Assessing the Quality and Relevance of ODL Programmes in Nigeria: Tracing Journalism Graduates of National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) on The Labour Market

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ABSTRACT

Tracer study is an approach used in most organizations and educational institutions to track and keep record of the graduates from their institutions. It is the follow up of graduates of higher education institutes in order to evaluate their progress up to the time they get jobs and to ascertain the level of their acceptability within the workforce. It is a way of understanding the relevance and quality of programs offered by the universities as well as the labor market. This study assesses the quality, relevance, availability and acceptability of NOUN journalism graduates in the labour market. The essence is to elicit feedback from graduates and employers on the quality, relevance and professional skills obtained through the ODL programme and their impact on workplace performance. In Nigeria, there has been an increasing demand for a workforce with demonstrable skills and competencies well suited for the 21st century, and Journalism is not an exception. The PGD Journalism programme at NOUN is designed to close the skills gap by equipping students with demonstrable skills in journalism and media, such as: digital journalism, social media reporting, digital news processing and reporting, e-publishing as well as citizen journalism. It seeks to ascertain if identified gaps have been closed and identify new competencies acquired by NOUN graduates. This presentation is a pilot run of the survey of 198 Journalism graduates of NOUN (2009-2014) in Lagos. About 15% of the respondents were used as a test run of a larger study, essentially, to validate research instrument (online questionnaires, analysed through Google forms). Analyzed data were interpreted and conclusions drawn which will inform future reviews of the programme. It was recommended that Learner support provisions for the programme in NOUN need to be improved upon in line with the findings of the study; and that Course contents which are labour- market related should be massively endorsed by NOUN.

KEYWORDS:
Competencies, Journalism, ODL, NOUN, Quality, Relevance, Skills, Tracer,