

## Factors Hindering the Progress of Nigerian Universities in the Global Ranking of Universities

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### ABSTRACT

This paper reviewed some factors that hinders the progress and performance of Nigerian universities in the global Ranking of the worlds' universities. Over ten factors were reviewed and about nine factors were also highlighted, making a total of twenty factors reviewed in this study. Educational pursuit in Nigeria has become something of a necessity which puts pressure on the higher education system hence this problems faced in Nigerian Universities. Based on the challenges, it was recommended among others that the Nigerian University Commission (NUC), Ministry of Education, and other governing bodies of the education system in Nigeria need to take cognizance, factors hindering the progress of Nigerian universities in global ranking. A clear understanding of this factors would cause the willingness to restructure and do all that is necessary to get the universities in Nigeria up to standard.

### INTRODUCTION

For a country to progress on a way to development and advancement, there could be no greater spot to start the cycle than in repositioning the countries tertiary institutions and universities. Unfortunately, today, *in the global ranking of universities*, Nigerian universities are not progressing admirably and are not known to have been. None of the 170 public and private universities in Nigeria were among the best 1,000 universities on the planet regardless of making a few forward leap and research grants. In 2018, Nigeria had just a single university on the best 1000 colleges across the world. As of now, six Nigerian universities are addressed in the top global universities' rank. The best three universities include: The University of Ibadan, which top the rundown of Nigeria colleges positioning 401-500th on the Time Higher Education ranking 2022 table. Universities of Lagos positioned 501-600th while Covenant University ranked 601-608th.

National Universities Commission (NUC) is a *regulatory agency for universities education* in Nigeria whose mandate has *remained* relentless in guaranteeing the subjective and efficient improvement of higher education toward *global relevance and competitiveness*. Nigerian universities were performing ineffectively on global ranking which may have been as a result of many factors addressed by the Executive Secretary, National Universities Commission (NUC), Professor Abubakar Rasheed who expressed that the Nigerian advanced education framework is in critical need of changes. The difficulties confronting the higher education framework in Nigeria are disturbing and these challenges has degraded the quality of higher education when compared with global standard. Deplorably, the NUC has not led any ranking activity or positioned any universities in Nigeria over the most recent 17 years, in this way the tales making adjusts that the NUC has ranked any university is *false and should be discarded* completely.

### Factors Hindering Progress of Nigerian Universities

The variables impeding an advantageous worldwide positioning of Nigerian Universities include:

#### 1. Poor subsidizing and speculation by certain arms of government in the improvement of universities and restricted financial and physical resources:

There is a continually developing interest for advanced education in Nigeria and the accessible assets to fulfill this need is deficient. The education sector in Nigeria is known to be one of the few areas that do not get the right budget allocation. Asides funds for buildings, equipment and other necessities, pay rates of staff are generally postponed bringing about various showdowns between the diverse staff associations such as

Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) and the public authority. These enormously influence the understudies and the schools by and large.

## **2. Examination Malpractice:**

This is an upsetting issue that has nearly turned into a standard in Nigerian universities. It is one of the consequences of the low quality of students coming from auxiliary schools. Additionally, the monstrous deluge of ill-equipped students conceded into tertiary institutions has led students to engage in exceptionally unscrupulous practices like exchange of money or sex for grades.

## **3. Plagiarism and Cheating:**

This is a typical issue in Nigeria universities. Besides the absence of zeal to learn from students, as a rule than not, students as well as academic staff lack the resources that encourage creativity. Students fail to learn, comprehend and think independently and collaboratively with other students in other countries, nullifying the aim of education.

## **4. Poor Operating Environment:**

This is happening increasingly more recently as universities lose talents in academia to different fields for economic or political reasons. Brilliant lecturers leave the dissatisfactions of universities for more rewarding sectors or seek better opportunities outside the country.

## **5. Obsolete Educational System:**

Nigeria universities still use the system established in the 1960s when the University of Ibadan was converted from college to university. It was the first university established in Nigeria and until now, the same 19<sup>th</sup> century academic traditions are still applied. There is a serious lack of innovation to meet up to new world standards.

## **6. Poor Quality Elementary and Secondary Education:**

One of the responsibilities of the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) according to information on their website is to place suitably qualified candidates in tertiary institutions. From recent statistics and the constant reduction of the cut-off mark of prospective university students, it is obvious the quality of education in elementary and secondary schools is on the decline. This poses a huge problem to Nigeria universities.

## **7. Strike Actions:**

Financial crises between the various staff unions and the government, students' excesses like riot, and other issues that lead to strike or temporary shut-down of universities threaten the stability of institutions as well as affect the overall performance of students and staff.

## **8. Dilapidated Structures and Equipment:**

1) Most universities in Nigeria are ill-equipped. According to the Nigeria University Systems Chronicler, Over 70 percent of the laboratory equipment and library books in today's Nigeria universities for example, were brought and placed between 1960 and 1980.

## **9. Insecurity:**

This has been a major challenge of Nigeria universities for so long. Campuses all over the country have reports of cult groups whose activities frequently end in social mishaps and crises that threaten academic work.

## **10. Inadequate Infrastructure:**

A survey by the National Universities Commission (NUC) records that only about 30 percent of Nigeria student population has adequate access to classrooms, lecture theatres, laboratories, workshops and libraries. The figure shows a very poor state of affairs. Other amenities such as electricity, water, good hostel

accommodation and medical care are also inadequate, even though it is agreed that availability of these will boost students' performance, hence a major problem of Nigeria universities.

#### **11. High Demand of Tertiary/Higher Education:**

The Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB), primarily responsible for the prerequisites of admission into tertiary institutions in Nigeria reported that the number of candidates who register and sit for the UTME are constantly on the increase. Given the importance of education and the role it plays in a country, this high demand of education in Nigeria should be met with the attention it deserves, to put Nigeria universities at par with those around the globe.

**Other factors include:** high number of mushroom universities not worthy of status; poor attitude of Nigerian lecturers to teaching and research; large numbers of students at the undergraduate level; low research out-puts; low performance on international linkages and collaborations, lack of international recognition; poor economy; politicisation of education in the country; corruption in the public university system, among others.

#### **Way Forward**

To solve the problems hindering the progress of Nigerian Universities, this paper recommended the following:

1. The Nigerian University Commission (NUC), Ministry of Education (MoE), and other governing bodies of the education system in Nigeria need to take cognizance in factors hindering the progress of Nigerian universities in global ranking. A clear understanding of these factors would cause the willingness to restructure and do all that is necessary to get the universities in Nigeria up to standard.
2. Provision of conducive environment for active learning to take place.
3. Setting up the necessary infrastructure for the different programs universities offer.
4. Creating a research-friendly environment to encourage innovation.
5. Augment the salary structure of lecturers and include deserving benefits to limit brain drain and increase eagerness to impart knowledge in students.
6. The government should allocate the necessary funds required for the educational sector and eliminate strike actions.
7. Involvement of private and public sectors in financing higher institutions.
8. Curricula and use of technology should be tailored to match international standards.
9. Providing adequately equipped libraries, well furnished with ICT tools.
10. Increase security and set appropriate measures to curb cult activities.
11. Decision making as regards management should not be partisan or politically motivated but based on qualifications.
12. Lecturers that instigate exam malpractice should be penalized accordingly just as students are too.
13. The federal government needs to establish more universities to meet the growing demand from secondary schools.

#### **Conclusion**

To be a true giant of Africa, the story of Nigerian universities must be rewritten for good, insisting that the development of Nigeria as a nation can only be tied to the quality of its universities. Without a doubt, the higher education system in Nigeria needs to be reformed, and the move by NUC to establish a board on the revitalization of the Nigeria University System (NUS) is a positive development. The above arrangements, if executed would enhance the progress and performance in the global ranking of the nation.

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