Assessment of Tertiary Education in Nigeria

Jovita Chika Opara
adamummyopara@gmail.com
Department of Educational Management, University of Abuja, Nigeria

Abstract
This paper assessed the challenges facing tertiary education in Nigeria with the view of addressing them systematically. To do this, the paper employs the use of content analysis to extract pieces of literature fit that are suitable for the topic. Secondary data were the major data used in the paper and they were collected from both print and online publications. The paper concludes that inadequate funding, infrastructural facilities, shortage of personnel, Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS), indigenization of Principal Officers, cultism/insecurity, Autonomy, leadership, Brain-drain syndrome and poor motivation are some of the problems that are facing tertiary education in Nigeria. Based on these problems identified, the paper suggested the following: the government should increase the funding of tertiary institutions in Nigeria. There should be a master plan for infrastructural facilities development in all the tertiary institutions in Nigeria. The government should direct all tertiary institution administrators to employ more staff. The federal government should remove the tertiary institutions' staff from Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS). The government should discourage the indigenization of Principal Officers in public institutions and insist on merit in the appointment of principal officers of tertiary institutions in Nigeria, etc.

Keywords: Challenges, Development, Tertiary Education.

Introduction
The definition of tertiary education differs according to the context. Almost all definitions agree that tertiary education refers to post-secondary education (or study beyond the level of post-secondary education) where a degree, diploma, or certificate is awarded at the end of study. Tertiary education builds on the level of competence, knowledge and skills normally acquired in secondary education. Ogunode et al (2021) cited Obanya, (1999) who viewed higher education as embodying all organized learning and training activities at the tertiary level. This includes conventional universities, those with the conventional arts, humanities and science faculties as well as specialized universities like institutions specializing in agriculture, engineering, science, and technology. It also includes post-secondary institutions such as polytechnics and colleges of education.

Ogunode et al. (2022) viewed tertiary education as the final stage of education that handles the production of manpower for the social, economic and technological development of a country. Tertiary education is an organized education that deals with intensive teaching, research and provision of community services. Ogunode et al (2021) cited Adeyemi (2001), observed that Higher Education is a system which embraces much of the country's research capacity and reproduces the majority of the skilled professionals that are required in the labour market. The National Policy on Education of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) defined tertiary education...
as the education given after Post Basic Education in institutions such as Universities and Inter-
University Centres such as the Nigeria French Language Village, Nigeria Arabic Language
Village, National Institute of Nigerian Languages, institutions such as Innovation Enterprise
Institutions (IEIs), and Colleges of Education, Monotechnics, Polytechnics, and other specialized
institutions such as Colleges of Agriculture, Schools of Health science and Technology and the
National Teachers' Institutes (NTI).

The goals of Tertiary Education are to: Contribute to national development through high-level
manpower training; provide accessible and affordable quality learning opportunities in formal and
informal education in response to the needs and interests of all Nigerians; provide high-quality
career counselling and lifelong learning programmes that prepare students with the knowledge and
skills for self-reliance and the world of work; reduce skill shortages through the production of
skilled manpower relevant to the needs of the labour market; promote and encourage scholarship,
entrepreneurship and community service; forge and cement national unity; and promote national
and international understanding and interaction (FRN, 2013).

Tertiary Educational institutions shall pursue these goals through: Quality student intake; quality
teaching and learning; research and development; high standards in the quality of facilities,
services and resources; staff welfare and development programmes; provision of a more practical
based curriculum relevant to the needs of the labour market; generation and dissemination of
knowledge, skills and competencies that contribute to national and local economic goals which
enable students to succeed in a knowledge-based economy; a variety of flexible learning modes
including full-time, part time, block release, day-release, and sandwich programmes; access to
training funds such as those provided by the Industrial Training Fund (ITF), Tertiary Education
Trust Fund (TETFund); Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) that is well
structured, coordinated and supervised; maintenance of minimum educational standards through
appropriate regulatory agencies; an all-inclusive credible admissions policy for national unity;
supporting affordable, equitable access to tertiary education through scholarships and students’
loans; inter-institutional co-operation and linkages; and dedicated services to the community
through extra-mural and extension services (FRN, 2013).

Tertiary education is the education that is anchored on teaching, research and provision of
community service. It is the education designed for the advancement of technology and manpower
production. Tertiary educational institution is a community of scholars, free to pursue knowledge
without undue interference from anywhere. Tertiary education in Nigeria is faced with many
challenges. It is important to discuss these challenges with the view to finding lasting solutions.
Based on this, this paper is aimed to analyse and assess the challenges facing tertiary institutions
in Nigeria.

Challenges Facing Tertiary Education in Nigeria
There are many problems facing tertiary education in Nigeria. Some of the problems include;
inadequate funding, infrastructure facilities, shortage of personnel, Integrated Payroll and
Personnel Information System (IPPIS), indigenization of Principal Officer, cultism/insecurity,
Autonomy issues, leadership tussles, Brain-drain syndrome and poor motivation

Inadequate Funding
Tertiary education in Nigeria is faced with the problem of underfunding as noted by Ogunode et
al (2021) cited Udida, Bassey, Udofia, & Egbona, they observed that the major issue in educational development is a shortage of funds. One of the most serious problems threatening the survival of the educational system is the dwindling level of public funding in the face of rising demands and hence the rising cost of higher education. This shortage of funds affects job performance and the growth of the institution. Higher educational institutions cannot perform optimally without funding. This situation calls for increased funding initiatives from both the government and educational stakeholders to sustain the tempo and growth of the education industry. The inability of the Nigerian government to objectively accept and implement the 15% -20% funding formula for education recommended by UNESCO impact negatively on the performance and sustainability of higher education. Thus, it has become obvious that Nigeria's neglect of the funding formula is detrimental to higher educational institution performance and development aspiration as quality performance is the veritable instrument for the sustenance of the education system. This neglect has further precipitated crises in the entire higher educational system as effective teaching, research and services are no longer taking place seriously. On this note, Ogunode (2020) citing Akinola (1990) was worried about the funding situation and commented thus: "Our higher institution education systems are in dire need of money to cater for both their capital and recurrent needs. For a few years past, the budget has been cut back from year to year by the federal government. This cutback has affected both capital and recurrent expenditures. In many higher institutions capital projects embarked upon a few years ago, are yet to be completed due to lack of adequate funds". Olayinka (2018); Ogunode & Onyekachi (2021) ;Ogunode, Abubakar & Ajape (2021); Ohiare, Udebu, Sarafadeen & Abashi (2022) and Ogunode, Onyekachi, & Ayoko (2023) outlined the reasons for a sortie of funds in the tertiary institutions to include; insecurity, national debt servicing, lack of political will, corruption, increase in population, inflation, fall in national revenue and poor financial planning.

**Infrastructural Facilities challenges**

Many tertiary institutions in Nigeria are faced with the challenges of inadequate infrastructural facilities. Ebehikhalu & Dawam (2017) submitted that ninety per cent (90%) of what exists today as tertiary institutions in Nigeria could be referred to as mere glorified secondary schools. This is because most of the nation’s universities are characterized by stark infrastructural decay and paucity of funds for research work (Jiduwah, 2010). Recent reports on our universities portray a general lack of infrastructural facilities. An average public university in Nigeria lacks basic infrastructures like a regular water supply, electricity, and standard accommodation for students. In many instances, the toilets that serve the students are in bad shape as many do not have running water. Lecture rooms and offices are not available and where available need refurbishment. Libraries are poorly equipped and are short of modern books and equipment. Laboratory equipment is obsolete and inputs for teaching are in short supply. Roads and buildings on many campuses are in a state of disrepair. Poor and dilapidated infrastructures are the major factors that have led to the despicable state of Nigerian Universities. It is therefore not surprising that the products of these infrastructures often fail to rise to the occasion when put to test and task ((Ebehikhalu & Dawam, 2017). Also, the student’s Union president of Ahmadu Bello University, Mallam Rafindadi Abubakar Aliyu, observed that lack of basic facilities in Nigerian Universities is a setback to conducive learning and teaching activities. Rafindadi said “the main problem facing students in the universities is congestion in classrooms, dilapidated hostels and lack of modern laboratory equipment. You see a class that is meant to accommodate only 30 students in those days, over 200 students are using the class today. Many of us hang outside by the windows to receive lectures. In my department (Political Science), we seat on a bare floor to receive lectures
in the lecture theatre. We are 312 in my class. You can imagine one lecturer teaching 312 students, marking 312 scripts and each of the scripts, in an examination, none of them are less than 10 pages. Some students seat on the podium where the lecturer is standing. Most of the seats are broken so you put your books on your lap to write. There are no fans in many of the classrooms and when it is hot, you will be using the same book to fan yourself and taking down notes at the same time. During the rainy season, the classrooms leak. The books in the libraries are outdated, and the equipment in the laboratories is outdated. You will see a large number of students lining up to use one microscope in the laboratories”. Hostel accommodation is one of the most challenges facing students in institutions. There are no beds in the hostels and the students put mattresses to sleep on the floor. The hostels are overcrowded with more than eight students in a room that was initially meant for one or two persons. The students are exposed to all sorts of health problems because they also use the rooms for cooking and washing in front of their rooms as there is no laundry where they can wash. The toilets are bad, they have no doors and students have to queue to take their baths or ease themselves (Thisday, 2013). According to Ololube (2016); Ahaotu, & Ogunode (2020); Ogunode & Jegede (2021) and Ishaya & Ogunode (2021) the factors responsible for inadequate infrastructure facilities in Nigerian higher institutions include underfunding, increased student population, corruption, poor infrastructural facilities planning, poor supervision and inflation.

**Shortage of Personnel**

Tertiary institutions in Nigeria are faced with the challenge of shortages of staff (Romina, 2013; NEEDS, 2014; Daniel-Kalioi, 2019). Personnel in the tertiary institutions are classified into two namely; academic and non-academic staff. Ogunode, Jedege & Musa (2021) noted that Academic staff also known as faculty members are a key component of higher institutions, especially universities. The academic staff as the name implies are professionals that handle the teaching, and research programmes of higher institutions and also perform other academic services. The role of academic staff in the development of higher institutions cannot be underestimated because the academic staff are the implementer of instruction in educational institutions. The academic staff members are professional personnel in charge of teaching or lecturing in higher institutions. They are called lecturers (Ogunode, et al. 2021). They are involved in three major functions in the institutions which are teaching, researching and community services. Unfortunately, many Vice Chancellors in Nigerian public universities do not have adequate academic staff to deploy for the implementation of teaching, research and community service programmes in the respective institutions. Majorities of administrators of higher institutions in Nigeria are confronted with the problem of shortages of academic and non-academic staff. Many administrators of higher institutions in Nigeria do not have enough manpower to deploy for teaching in their respective schools. Oluremi & Oyewole (2014); Ogundoe & Adamu (2021) and Ogundoe & Okwelogu (2022) concluded that underfunding, poor manpower planning, poor motivation, government policy on the embargo, corruption (Ghost workers) and strike action are the causes of inadequate academic staff in public universities in North-central Nigeria.

**Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS)**

In 2019, the Nigerian Government ordered that all federal tertiary institutions including all the federal universities in Nigeria should be enrolled in the Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS) platform of the federal government and salaries should be paid only to civil servants on the automated payroll; the order took effect in October of the same year. The policy was opposed by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU). Due to this order, ASUU at different times has embarked on industrial actions to kick against the implementation of
Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information Systems (IPPIS) in federal universities. The opposition was weakened when other unions in the Universities joined the platform and finally, all the academic and non-academic staff in the Nigerian federal tertiary institutions were forced to enrol in the Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS) platform of the federal government which implies a centralized payment system. The integration of the higher institutions into the Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS) has affected the development rate of the higher institutions in Nigeria. This submission is reaffirmed when Ogunode & Garba (2023) noted that the integration of the federal universities into the Integrated Personnel and Payroll Information System (IPPIS) has slowed down the federal universities’ administration due to the non-flow of funds for effective administration as a result of the centralization of universities' funds. (Ogunode & Garba 2023) also submitted that the integration of the Nigerian federal universities into the Integrated Personnel and Payroll Information System (IPPIS) has also brought some negative impacts to the federal university administration in Nigeria. The negative impacts include; termination of appointments of contract staff, shortages of academic staff, slows federal university administration and violation of federal universities’ autonomy. (Aluko, 2020) argued that the integration of the Nigerian federal universities into the Integrated Personnel and Payroll Information System (IPPIS) is a blatant violation of the concept of University autonomy.

Indigenization of Principal Officer

Ogunode & Agyo (2022) defined domestication of principal officers of the tertiary institution or indigenization of principal officers as a former request by the indigenes of a host community to the government to appoint their sons and daughters into the positions of principal offices of the institutions located in their communities. Domestication of principal officers of the tertiary institution or indigenization of principal officers is an agitation by host communities of tertiary institutions to produce the principal officers of the institutions. Domestication of principal officers of the tertiary institution or indigenization of principal officers is an appeal to the government to consider their sons and daughters or appoint them into the principal offices of the institutions located in their communities based on community interest first before merit. Indigenization of principal officers or domestication of principal officers of the tertiary institution is an act whereby indigenes of a university's host community would be laying claim to the coveted position of a VC and other positions in the institution because they are the host community. Recently, the Minister of Education, Adamu Adamu, confirmed at a National Assembly hearing in 2019 that he had been under pressure from indigenes of host communities insisting on producing the VCs of Federal Universities (Punch, 2022). The call by the host communities of the tertiary institution especially the Universities in Nigeria for their indigenous sons and daughters to be appointed as principal officers of the Federal and State tertiary institutions is a current problem facing University education in Nigeria. Domestication of principal officers of the tertiary institution or indigenization of principal officers is a major issue and problem higher institutions in Nigeria are faced with. Bamigbola (2021) submitted that the introduction of primordial sentiments in selecting principal officers such as chief academic and administrative officers is very bad and not good for the system because the university recruits staff and students from all over the world. In the same vein, the Vice-Chancellor can come from any part of Nigeria and the wider world. The vice chancellorship is purely based on merit and not on the geography of the candidate. Merit other than where the candidate comes from must be emphasised in the appointment of the vice-chancellor of a university. The appointment of a vice chancellor should be based on merit and not the ethnic background of the candidate. However, if an indigene of the town the university is
located qualifies for the job on merit, he should be given the post. Universities should be universal and international in outlook. Some Nigerians have been appointed heads of universities abroad. Ogunode & Agyo (2022) concluded that poor international outlook, poor international rating, bad governance, under-development, discouragement of foreign academics, bad international image and less competition are the implications of the indigenization of principal officers or domestication of principal officers of the tertiary institution (Universities) in Nigeria.

Cultism/Insecurity Problem

Cultism and insecurity are issues that have affected the tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Okoli, Ogbondah, & Ewor (2016) observed that most of the university problems are traced to cult-related activities among our students. It has become a monster in almost all the universities in Nigeria. The Government's efforts to eradicate cultism in these universities have not yielded any positive results. Cultism has physically, emotionally and psychologically maimed and rendered a good number of our youths useless. On this issue, Ogbondah (2013) acknowledge that Cult-related activities in public universities in Nigeria are one of the burning contemporary issues that have not spared anyone, high or low, academic and non-academic staff, members and non-members, the students and the general public. Cult activities constitute a major obstacle to the quality assurance of universities according Okoli, Ogbondah, & Ewor (2016) in (Nwankwo, 2006). Okoli, Ogbondah, & Ewor and in Nwankwo Concluded that without mincing words, the activities of cultists are threatening to undermine and erode the very essence of university education. Also, in the area of insecurity, Ogunode (2020) noted that insecurity is another problem facing the administration of public universities in Nigeria. Nigeria is facing an insecurity challenge and this is affecting the entire educational institutions in the country. The Islamic sect called Boko haram meaning western education is forbidden is attacking educational institutions in the Northern part of Nigeria. Many public universities located in Northern Nigeria have been victims of continuous attacks. Many students, lecturers and administrators have been killed while others kidnapped. The various attacks on the universities have resulted in school closures leading to unstable academic programmes (Ogunode, & Ukozor, 2022).

Autonomy Problem

Public institutions in Nigeria lack full autonomy to operate well and this has affected the management of the institutions. Okoli, Ogbondah, & Ewor (2016) asserted that Autonomy is a principle upon which the university education system tries to maintain its operational stability and actualization of goals. When autonomy is enthroned in the right perspective, it then facilitates academic freedom and accountability. However, in 1973, universities in Nigeria started what would be called the first threat letter to university autonomy. A trade dispute was ensured between the governing council and university teachers in 1973 over the issues of autonomy and review of their conditions of service. The review of their conditions of service was thwarted by top officials of the Federal Ministry of Education. The university lecturers were ordered by General Yakubu Gowon to go back to work or face dismissal and ejection from their official residences. Babalola (2014) defined autonomy for Nigerian universities to mean the right of a university to enjoy the core privileges of academic freedom, substantive independence, and procedural self-independence, subject only to public accountability. University scholars must be free to air out the results of findings without fear of intimidation by the government and other agencies. In an era where many key university appointments and decisions are made outside the university, meritocracy is eroded and replaced with nepotism, godfatherism, lobbying and political patronage. This usually results in a system where the most eligible persons are often frustrated and left without promotions. The survival of the university education system is directly proportional to or to a large
extent dependent on the institutionalization of autonomy. Ogunode & Ibrahim (2023) concluded that the integration of the federal universities into the Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS), centralization of the university system, centralization of admission, governing council dominance, poor implementation of the university Autonomy Bill and poor funding model of public universities are the tools used by the Nigerian government to undermine universities' autonomy in Nigeria.

**Leadership Problem**

Public universities in Nigeria are faced with the challenges of quality leaders. Ogunode (2020) cited Udida, Bassey, Udofoa, & Egbona, they posited that some individuals appointed as vice-chancellors of some universities are weak, not competent and lack administrative potential; such appointees must possess administrative qualities and must lead by example. The leader must have integrity, must be knowledgeable, and practice modern types of management leadership styles. He or she must be visionary and ready to adjust to situations in the system. The performance of the administrator should be sustained through the proper utilization of material and human resources in the achievement of institutional goals and objectives. Ogunode, Yiolokun, & Akeredolu (2019) in Taiwo in Ekaette; Udida, Bassey, Udofoa, & Egbona ascertained that leaders in some universities are weak, uncoordinated and lack administrative skills. Some do not have administrative knowledge or skills. In addition, a lot of higher education system managers do not poses the charisma or good human relations needed for effective and efficient leadership. As a result of the poor leadership and ineffective style of administration, a lot of programs or activities are not carried out in such institutions such as the provision of grants for research and publications, staff welfare is neglected, no adequate control of staff and students, and no vision for the University. Such leaders also do not have the zeal for supervision and monitoring of institutional activities. This can affect the performance of the system in that, workers can result to a nonchalant attitude toward work and hence no sustainability or continuality of good track records of performance in the system. Nigerian Higher Educational System needs leaders who can position it to an envying height of success and progress that will contribute to society's quest for self-reliance (Ujomu 2001; Udida, Bassey, Udofoa, & Egbona, 2009).

**Brain-drain**

Brain drain is another problem tertiary institutions in Nigeria are faced with. Ogunode (2020) viewed Brain-drain as the movement of professionals from developing countries to developed countries for better job offers. Brain drain is a situation whereby professional individuals are migrating from their countries to another country to seek greener pastures. Many lecturers and researchers are leaving public universities in Nigeria for other parts of African countries and Europe for better job offers and conducive working environments. This submission is agreed upon by Ahaotu & Ogunode (2020), they concluded that administrators of higher institutions in Nigeria are also struggling with the issue of brain drain in their respective institutions. Much academic staff in Nigerian higher institutions are moving out of the institutions frustrating the efforts of the administrators and managers to provide quality education. Ogunode, Ayoko & Ezema (2022) and Ogunode & Ndayebom (2022) stated that the mass migration of academic staff from the various universities in Nigeria has affected the administration of the universities because academic staff members are very important for the implementation of universities’ programmes. Factors responsible for Brain-drain in Nigerian public universities include; poor motivation, an unconducive working environment, insecurity, underfunding and political interferences. The implication of brain drain in Nigerian public universities include; a shortage of lecturers, poor quality of education and a high student-teacher ratio (Ogunode & Atobauka 2021).
Poor Motivation
Personnel in tertiary institutions in Nigeria are poorly motivated. Offem, Anashie, & Solomon (2018) lamented that University workers are often underpaid and most times the Government pays part salaries to lecturers. Lecturers are not happy because many politicians go home with bags of money even when such politicians are not as educated as they are. According to Amadi & Urho (2015), the underpayment of university staff vis-à-vis their counterparts in other economic sectors and the discriminating salary structure between the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) and the Non-Academic Staff Union of Universities (NASU) have been a major cause of their dissatisfaction. Mark (2018) cited Adesina (2008) who stated that the immediate effect of the depressing working conditions in the universities is mass resignation, and departure of hard-working colleagues to North America, Western Europe, the Middle East and even to African Countries with less buoyant economics than oil-rich Nigeria. Most lecturers are completely disillusioned with the gross neglect of successive governments of the educational sector and the government's hard-line posture toward their legitimate demands. They cannot plan their schedule such as the period to proceed on sabbatical leaves. Unfortunately, the government has not evaluated the financial loss it incurs as a result of incessant strikes in our educational institutions as it does in other sectors of the economy.

Conclusion and Way Forward
Tertiary education is the education that is anchored on teaching, research and provision of community service. It is the education designed for the advancement of technology and manpower production. Tertiary education in Nigeria seems to be faced with many challenges. This paper examined the challenges and concluded that inadequate funding, infrastructure facilities, shortage of personnel, Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS), indigenization of Principal Officer, cultism/insecurity, Autonomy issues, leadership problems, Brain-drain syndrome and poor motivation are some of the challenges facing tertiary education in Nigeria. Based on this, the paper concluded that:
1. The government should increase the funding of tertiary institutions in Nigeria;
2. There should be a master plan for infrastructural facilities development in all the tertiary institutions in Nigeria;
3. The government should direct all tertiary institutions administrators to employ more staff;
4. The federal government should remove the tertiary institutions’ Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS);
5. The government should discourage the indigenization of Principal Officers in public institutions and insist on merit in the appointment of principal officers of tertiary institutions in Nigeria;
6. Tertiary institutions should come up with strict laws against cultism and the federal government should address all issues fueling insecurity in Nigeria.
7. Federal and states government should grant full autonomy to the tertiary institutions in Nigeria;
8. Recruitment of tertiary institutions leadership should be based on merit and not political influence;
9. The government should increase the salaries of personnel in tertiary institutions to prevent brain drain and improve productivity.
References


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