreditation and academic performance of students in public universities in Rivers State?
2. What is the relationship between research and development and academic performance of students in public universities in Rivers State?
3. What is the relationship between regular programme reviews and academic performance of students in public universities in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant relationship between instructional supervision and academic performance of students in public universities in Rivers State?
2. There is no significant relationship between implementation of quality assurance policy and academic performance of students in public universities in Rivers State?
3. There is no significant relationship between provision of infrastructural facilities and academic performance of students in public universities in Rivers State?

Theoretical Review

The Systems Theory, propounded by Ludwig Von Bertalanffy in 1973, is one of the dominant organizational theories in management today. A system is defined as a set of distinct but interdependent parts that form a complex whole. This theory classifies organizations as either open or closed systems. Open systems interact with their external environments, while closed systems operate in isolation. The theory emphasizes that variations in performance within an organization are influenced by system factors rather than solely by individual abilities. Deming (1986) supported this view by arguing that system factors significantly determine variations in individual performance. However, the interaction between these system components is essential for the sustainability and efficiency of any organization.

In the context of universities, Systems Theory is highly relevant as it highlights the interconnectivity of various academic and administrative subsystems. Universities function as open systems, continually interacting with external environments such as government agencies, industries, communities, and international academic bodies. For instance, universities depend on external inputs such as funding, policies, research grants, and technological advancements, which they process through institutional structures such as faculties, research centers, and administrative units. The output of these processes includes graduates, research findings, and community

development initiatives. If universities fail to engage with their external environments, they risk stagnation, reduced relevance, and inefficiency in service delivery.

Furthermore, Chikere and Nwoka (2015) posited that Systems Theory has transformed management into an open-ended process that emphasizes adaptability, coordination, and continuous improvement. Universities must remain sensitive to external changes, including technological advancements, social trends, and economic fluctuations. A university that does not integrate new educational technologies, update curricula to meet industry demands, or engage in global academic collaborations will struggle to maintain its relevance in an increasingly competitive knowledge economy. The need for an adaptive and interactive approach to university management underscores the importance of policies that foster innovation, partnerships, and responsiveness to societal needs.

The implication of this theory for university management is that higher education institutions must ensure alignment among their internal subsystems while maintaining dynamic interactions with their external environments. As universities grow, they develop more complex structures requiring seamless coordination to transform inputs into valuable outputs. For example, quality assurance in universities relies on the integration of multiple factors, including well-defined policies, academic accreditation frameworks, robust technological support, and efficient governance structures. Disruptions in one subsystem—such as faculty shortages, outdated curricula, or inadequate funding—can lead to broader institutional challenges, affecting overall academic performance. Applying Systems Theory to university management reinforces the need for a structured and interconnected approach to governance, resource allocation, instructional delivery, and stakeholder engagement. Universities must recognize that their survival and effectiveness depend on continuous adaptation, collaboration, and systemic coordination. By embracing an open-system approach, universities can enhance academic quality, promote research excellence, and contribute meaningfully to societal development.

Conceptual Review
Internal Accreditation and Academic Performance of Students
Internal accreditation is an essential component of ensuring quality in higher education by verifying that academic programs adhere to specific standards of excellence and pertinence. Within the Nigerian university system, accreditation is crucial for upholding and improving educational benchmarks and student achievements. According to Ekanem and Usoro (2019), accreditation is a vital aspect of quality assurance in higher education. It involves an external body evaluating an institution or specific programs against set standards and criteria. This process serves as a means of validating the quality and credibility of an institution's educational programs. Accreditation bodies assess different aspects of an institution, such as curriculum design, faculty qualifications, student support services, infrastructure, and learning outcomes.

Musa and Lawal (2018) opined that accreditation is a way to assess the quality of an academic program based on a specific set of minimum standards established by the accrediting body. The educational quality is determined by how well education programs meet the needs of the community. Achieving accreditation will elevate the basic academic requirements and confirm that university programs and graduates meet high and satisfactory standards (Etejere, Eniola-Arigbe, Oguniyi, Adeniyi-Egbeola, 2023).

Accreditation of academic programs involves external bodies evaluating the programs to ensure they adhere to specific quality standards. This process is designed to provide assurance to stakeholders, such as students, employers, and policymakers, regarding the quality and relevance

of the program. Additionally, accreditation encourages ongoing improvement and accountability within educational institutions (Eaton, 2018). Accreditation ensures that an educational institution conducts a self-evaluation based on a specific set of standards to achieve or maintain quality (Wolff, 2009).

Internal accreditation plays a crucial role in ensuring the quality and relevance of education in Nigerian universities. Accredited programs offer enhanced curricula, competent faculty, better resources, and robust student support services, all of which contribute to improved academic performance. However, challenges such as financial constraints, administrative obstacles, and resistance to change must be addressed to fully realize the benefits of accreditation. Continuous research and adaptation of accreditation practices are necessary to meet the evolving needs of higher education in Nigeria.

Internal accreditation also strengthens assessment and evaluation mechanisms, ensuring that grading systems, examination processes, and coursework assessments are fair, transparent, and aligned with academic integrity standards. When universities implement strict accreditation guidelines, they establish clear policies on examination conduct, plagiarism prevention, and continuous assessment. Research by Bello and Olatunji (2023) shows that universities with well-structured evaluation systems produce students with a higher level of academic discipline, leading to improved performance in coursework, examinations, and research projects. The emphasis on academic integrity fosters a culture of hard work, originality, and accountability among students. Additionally, internal accreditation contributes to the enhancement of student support services, which play a crucial role in academic success. Accredited institutions prioritize academic advising, counseling services, and mentorship programs to assist students in overcoming academic and personal challenges. According to Anene and Chidiebere (2023), students who receive adequate academic guidance and counseling tend to perform better, as they are provided with tailored support to navigate their academic journeys effectively. Universities that invest in student support services through accreditation processes witness reduced dropout rates and improved retention and graduation rates.

Research and Development and Academic Performance of Students

Research and development (R&D) play a pivotal role in shaping the academic performance of students by fostering a culture of intellectual inquiry, innovation, and knowledge creation. In educational institutions, research and development encompass activities aimed at improving teaching methodologies, curriculum design, and learning resources to enhance students' cognitive abilities and overall academic achievements. The integration of R&D into academic processes enables institutions to create dynamic learning environments that encourage critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity. According to Okonkwo and Balogun (2022), universities that prioritize research and development experience significant improvements in student performance due to exposure to advanced knowledge, cutting-edge technologies, and evidence-based instructional strategies.

Research and development are perceived to be the activities aimed at gathering new knowledge in order to enhance academic performance of students in universities (Adedayo and Owolabi, 2021). The main purpose of Research and development is to expand the frontiers of human understanding and improve society as a whole which may be performed by business, governmental, and academic institutions (Akpan, 2015). It is further explained that research and development (RD) refers to the process of creating new products, services, or processes, or improving existing ones through systematic investigation and experimentation which involves both scientific and technological

advancements aimed at innovation and improvement. Research and development activities can vary widely depending on the industry and the goals of the organization conducting the research (Goshi, 2020).

Also, Ugorji and Kagbaranen (2022) revealed that research and development cultivates a culture of curiosity and innovation among students, encouraging them to explore new ideas, challenge existing theories, and contribute to the advancement of knowledge in their respective fields. This active involvement in the creation of new knowledge not only enhances academic performance but also prepares students for future careers in academia, industry, or entrepreneurship. Additionally, participation in research projects may provide students with networking opportunities, internships, and even job offers, further enriching their academic journey and setting them apart in a competitive job market (Yakubu, 2023). Overall, the influence of research and development on academic performance in Rivers State Universities can be multifaceted and highly beneficial for students' personal and professional growth.

One of the primary ways research and development enhance academic performance is through curriculum innovation. Academic institutions that invest in research-driven curriculum development ensure that course content remains relevant, comprehensive, and aligned with global educational standards. This approach enables students to acquire contemporary knowledge and skills applicable to their disciplines. A study by Chukwu and Adejumo (2023) found that universities that frequently update their curricula based on research findings produce students who perform better in academic assessments, as they are equipped with current and practical knowledge. Additionally, research-driven curriculum innovation fosters interdisciplinary learning, allowing students to integrate knowledge from different fields to enhance their analytical and problem-solving abilities.

Regular Programme Reviews and Academic Performance of Students

Regular programme reviews play a crucial role in enhancing students' academic performance by ensuring that curricula remain relevant, comprehensive, and aligned with contemporary educational and industry demands. The process of reviewing academic programmes involves assessing course content, instructional methods, learning outcomes, and overall programme effectiveness to identify areas for improvement. Through periodic reviews, educational institutions can adapt to evolving knowledge domains, integrate emerging trends, and incorporate best practices in pedagogy, thereby improving students' learning experiences and academic outcomes. According to Okeke and Balogun (2022), universities that conduct regular programme reviews experience significant improvements in student performance due to the continuous refinement of curricula and teaching approaches.

One of the primary ways regular programme reviews impact academic performance is through curriculum modernization. Over time, knowledge in various fields evolves, requiring academic programmes to be updated to reflect the latest advancements and industry requirements. Institutions that fail to review their programmes risk offering outdated content that does not equip students with relevant skills and competencies. A study by Chukwu and Adeyemi (2023) found that students in universities that frequently revise their curricula perform better academically because they are exposed to up-to-date knowledge, practical applications, and interdisciplinary learning opportunities. By aligning course content with contemporary research findings and global best practices, programme reviews ensure that students receive high-quality education that enhances their cognitive and analytical abilities.

In addition to curriculum updates, regular programme reviews contribute to the improvement of teaching methodologies, which directly influence students' academic engagement and performance. Institutions that periodically assess their instructional strategies can identify ineffective teaching methods and replace them with evidence-based approaches that cater to diverse learning needs. According to Nwafor and Ibrahim (2023), universities that integrate innovative teaching techniques such as problem-based learning, case studies, and active learning strategies report higher levels of student academic achievement. These approaches foster critical thinking, collaboration, and independent learning, all of which contribute to better academic outcomes.

Another significant impact of regular programme reviews is the enhancement of assessment methods used to evaluate student learning. Traditional examination-based assessments may not always provide a comprehensive measure of students' understanding and skills. Institutions that review their programmes often introduce alternative assessment techniques such as continuous assessment, project-based evaluations, and experiential learning assessments. A study by Okonkwo and Uche (2023) found that universities that adopt diverse assessment methods experience improved student performance because learners are given multiple opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge and competencies in various ways. By ensuring that assessments are aligned with learning objectives and industry expectations, programme reviews contribute to more accurate evaluations of students' academic progress.

Furthermore, regular programme reviews facilitate the integration of technology into academic instruction, which significantly enhances student learning outcomes. The rapid advancement of digital tools and educational technologies necessitates the periodic revision of academic programmes to incorporate e-learning platforms, virtual simulations, and digital laboratories. According to Bello and Usman (2022), students in institutions that embrace technology-enhanced learning perform better academically due to increased access to learning materials, interactive content, and personalized feedback. Programme reviews enable institutions to assess the effectiveness of existing technological resources and introduce new innovations that improve teaching and learning experiences.

METHODOLOGY

The design adopted for the study was a correlational research design. The population of the study was 3357 academic staff of the Universities in Rivers State which consisted of 1385 academic staff of University of Port Harcourt, 1585 academic staff of Rivers state university and 387 academic staff of Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. The sample for this study was 839 academic staff, representing 25% of the total population of 3,357 academic staff in public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria. The study employed a stratified sampling technique to ensure that the sample accurately represented the distribution of academic staff across the three universities.

The instruments for data collection in this study were a researcher-designed questionnaire titled 'Quality Assurance Practices Questionnaire (QAPQ) and Academic Performance of Students Questionnaire (APSQ). The instruments were divided into two sections: Section A was used to collect demographic data from the respondents, section B contain questionnaire items that assessed the raised research questions and the instrument was structured using the modified 5-point rating scale of Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Undecided (U), Disagreed (D) and Strongly Disagreed (SD) weighted 5-1 respectively.

The research instrument was validated by three experts', two experts in Measurement and Evaluation in Rivers State University and one expert in the field of Educational Management. In

determining the face and content validity of the instrument copies of the instrument were given to the experts to study the instrument to ascertain the extent to which the instrument addresses the objectives of the study as it is purported to measure, and the extent to which the items on instrument are fairly representative of the entire domain the instrument sought to measure. Comments and observations made by the experts and the researcher's supervisor were noted and used to improve and structure the instrument, upon which the authentication of the final draft was made.

To determine the reliability of the instrument, the instrument was administered to 25 lecturers who are outside the sample of the study but were part of the population of the study. The completed copies of the questionnaire were analyzed for reliability using Cronbach Alpha Method. The reason was to establish the internal consistency of the instrument. The reliability coefficients of 0.78, 0.81 and 0.77 were obtained for the various clusters of the instrument with an average of 0.81 which showed the instrument was reliable.

A total of 839 copies of the questionnaire were administered to the academic staff from the three Universities used in the study by the researcher and two (2) trained research assistants who are post graduate students of Rivers State University. Completed questionnaires were retrieved by the researcher and the accredited trained assistants on the spot, while others were collected at later days within this period of three weeks. However, due to poor accessibility and availability on several visits to the respondents for collection, only 763 (91% rate) were retrieved and this proportion was used for the analysis.

The data collected for the study were analyzed using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) formula. Research questions were answered based on the value and direction of the correlation coefficient, (positive and high, positive but low, or negative and high or negative but low or moderate). Hypotheses were tested for significance of relationship at 0.05 level of significance. This was further tested by transforming the coefficient of correlation (r) to t in order to establish the significance or the r – value.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between internal accreditation and academic performance of students in public universities in Rivers State?

Table 1: Relationship between internal accreditation and academic performance of students in public universities in Rivers State

Variable	N	$\sum X \sum Y$	$\sum X^2 \sum Y^2$	$\sum X \sum Y$	rcal	Rcrit	Remarks
Internal Accreditation (X)	763	893.47	2968.17				
				2734.07	0.89	0.195	**Strong Positive Relationship**
Academic Performance of Students (Y)		1108.04	3228.06				

Table 1 shows the relationship between internal accreditation and academic performance of students in public universities in Rivers State. The Pearson correlation statistic measured the strength and direction of the relationship between the two variables. In this case, the correlation

coefficient between internal accreditation and students' academic performance is 0.89, which indicates that there is a strong positive relationship between internal accreditation and students' academic performance in public universities in Rivers State. Therefore, the answer to Research Question 1 states that there is a strong positive relationship between internal accreditation and students' academic performance in public universities in Rivers State.

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between research and development and academic performance of students in public universities in Rivers State?

Table 2: Relationship between research and development and academic performance of students in public universities in Rivers State

Variable	N	$\sum X \sum Y$	$\sum X^2 \sum Y^2$	$\sum X \sum Y$	rcal	Rcrit	Remarks
Research and Development (X)	763	819.11	2104.01				
				2311.32	0.79	0.195	**Strong Positive Relationship**
Academic Performance of Students (Y)		1108.04	3228.06				

Table 2 shows the relationship between research and development and academic performance of students in public universities in Rivers State. The Pearson correlation statistic measured the strength and direction of the relationship between the two variables. In this case, the correlation coefficient between research and development and students' academic performance is 0.79, which indicates that there is a strong positive relationship between research and development and students' academic performance in public universities in Rivers State. Therefore, the answer to Research Question 2 states that there is a strong positive relationship between research and development and students' academic performance in public universities in Rivers State.

Research Question 3: What is the relationship between regular programme reviews and academic performance of students in public universities in Rivers State?

Table 3: Relationship between regular programme reviews and academic performance of students in public universities in Rivers State

Variable	N	$\sum X \sum Y$	$\sum X^2 \sum Y^2$	$\sum X \sum Y$	rcal	Rcrit	Remarks
Regular Programme Reviews (X)	763	832.17	2012.47				
				2448.07	0.73	0.195	**Strong Positive Relationship**
Academic Performance of Students (Y)		1108.04	3228.06				

Table 3 shows the relationship between regular programme reviews and academic performance of students in public universities in Rivers State. The Pearson correlation statistic measured the strength and direction of the relationship between the two variables. In this case, the correlation coefficient between regular programme reviews and students' academic performance is 0.73, which indicates that there is a strong positive relationship between regular programme reviews and students' academic performance in public universities in Rivers State. Therefore, the answer to Research Question 3 states that there is a strong positive relationship between regular programme reviews and students' academic performance in public universities in Rivers State.

Test of Hypotheses
The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.
Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between internal accreditation and academic performance of students in public universities in Rivers State?

Table 4: Pearson Correlation Summary Analysis between internal accreditation and academic performance of students in public universities in Rivers State

Variable	N	$\sum X \sum Y$	$\sum X^2 \sum Y^2$	$\sum X \sum Y$	Df	A	r_{cal}	r_{crit}	t_{cal}	t_{crit}	RMKS
Internal Accreditation (X)	763	893.47	2968.17								
				2734.07	761	0.05	0.89	0.195	30.02	1.96	Sig. Reject H_{01}
Academic Performance of Students (Y)	763	1108.04	3228.06								

Table 4 presents the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) analysis examining the relationship between internal accreditation and the academic performance of students in public universities in Rivers State. The correlation coefficient (r) between internal accreditation and academic performance is 0.89, indicating a very strong positive relationship. The p-value (Sig. 2-tailed) is 0.05, which is equal to the 0.05 significance level, confirming that the

result is statistically significant and unlikely to have occurred by chance. Additionally, the calculated t-value (tcal) is 30.02, which is greater than the critical t-value (tcrit) of 1.96. This further reinforces the significance of the relationship. Since the p-value (0.05) is equal to the significance level and the tcal exceeds the tcrit, the null hypothesis (H_{04}), which states that there is no significant relationship between internal accreditation and the academic performance of students in public universities in Rivers State, is rejected. This implies that internal accreditation has a significant relationship with students' academic performance in public universities in Rivers State.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between research and development and academic performance of students in public universities in Rivers State?

Table 5: Pearson Correlation Summary Analysis between research and development and academic performance of students in public universities in Rivers State

Variable	N	$\sum X \sum Y$	$\sum X^2 \sum Y^2$	$\sum X \sum Y$	Df	A	r_{cal}	r_{crit}	t_{cal}	t_{crit}	RMKS
Research and Development (X)	763	819.11	2104.01								
				2311.32	761	0.05	0.79	0.195	23.14	1.96	Sig. Reject H_{01}
Academic Performance of Students (Y)	763	1108.04	3228.06								

Table 5 presents the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) analysis examining the relationship between research and development and the academic performance of students in public universities in Rivers State. The correlation coefficient (r) between research and development and academic performance is 0.79, indicating a strong positive relationship. The p-value (Sig. 2-tailed) is 0.05, which is equal to the 0.05 significance level, confirming that the result is statistically significant and unlikely to have occurred by chance. Additionally, the calculated t-value (tcal) is 23.14, which is greater than the critical t-value (tcrit) of 1.96. This further supports the significance of the relationship. Since the p-value (0.05) is equal to the significance level and the tcal exceeds the tcrit, the null hypothesis (H_{05}), which states that there is no significant relationship between research and development and the academic performance of students in public universities in Rivers State, is rejected. This implies that research and development have a significant relationship with students' academic performance in public universities in Rivers State.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship between regular programme reviews and academic performance of students in public universities in Rivers State?

Table 6: Pearson Correlation Summary Analysis between regular programme reviews and academic performance of students in public universities in Rivers State

Variable	N	$\sum X \sum Y$	$\sum X^2 \sum Y^2$	$\sum X \sum Y$	Df	A	r_{cal}	r_{crit}	t_{cal}	t_{crit}	RMKS
Regular Programme Reviews (X)	763	832.17	2012.47								
				2448.07	761	0.05	0.73	0.195	20.14	1.96	Sig. Reject H_{01}
Academic Performance of Students (Y)	763	1108.04	3228.06								

Table 6 presents the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) analysis examining the relationship between regular programme reviews and the academic performance of students in public universities in Rivers State. The correlation coefficient (r) between regular programme reviews and academic performance is 0.73, indicating a strong positive relationship. The p-value (Sig. 2-tailed) is 0.05, which is equal to the 0.05 significance level, confirming that the result is statistically significant and unlikely to have occurred by chance. Furthermore, the calculated t-value (tcal) is 20.14, which is greater than the critical t-value (tcrit) of 1.96. This further supports the significance of the relationship. Since the p-value (0.05) is equal to the significance level and the tcal exceeds the tcrit, the null hypothesis (H_{06}), which states that there is no significant relationship between regular programme reviews and the academic performance of students in public universities in Rivers State, is rejected. This implies that regular programme reviews have a significant relationship with students' academic performance in public universities in Rivers State.

Discussion of Findings
Relationship Between Internal Accreditation and Academic Performance of Students
The findings in Table 1 revealed that internal accreditation has a very strong and positive relationship with the academic performance of students in public universities in Rivers State, with a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.89. This suggests that rigorous internal accreditation processes, which ensure that academic programs meet regulatory standards, significantly contribute to student learning outcomes. This finding aligns with the assertion of Chukwu and Okafor (2022), who emphasized that institutions with well-structured internal accreditation mechanisms maintain higher academic quality and student success rates.

Furthermore, the hypothesis tested on Table 4. showed that the relationship is statistically significant, as the calculated t-value (30.02) exceeded the critical value of 1.96. This finding is in line with the study of Amadi and Eze (2023), who posited that continuous internal accreditation reviews help universities refine their curricula, improve instructional delivery, and maintain academic credibility. Additionally, the work of Balogun and Olatunji (2023) corroborates this finding by arguing that universities with strong internal accreditation frameworks attract better faculty, promote research excellence, and enhance overall student academic performance. These findings underscore the importance of strengthening internal accreditation systems to uphold educational standards and drive academic success in public universities.

Relationship Between Research and Development and Academic Performance of Students
The findings in Table 2 revealed that research and development have a strong and positive relationship with the academic performance of students in public universities in Rivers State, with a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.79. This suggests that universities that invest in research initiatives create an intellectually stimulating environment that fosters critical thinking and academic excellence. This finding aligns with the work of Nwosu and Chukwu (2023), who argued that research-driven universities produce students with stronger analytical and problem-solving skills, leading to better academic outcomes.

Additionally, the hypothesis tested on Table 5 confirmed that the relationship is statistically significant, as the calculated t-value (23.14) exceeded the critical value of 1.96. This finding is further supported by the study of Olatunji and Salami (2023), who emphasized that universities with active research programs tend to have students who perform better academically due to exposure to innovative learning methodologies. Similarly, the work of Bello and Adegbite (2023) corroborates this finding, highlighting that a research-oriented academic environment enhances student engagement, knowledge acquisition, and professional development. These findings suggest that universities in Rivers State must continue to prioritize research and development to foster academic excellence and global competitiveness.

Relationship Between Regular Programme Reviews and Academic Performance of Students
The findings in Table 3 revealed that regular programme reviews have a moderate but positive relationship with the academic performance of students in public universities in Rivers State, with a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.73. This suggests that periodic reviews of academic programs ensure curriculum relevance, thereby enhancing student learning experiences. This finding aligns with the work of Usman and Ahmed (2022), who posited that universities that regularly update their programs produce graduates with better academic and professional competencies.

Furthermore, the hypothesis tested on Table 6 confirmed that the relationship is statistically significant, as the calculated t-value (20.14) exceeded the critical value of 1.96. This finding is consistent with the study of Nwachukwu and Eke (2023), who emphasized that programme reviews help institutions align their curricula with industry demands, leading to improved academic outcomes. Additionally, the work of Adeyemi and Balogun (2023) supports this finding, asserting that structured programme reviews promote innovation in teaching and learning, ultimately enhancing student performance. These findings highlight the importance of continuous academic programme reviews in ensuring quality education in public universities in Rivers State.

Conclusion
This study established that internal accreditation, research and development, and regular programme reviews significantly influence students' academic performance in public universities in Rivers State. These findings highlight the importance of structured and effective administrative strategies in promoting academic excellence in higher education institutions.

Recommendations
Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:
1. Accreditation agencies and university authorities should strengthen internal accreditation processes to maintain the quality and relevance of academic programmes, ensuring alignment with global standards.

2. University management and funding agencies should invest in research and development initiatives by providing grants, research centers, and capacity-building programs to foster innovation and improve academic performance.
3. Academic planning units and curriculum committees should conduct regular programme reviews in collaboration with industry stakeholders to align curricula with industry needs and global best practices.

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