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Quota Admission Policies and Students' Retention in Colleges of Education in North-West Zone, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examined quota admission policies and students' retention in Colleges of Education in North-west Zone, Nigeria. The study was guided by two research questions, two research objectives and one research hypothesis. The study employed a descriptive survey research design of correlational type. The population of the study were drawn from states-owned Colleges of Educations in North-west Zone, Nigeria which comprised of Admission Officers and students numbering 40372. A total of seven admission officers, 378 students were selected for the study guided by Research advisor, (2006). Purposive and proportionate sampling techniques were used. Two sets of researcher's designed instruments were used such as Admission Policy Questionnaire (APQ) and Students' Retention Scale (SRS). These instruments were validated by research experts using face, content and construct validity. Reliability indices of 0.78 and 0.85 were realized after subjecting the instruments for trial testing. Hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. Finding of the study, indicated that there was no significant correlation between the variables. The study concluded that admission policies based on merit, catchment area and educationally less-developed states (quota admission) and students' retention

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may not depend on each other. This is because student could be admitted based on the criteria of merit but perform abysmally and eventually drop out of the programme and student could be admitted based on catchment area or educationally less developed states criteria eventually perform academically well (good grade performance) after entering college due to factors such as family support, normative congruence, serious concentration on studies, regularity and punctuality. Study recommended that admission seekers should thoroughly be investigated with a view of offering them matching courses to their prior secondary schools, and merit based admission policy be given much priority than catchment and educationally less developed states policy.

Keywords: Admission Policies, Merit, Catchment Area, Educationally Less Developed States, Students' Retention and Colleges of Education

INTRODUCTION

This study examined quota admission policies and students' retention in Colleges of Education in North-west Zone, Nigeria. The study was guided by two research questions, two research objectives and one research hypothesis. The study employed a descriptive survey research design of correlational type. The population of the study were drawn from states-owned Colleges of Educations in North-west Zone, Nigeria which comprised of Admission Officers and students numbering 40372. A total of seven admission officers, 378 students were selected for the study guided by Research advisor, (2006). Purposive and proportionate sampling techniques were used. Two sets of researcher's designed instruments were used such as Admission Policy Questionnaire (APQ) and Students' Retention Scale (SRS). These instruments were validated by research experts using face, content and construct validity. Reliability indices of 0.78 and 0.85 were realized after subjecting the instruments for trial testing. Hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. Finding of the study, indicated that there was no significant correlation between the variables. The study concluded that admission policies based on merit, catchment area and educationally less-developed states (quota admission) and students' retention may not depend on each other. This is because student could be admitted based on the criteria of merit but perform abysmally and eventually drop out of the programme and student could be admitted based on catchment area or educationally less developed states criteria eventually perform academically well (good grade performance) after entering college due to factors such as

family support, normative congruence, serious concentration on studies, regularity and punctuality. Study recommended that admission seekers should thoroughly be investigated with a view of offering them matching courses to their prior secondary schools, and merit based admission policy be given much priority than catchment and educationally less developed states policy.

Keywords: Admission Policies, merit, catchment area, educationally less developed states, students' retention and Colleges of Education.

INTRODUCTION

Education is regarded as a tool for development of the nation. To build a strong nation, the capability and competence of its teachers have to be of high standard and equal to the task. Teachers are critical factor in qualitative education delivery. Therefore, the production of teachers is the most important parameter that builds the nation and policy is the bedrock of foundation as well as formation of a strong and dynamic nation (Singh et al., 2016; Rabia et al., 2023; Sarkingobir et al., 2023). Primary and secondary education is the foundation for tertiary institutions and the basis for citizens to function and develop in the society, it is the realization of this right from the inception of western education in Nigeria; that teacher education has been recognized as an important part of the educational system.

The Federal Government guidelines for admission into Colleges of Education in Nigeria are based on 45% merit, 35% Catchment/Locality and 20% Educational Less-developed states. It should be noted that western education is at different levels of development in the different component units of the federation schools such as Federal Universities, Colleges of Education, Polytechnics, and Monotechnics among others. This is as a result of different contact in times with the western world (Pemida, 2015). (Pemida, 2015) further stated that, the admission policies of Colleges of Education are geared towards producing quality teachers that will be the custodian of Education of Nigeria in future. Thus, from what is happening now in terms of admission of the students, if nothing is done to rectify the abnormality, our education system may collapse in the near future (Pemida, 2015).

The effect of catchment area and quota system as they exaggerate admission problem into Nigerian Colleges of Education cannot be over emphasized. By catchment area, preferences are given to the indigenes of a place where a College is sited in considering candidates for admission, these have destroyed the idea of equal access and justice among candidates thereby allocating highest admission slots share to the neighboring states where the institution is sited (Obi & Ezeogu, 2016).

Ekundayo & Ajayi (2009) asserted that the quota system and catchment area policies ensure equity and fairness in the admission processes. However, assenting this, Oduwaiye (2011) warned that much as it is good that the educationally disadvantaged area is being encouraged, it should not be at the detriment of others in a situation where a candidate does not gain access just because of his birthplace which is not too good. Dissenting the opinion of the consensus apostle of quota system and catchment area policies of admission, Enemuo (2004) argued that the policy encourages social discrimination of one group against the other. He further stated that the quota system in all its ramifications is the practice of favoring some candidates at the expense of others in the university/Colleges admissions on the basis of state of origin, local government area, tribe, nepotism, or choice of course of study. Enemuo (2004) further pointed out that the application of the quota system to students' admissions denies meritorious candidate admissions into the universities and Colleges of Education. This discrimination is also portrayed in the payment of tuition fees for non-indigenes. Using the quota system to guide and regulate access to Colleges of Education has an inequitable effect, (Akpan & Undie, 2007; Ryan, 2010).

Considering the case of failure of the Colleges to implement the quota system, it is believable that the inclusion of quota as a guideline in students' admission raises a moral question as to whether qualified students should be denied admission simply because they are not from a given area/state and by implication denied so many opportunities of merited/qualified students study slots in Colleges of Education which resulted to abysmal academic performance in the side of the students thereby resulting to dropping out from the programme (Farooq et al., 2011; Sani, 2017).

Statement of the Problem

In 1978 Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) was established by the Nigerian government as a central admission body to execute policies that are concerned

with admissions into Nigeria's higher institutions. JAMB has been empowered to carry out its functions, which among others include using government approved admission guidelines to conduct matriculation examinations for entry into all degree-awarding and recently incorporated other higher institutions in Nigeria; to place suitably qualified candidates in the available admission slots in the tertiary institutions. To achieve this mandate, the board stipulated that the first 45% of admissions to any higher institution should be based on merit irrespective of the candidates' state of origin, while the other 55% is to be distributed according to catchment area or locality and educationally less-developed states (ELDS) in the proportion of 35% and 20% respectively. The board however, has come under the allegations that the examination is always characterized by malpractices and admission processes in most institutions are marred by irregularities such as giving admission to a low performer ahead of high performer students thus making it difficult to ascertain the quality of candidates.

Furthermore, the researcher observed that institutions' administrators entrusted with the management of resources (human and material) seems to be less concerned with the quality of teaching and learning process, provision of enabling school environment and monitoring the rate at which students' progress in the system. The administrators in most institutions are faced with not only the challenge of quality of students admitted but also with inadequacy/lack of required resources to meet the admission demand. Students on their part face difficult conditions of study; such as overcrowded classes, poor family support, lacking normative congruence and poor in-and-out interaction with staff which resulted to their poor grade performance which eventually led to drop out of student. This posed a serious threat if it continues to exists in higher institutions being them manpower providers of the nation. This what prompted the researcher to carry out the study with a view to establish the relationship between quota admission policy and students' retention in Colleges of Education in North-west Zone, Nigeria.

Research Objectives

The main thrust of this study is to find out the relationship between quota admission policy and retention in colleges of education in North-west Zone, Nigeria. However, the specific objectives of this study are to:

1. Find out whether merit admission policy correlates of students' retention in Colleges of Education in North-west Zone, Nigeria.

2. Find out whether catchment area and less-developed states admission policy are correlate of students' retention in Colleges of Education in North-west Zone, Nigeria.

Research Questions

This study aimed at finding answers to these research questions:

1. Does merit admission policy correlates with students' retention in Colleges of Education in North-west Zone, Nigeria?
2. Do catchment area and less-developed states admission policies correlate with students' retention in Colleges of Education in North-west Zone, Nigeria?

Research Hypothesis

The following null hypothesis was formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

$H0_1$: There is no significant relationship between quota admission policy and students' retention in Colleges of Education in North-west Zone, Nigeria.

Review of Related Literature

Admission refers to a systematic process of offering a study slot(s) to a particular student(s), in this research admission also, is the process where admission slots are offered to students to study various courses in Teacher Training Colleges. Several definitions were given by different scholars to what admission means. According to Joe et al., (2014), admission as the acceptance of a candidate on meeting some basic criteria to study a programme at any level of an educational institution.

Admission process into a College is critical. Like any other nation, admissions information has historically been used as a predictor of academic success by most institutions and when evaluated, it may likely help identify students that may be at risk of low academic performance, as well as revolve around the factors that may likely predict quality, but may not be factors that predict low performance (Agboola et al, 2014). It is further stressed that student quality on its part is a measure of the forces that shape student's attributes such as: their performance in academic works, study and coping skills satisfaction with course of study and ability to persist in the educational system. It is one of the major indicators of institutional efficiency (Waheed et al., 2022).

In recent times, research studies have revealed that for most students' poor academic performance; institutional factors such as provision of enabling school environment, adequate and quality academic staff, infrastructures and facilities for quality teaching and learning, government policy on admission and selection process among others are some of the reasons adduced for students graduating from school without acquiring the relevant knowledge and skills that are pre-requisite for assessing student quality or dropping out of programme as a result of lacking aforementioned factors (Joe et al., 2014; Narad & Abdullahi, 2016).

Agboola et al (2014) researched on academic achievement and admission policy as correlate of student retention in Nigerian Federal Universities, a sample of 42,288 first-year undergraduate students from five federal universities in South-West, Nigeria was surveyed. Therein, variables being examined and retention rate were admission policy and academic achievement. Data collected were analyzed with descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings revealed that significant relationship existed between academic performances of students admitted through criteria policy and retention. The study suggested that admission policy should be better align with institutional strategies that can improve student academic performance and subsequently impact on the retention of students.

In their study Omeje et al., (2016) study examined the impact of the quota system and catchment area policies on students' admissions in North Central Nigeria. A research question and a null hypothesis guided their study. Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The population for the study was 14,347 staff in the federal and state universities in North Central Nigeria. A sample of 1,435 was drawn through stratified proportionate sampling technique. Data were collected using questionnaire and interviews. Mean scores and standard deviations were used to answer the research question, whereas *t*-test statistics were used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study showed, among others, that the impact of the quota system and catchment area policies on students' admission was to a high extent.

Odigwe & Swem (2016) carried an investigation on the Nigerian University Quota Admission System and quality of education in universities in Cross River State, Nigeria. Four research questions were raised by the researchers and four research hypotheses were also formulated to guide their study. An ex-post facto design was adopted for the study. Purposive sampling technique was utilized with a sample of 116 academic heads of

departments in universities in Cross River State. The instrument used for data collection was a structural questionnaire titled "Quota Admission System Questionnaire (QASQ)" for the quality of education in universities and administered to 116 academic heads of departments. Multiple regression analysis was used to test the hypotheses. The result showed that there is a significant positive influence of the merit system of admission on quality of education in universities while there was no significant influence of the categorization of educationally disadvantaged states, catchment area and discretion systems of quota admission on the quality of education. Based on the findings in their study, it is recommended among others, that university admission should be purely on merit. The quota system of admission, which has its roots in the federal character policy, negates the principle of equality and should be abolished.

Theoretical Framework

This study was underpinned by the following theory:

Spady's (1970) Theory of Student Departure

This study was informed by Theory of Student Departure, Spady was the first proponent of the theory of student retention in higher education. Spady's (1970) theory of student departure is based upon Durkheim's theory of suicide. Durkheim concluded that suicidal behaviour was the result of the inability to integrate socially and intellectually into society. Basic Principles of the theory are:

1. Suicide can have origins in social causes rather than just being due to individual temperament was groundbreaking at the time;
2. More socially integrated and connected person is, the less likely he or she commits suicide;
3. As social integration decreases, people are more likely to commit suicide.

Spady (1970) postulated that the same process occurs when students are admitted and drop out from university or college. Students who did not socially integrated in the university system or any higher institution of learning were more likely to leave university or college. According to Spady's theory, presented in Figure 1, family background affects a student's academic potential as well as a student's normative congruence. The student's normative congruence, represents not only all of the student goals, orientations, interests, and personality disposition, but the consequences of the interaction between these attributes and academic potential in turn affects grade performance and intellectual

development, while the student's normative congruence affects grade performance, intellectual development, and friendship support. Normative congruence, grade performance, intellectual development, and friendship support all affect the student's social integration. This affects the student's satisfaction in university or college, which in turn affects the student's commitment to the institution.

Consequently, the student's level of institutional commitment has a direct effect on the student's decision to stay or leave university or college. Grade performance has a direct effect on the drop-out decision because a student who has poor grade performance may be dismissed for academic reasons. In addition, the student's institutional commitment has a direct effect on the student's normative congruence by altering goals, motivation or interests. Spady (1970) tested the predictive validity of his model, the data were obtained from 683 first-year students enrolled at the University of Chicago between 1965 and 1970. Using multiple regression analysis, the results indicated that over a four-year period the dominant predictor of student retention for male and female students was academic performance. In addition, the results indicated significant differences between male and female students. For male students, academic performance was the most influential predictor of student retention, followed by institutional commitments. For female students, the situation was reversed, with institutional commitment being the most influential predictor of student retention, followed by academic performance.

Applicably, this theory is related to this study as admission into colleges are been conducted in every year and students are been trained in the colleges and the offshoot of their training/study perhaps connected to these factors such as academic potential, family background, social integration, satisfaction, intellectual commitment, intellectual development, grade performance and eventually determines drop out decision as depicted in Figure 1.

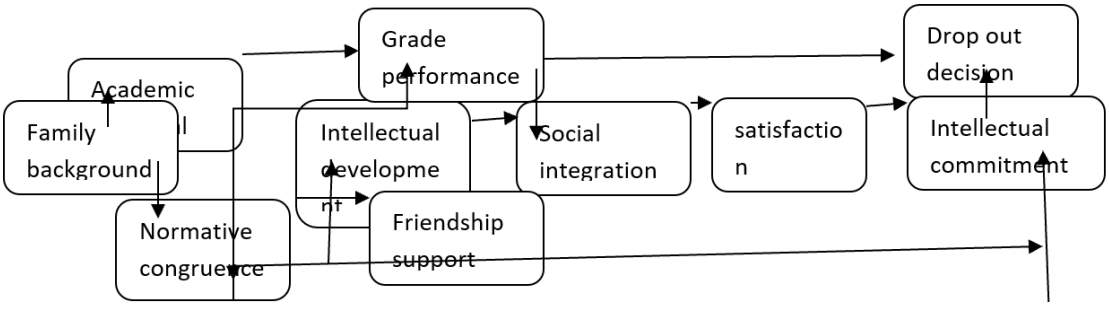


Figure 1: Illustrating Spady's (1970) Theory of Student Departure
Source: Adopted Spady's theory and modified by the researcher, (2023).

METHODS

This study employed a descriptive survey research design of correlational type. Research design is a framework for the identification of relevant variables as well as for the analysis and interpretation of data collected in the course of the investigation in order to answer the research questions Sani (2017). According to Salawu (2012), it can be used to know if a relationship exists between variables but does not indicate it causes.

Table 1 indicated population of the study which comprised of admission officers of Colleges of education in North-west Zone, Nigeria (State-own Colleges of Education), members of academic staff (teachers) of the Colleges and students.

Table 1: Population of the Study

S/No	Colleges	Admission officers	Students	Total
1	C.O.E, Gumel, Jigawa	1	1670	1671
2	Kaduna State C.O.E, Kafanchan	1	5678	5679
3	Sa'adatu Rimi, C.O.E, Kano	1	11321	11322
4	Isah Kaita, C.O.E, Dutsinma, Katsina	1	4560	4561
5	A. A.C.O.E, Argungu, Kebbi	1	3606	3607
6	Shehu Shagari COE, Sokoto	1	10857	10858
7	C.O.E, Maru, Zamfara	1	2673	2674
	Total	**7**	**40365**	**40672**

Source: Field Survey, (2023).

Table 1 presented population of the study. The table revealed that from C.O.E. Gumel, Jiagawa: 1 admission officer and 1670 students make up the population. Kaduna state C.O.E Kafanchan: 1 admission officer and 5678 students. Sa'adatu Rimi C.O.E, Kano: 1 admission officer and 11321 students. Isah Kaita, C.O.E, Kano: 1 admission officer and 4560 students. Adamu Augie, C.O.E Argungu, Kebbi: 1 admission officer and 3606 students. S.S.C.O.E Sokoto: 1 admission officer and 10857 students. C.O.E Maru, Zamfara: 1 admission officer and 2673 students.

Table 2: Sample Size

S/N	Name of institution	Admission officers	Students
1	Adamu Augie, C.O.E Argungu, Kebbi	1	41
2	C.O.E, Maru, Zamfara	1	30
3	C.O.E. Gumel, Jigawa	1	28
4	Kaduna State C.O.E, Kafanchan	1	65
5	Isah Kaita, C.O.E, Dutsinma, Katsina	1	39
6	Sa'adatu Rimi, C.O.E, Kano	1	129
7	Shehu Shagari C.O.E, Sokoto	1	46
	Total	**7**	**378**

Source: Field Survey, (2023).

Table 2 indicates sample size used in this study. A sample size of seven (7) admission officers and three hundred and seventy eight (378) students were selected for the study from the population of seven (7) admission officers and fourty thousand, three hundred and sixty five (40365) students guided by Research Advisors (2006) table of sample size determination.

A multi-stage sampling techniques was used. To determine the sample size for admission officers, purposive sampling technique was used. To obtained sample size for students a proportionate sampling technique was used since students encompassed all students from different schools in their respective colleges. The sampled colleges have different schools but the study was limited to only three schools such as; School of Languages; Sciences and Arts and Social Sciences in which proportionate sampling technique was employed in selecting the sample size of students that formed the study respondents.

Two instruments were used to collect data in this study and they include:

1 Admission policies questionnaire (APQ) for admission officers to measure quota admission system.
2 Students' retention scale (SRS) for students to measure students' retention rate.

A researcher designed four points Likert scale type of questionnaire for Admission Policies was used as well as Students Retention Scale (SRS) were the major instruments that were used in data collection. These instruments were validated by experts using face, content and construct validity approach. The reliability coefficient indices of 0.78 and 0.82

were obtained using Cronbach's alpha after exposing the instruments for trial testing. The closed-ended questionnaire type was issued in order to generate information of admission policies and closed ended retention rating scale was used to generate information on students' retention.

Data obtained from the field concerning admission policies and students' retention responses of NCE 2 and 3 students was entered in a computer and the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 20) was used to compute the descriptive statistics of respondents' demographic information, responses to the questions raised in the questionnaire and retention scale. Responses were presented in tables in line with research objectives using simple frequency count and percentage and inferential statistics was also computed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) technique to test the null hypothesis of the research at 0.05 level of significance. Responses on Question items on Admission policies questionnaire (APQ) were later correlated with Retention Scale (SRS) in order to find out the magnitude of relationship between the variables.

RESULTS

Research Question One

- Does merit admission policy correlates with students' retention in Colleges of Education in North-west Zone, Nigeria?

  This research question was answered and presented in table 3:

Table 3: Summary of Admission based on Merit

S/N	Items Statement	Agreed F (%)	Disagreed F (%)
1	Students are admitted in School of Arts & Social Science based on the quota system of merit	246 (66.4%)	124 (33.6%)
2	Students are admitted in School of Languages based on the quota system of merit	360 (97.2%)	10 (2.8%)
3	Students are admitted in School of Sciences based on the quota system of merit	258 (69.7%)	112 (30.3%)

Source: Field Survey, (2023)

Table 3 presented the opinions of the participants on whether they agree or disagree that admission policy based on merit has any relationship with students' retention

in Colleges of Education in North-west Zone, Nigeria. As presented (in the Table 1), 66.4% agreed on Students are admitted in School of Arts & Social Science based on the quota system of merit while 33.6% disagreed. 97.2% agreed and 2.8% disagreed on Students are admitted in School of Languages based on the quota system of merit. 69.7% agreed and 30.3% disagreed on Students are admitted in School of Sciences based on the quota system of merit.

Research Question Two

Do catchment area and less developed states admission policy correlate with students' retention in Colleges of Education in North-west Zone, Nigeria?

This research question was answered and presented in table 4:

Table 4: Summary of Admission based on catchment area and educationally less developed states

S/N	Items Statement	Agreed F (%)	Disagreed F (%)
1	Students are admitted in School of Arts & Social Science based on the quota system of Catchment areas	258 (69.7%)	112 (30.3%)
2	Students are admitted in School of Arts & Social Science based on the quota system of Educationally less developed states	257 (69.4%)	113 (30.6%)
3	Students are admitted in School of Languages based on the quota system of Catchment areas	349 (94.2%)	21 (5.8%)
4	Students are admitted in School of Languages based on the quota system of Educationally less developed states	0 (0%)	370 (100%)
5	Students are admitted in School of Sciences based on the quota system of Catchment area	155 (41.9%)	215 (58.1%)
6	Students are admitted in School of Sciences based on the quota system of Educationally less-developed states	257 (69.4%)	113 (30.6%)

Source: Field Survey (2023)

Table 4 presented the opinions of the participants on whether they agreed or disagreed on admission policy based on catchment area and educationally less-developed states have any relationship with students' retention in Colleges of Education in North-west Zone, Nigeria. As presented in the Table, 69.7% agreed and 30.3% disagreed on Students are admitted in School of Arts & Social Science based on the quota system of Catchment areas. 69.4% agree and 30.6% disagree on Students are admitted in School of Arts & Social Science based on the quota system of educationally less-developed states.

94.2% agreed and 5.8% disagreed on Students are admitted in School of Languages based on the quota system of Catchment areas. 100% of the respondents from the school of languages disagreed on the assertion that they were admitted on the basis of 35% catchment area and 20% less educationally developed states policy of Admission. 41.9% agreed and 58.1% disagreed on Students are admitted in School of Sciences based on the quota system of Catchment area.

H0: There is no significant relationship between quota admission policy and students' retention in Colleges of Education in North-west Zone, Nigeria.

Table 5: Summary of Admission Policy Based on quota system and Students' Retention in State Colleges of Education

Variables	N	Mean	SD	df	r-Value	P-Value	Decision
Quota Admission	371	2.53	.885				
				370	-0.003	0.558	H0 retained
Students' retention	371	1.98	.468				

Source: Field survey, (2023)

As indicated in Table 5, the calculated p-value using Pearson Product Moment correlation at 0.05 level of significance was 0.558 which is greater than the significance level. Therefore, the hypothesis, which stated that there is no significant relationship between admission policy based on quota system and students' retention in states-owned Colleges of Education in North-west Zone, Nigeria, was not rejected. This shows that no relationship existed between admission policy based on merit, catchment area and 20% educationally less-developed states in state Colleges of education in North-west Zone, Nigeria. In other words, admission policy based on merit, catchment area and educationally less developed states was not a predictor of students' retention in Colleges of education in North-west Zone, Nigeria. That is, a students could be admitted on the basis of merit, but due to factors like poor pre-college schooling, lacking family support, normative congruence, institutional commitment and so on may jeopardize the student's end of semester grade performance and drop out of the programme. By implication, admission policy based on merit, catchment area and educationally less developed states may not lead to increase in students' retention in Colleges of education in North-west Zone, Nigeria. This is perhaps as a result of the presence of other aforementioned factors such as family background, pre-college school, student's aptitude and school climatic condition.

DISCUSSION

Admission policy based on merit, catchment area and educationally less-developed states (Quota admission) does not enhance students' retention in state Colleges of Education in North-west Zone, Nigeria. This means that Admission policy based on merit, catchment area and educationally less-developed states does not have any effect on students' retention in colleges of education. This is as a result of grade performance scored by student in academic endeavor. Summarily:

1. Student could be admitted on the basis of merit into College, but due to family background, institutional commitment, normative congruence may eventually affect the student's grade performance which will in turn resulted to dropping out of programme.
2. Student could have low entry performance and be admitted on the basis of catchment area and educationally less developed states but along the process perform well as a result of family support, individual attributes, and normative congruence and in turn affects student's grade performance and eventually be retained in the College.

Invariably, findings from Table 5 revealed that there is no significant correlation between admission policy based on merit, catchment area and educationally less-developed states (Quota admission) and students' retention in Colleges of education in North-west Zone, Nigeria. This means that having admission based on merit, catchment area and educationally less-developed states does not have any effect on students' retention in Colleges of Education in North-west Zone, Nigeria. The merit policy mandates schools to admit of their qualified applicants based on merit. This means, should score equal or above the cut-off marks of the course they applied for. Candidates with very high scores in each matriculation examination are given first consideration for their first choice of course and institution before other candidates. However, this study found that those with high score before entering college does not guarantee that student could remain after entering the college.

This is supported by Spady's (1970) theory where they stressed that family background affects a student's academic potential as well as a student's normative congruence. The student's normative congruence, represents not only all of the student

goals, orientations, interests, and personality disposition, but the consequences of the interaction between these attributes and academic potential in turn affects grade performance and intellectual development, while the student's normative congruence affects grade performance, intellectual development, and friendship support. Normative congruence, grade performance, intellectual development, and friendship support all affect the student's social integration. This affects the student's satisfaction in university or college, which in turn affects the student's commitment to the institution to retain or drop out of programme. This study is also supported by findings of Okoroma (2008) who founds that, policies like catchment area policy, educationally disadvantaged or backward policy, quota system policy and discriminatory school fees policy contributed to the reduction of quality of university education in Nigeria.

In contrary also, Odigwe & Swem (2016) found that there is a significant positive influence of the merit system of admission on quality of education in Universities and Colleges of Education while there was no significant influence of the categorization of educationally disadvantaged states, catchment area and discretion systems of quota admission on the quality of education.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that the variables are not correlated. Specifically merit-based admission, catchment area and educationally less developed states has no relationship with students' retention, invariably may not depend on each other. This is because:

I. Student could be admitted based on the criteria of merit but perform abysmally and eventually drop out of the programme.
II. student could be admitted based on Catchment area or educationally less developed states criteria eventually perform academically well (good grade performance) after entering college due to factors such as family support, normative congruence, serious concentration on studies, regularity and punctuality

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study the following recommendations were made:

1. In order to ensure retention of students in Colleges of Education, admission seekers should thoroughly be investigated with a view of offering them marching courses to their prior secondary schools.
2. Merit based admission policy be given much priority than catchment and educationally less-developed states policy.

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