

Planning of Public University Education in Nigeria: Challenges and Solutions

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Abstract: Public Universities in Nigeria are faced with many challenges which are traced to poor planning. This paper intends to critically examine the problems hindering effective planning of public universities in Nigeria. To do, Secondary data were adopted to provide empirical facts to support points raised in the paper. Inadequate funding, inadequate data, corruption, political instability, policies instability, poor capacity development of planners, shortage of planners, inadequate planning facilities and political influence were identified as problems hindering effective planning of public universities in Nigeria. To address these problems identified in this paper, it was recommended that the NUC should develop a road map strategic plan on establishment of public universities in Nigeria, planned document should be implemented faithfully and Planner should be allowed to do their professional work. More planners should be employed, funds, planning materials should be provided adequately to all ministries and commission handling planning of university education. Educational policies and those inherited should be implemented as planned and government should reach riot act against influencing establishment of public universities in Nigeria.

Keywords: Public, Problems, Planning, System, Universities

1.0. Introduction

In Nigeria, University education is included in the tertiary education. The National policy on education (2013) defined tertiary education as Tertiary Education is 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 and Technology and the National Teachers' Institutes (NTI) (NPE, 2013).

The goals of Tertiary Education which include the universities shall be 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 counseling 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 (NPE, 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 (NPE, 2013).

The realization of any educational objective include university objective depend on effective planning. This position is supported by National Policy on Education (2013) when is submitted that the success of any system of education is hinged on proper planningframework, efficient administration and adequate financing.

Planning is key in the realization of the objective of university education. In order to realize effective planning and administration of university education in Nigeria, the Federal government of Nigeria established National Universities Commission (NUC) a commission under the federal ministry of education to handle the planning of the university education in Nigeria with collaboration with the federal ministry of education and other sister commissions. The Federal government of Nigeria handle the planning of federal universities and the state government handles the planning of states universities in term of location, programme type, capacity and

In Nigeria, educational planning have not been given the right political priorities according to Ogunode, Abubakar& Gregory (2020) and this have led to the current problems facing the public universities in Nigeria.

Funding is very important in the administration of the university system. Witout adequate funding no meaningful administration can take place. It is unfortunate that Ogunode (2020);Agabi, 2014; Ekankumo&Kemebaradikumo, 2014); Garba (2014) and Ajayi&Haastrup., (2011) identified the problem of inadequate funding.

Infrastructural facilities are key to the implementation of university system programme and policies. Infrastructural facilities are social capital that are aid the administration and management if the university system. As important as these facilities to the development of the university education in Nigeria, it is sadden to realized that Ogunode&Abubaker (2020); Mason, Mastro, & Wirth, (2013) identified the problem of inadequate infrastructural facilities as a major problem facing public universities in Nigeria.

Another, problem with the university education in Nigeria is the poor quality problem. Ogunode&Ahaotu (2021) submitted that poor quality of education of universities education is poor due to the challenges facing the sector.

Also, Wagner, Garippo, &Lovaas, (2011) observed that the universities in Nigeria are not enough to meet the need of the population of right and access to education whileOnyeike and Owuama (2012) revealed among others that inadequacy of funds, planning with inaccurate statistical data, political interferences, misappropriation of funds and shortage of qualified manpower were major limitations to the development of higher education in Nigeria.

Many researchers (Moja, 2000), Oluebe (2013) and Ogunode (2020) have also identified the problem of poor planning of education which include the university education as a major obstacle to the effective implementation and development of educational programme (University education) in Nigeria. Based on this, this paper want to critically examine the problems hindering effective planning of public university education in Nigeria.

2.0 Concept of University Education Planning

University education planning is the processof identifying, programmes, goals, targets and listing out implementation strategies to realize the university' programme and goals of the students and society within a timeframe.University education Planning is the process of outlining goals for future implementation with the aims of achieving policies on university education by the identified human and materials resources. University education planning is the act of identifying an organized set of decisions for implementation in the future and programmed towards realizing some goals of higher education. University education planning is the systematic assessment and analysis human and materials that would be used to attain the set objectives and programmes of the university system. University education planning is a process of deep thinkingon best possible alternatives of action to realize programmes and policies of higher education within a set time.

University education planning cover all the aspects of the university. These area includes, manpower planning, infrastructural facilities planning, academic planning, human development planning, student planning, financial planning etc.

- a) Planning of university education would lead to effective allocation of resources
- b) Planning of university education would lead quality education delivering
- c) Planning of university education would lead to effective infrastructural development
- d) Planning of university education would lead to adequate funding of the system
- e) Planning of university education would lead to effective manpower development in the system

- f) Effective planning of university education would led to effective implementation
- g) Planning of university education would elp to reduce wastages in the system

3.0 Challenges Facing Planning of University Education in Nigeria

Planning of university education in Nigeria is faced with many problems. Some of these problems include; inadequate funding, inadequate data, corruption, political instability, policies instability, poor capacity development of planners, shortage of planners and inadequate planning facilities.

3.1 Inadequate Funding

Funding is key to the planning of university system. Due to the complexity of the University system a lot of human and materials resources are required to carry out the planning. These human and materials resources requires a huge sum of financial investigation to be able to acquire them for the planning of the sector. University funding in Nigeria is poor and inadequate. According to Ogunode (2020) shortage of funds is a major problem affecting the administration of universities in Nigeria. And it is from the inadequate funding that planning as programme gets it' allocation. Due to inadequate funding many school administrators of public universities cannot implement the various programme of the universities. Shortage of funding have also been identified by Ogunode&Ahaotu (2021) as a problem facing the respective commissions set up by the government to carry out the planning and administration of the universities at the administrative level in Nigeria.

3.2 Inadequate Data

Ogunode (2021a) opines that data is very important to the realization of goals and programme of higher institutions. Data is needed to plan the higher institutions. The Executive Secretary of National Universities Commission said that for the Nigerian University System (NUS) to be respected globally, it must live above board by managing an effective and reliable information system that would guarantee accurate, reliable and timely data that could be used in advising government on issues of national planning. He observed that without accurate data, effective and strategic planning would not only be difficult for the university but also for the government. He said that as Ivory Towers, Universities were expected to have adequate and reliable information across all variables such as total number of students enrolment; total number of students by programme; faculty; gender; age; mode of entry into the university; Local Government of origin; State of origin; nationality; geo-political zone; distribution in term of PhD, Masters, PGD programmes and students (NUC,2016). It is unfortunate that universities data not timely generated, distributed and managed effective for planning and to make decision concerning universities development. The National Commission Universities (NUC) Boss in (2018) said, "I was totally disturbed that we could not lay our hand on a verifiable statistics that would have to help us with our plans for our universities. That made me to spend my first year as NUC boss studying some obvious inaccurate statistics being brandished in different quarters regarding the current situation in our Nigerian universities (NUC, 2018). Ogunode (2021) and Dominic, Segun&Jide (2016) observed that timely and reliable data are fundamental to planning and management in education especially in monitoring educational developments.Ogunode (2021) identified inadequate funding, inadequate working materials, shortage of professional data experts, poor capacity development of data mangers and inadequate infrastructural facilities as the problems preventing effective data collection and distribution in the Nigerian higher institutions.Udeme (2017) who listed other factors that account for inaccurate data to include poor technological advancement, poor infrastructure, poor funding, shortage of manpower, and ineffective supervision. Nkechi, Martins, & Lydia (2019) also observed that the major problem in generating and processing assessment big data from the experts" opinion is low level of infrastructural development, low awareness on the need/advantages of assessment big data, followed by security issues in contracting data and technical knowhow and lack of trained ICT officers.

3.3 Corruption

Ogunode&Ajape (2021) opines thatinstitution corruption is a big problem preventing effective planning of higher education in Nigeria. Funds released for planning, supervision, administration of higher institutions are been looted or misappropriated by some officers in the ministries and agencies of government responsible for planning of education. Corruption has penetrated some ministries and agencies of education in the country leading to a reduction in the volume of monies meant for the development of the educational programme in the country. Ogunode (2020) submitted that corruption in the public universities in Nigeria is another problem preventing effective administration of public universities in Nigeria. The high rate of corruption in the Nigerian public universities has hindered effective administration of the universities. Many public universities are in the present condition because of the corruption in the system. Funds provided for implementation of programme, provision of infrastructural facilities, employment of staff and programme development ended up been looted or diverted into private account. Onyeike, &Owuama (2012)

conducted a study that aimed at determining the constraints to planning and implementation of higher education programmes was carried out, with emphasis on the six higher institutions in Rivers State. The result of the study revealed among others that misappropriation of funds, inadequacy of funds, planning without accurate statistical data, political influence, and shortage of qualified manpower were major constraints.

3.4 Political Instability

Political instability is a major problem hindering effective universities planning in Nigeria. Ogunode&Ajape (2021) states that political instability is another problem facing planning of higher education in Nigeria. The change of political leaders and political party affects the planning process and planning implementation. The former administration in Nigeria from 2011 to 2015 came up with a plan of mega universities in Nigeria, the expiration of the tenure led to the termination of that plan document. WENR (2017) submitted that in 2013, the federal government announced plans to create six regional „mega-universities“ with the capacity to admit 150,000 to 200,000 students each. Akpan, (2014) observed that in Nigeria the leader in power even changed educational policies and plans. Therefore, we have not given our educational plans enough time as pacified in the plan to mature before they are terminated. The success of any plan or policy cannot be ascertained until its implementation and evaluation. The most serious problem in the Nigerian educational system is premature termination of plans and policies and this affects educational planning. Deedam, Akpe& Juliana (2019) observed that Nigerian government makes a lot of promises but cannot deliver on their promises. They are not committed enough in continuing and completing plans put in place already by their predecessors.

3.5 Policies Instability

Policies instability in Nigeria is another challenge preventing effective planning of universities education in Nigeria. Educational policies are often change whenever a new government comes on board in Nigeria. This submission is attested to by Ogunode, Ajape&Jegede, (2020) who posited that often, government in power would suspend the continuity of many higher education policies and plans developed by the previous administrations. There was a time in Nigeria that the minister of education came up with a policy of one student one laptop for all the Nigerian students. That policy was stopped when the new administration came on board due to different in political agenda. Political instability is another major problem preventing effective implementation of educational policies in Nigeria. Political instability is one feature of third world countries like Nigeria. Also, Odukoya (2011) concludes that politics and frequent changes in government tend to affect the implementation of the National Policy on Education negatively. He argued that the instability in the system of governance, coupled with constant changes in ministers and commissioners, led to the level of the crises the national education system has witnessed over the years and the inconsistency and often contradictory nature of the educational policies and practices. Ogunode& Adah (2020) observed that many educational policies have been put to hold due to changes in government or administration from one political party to another political.

3.6 Poor Capacity Development of Planners

Training and retraining programme is vital for the development of educational planners. Training exposes the planners to new dimension of planning. It equip him or her with relevant skills and knowledge to plan well. It is unfortunate that many planners working presently in the ministries of education and commission in charging of planning are not exposed to constant training programme. Ogunode&Ajape (2021) and NOUN (2009) observed that many educational planners working presently in majorities of the ministries and agencies are not going for constant training and retraining programme to improve their planning skis and capacity. Ogunode (2021) observed that poor capacity development of educational planners working in different agencies and department of education both at the state and federal level is preventing effective planning of education. Many educational planners since employed have not gone for training and retraining programme to help them improve on their planning capacities. Training and retraining programme is vital for educational planners. It helps them acquire new knowledge and skills of modern planning. Educational planners who are exposed to training and retraining programme perform well than those who are not going for training.

3.7 Shortage of Planners

The shortage of professional planner with specialization of higher education especially the university is another problem slowing down planning of universities education in Nigeria. The planning of universities needs experienced and well trained professionals. There are few of such people with in the ministries and commissions handling planning of universities education in Nigeria. Ololube, (2013) stated that most educational planners in Nigerian do not have complete competence in planning. Qualified planners are the single most significant resource that can lead to greater and efficient planning productivity as performance. In planning, what is needed is the effective utilization resources by

connecting the totality of knowledge, skills and talents to achieve planning objectives. The quality of planners should not be anything less than the basic acceptable standards worldwide.

3.8 Inadequate Planning Facilities

Inadequate planning facilities is a very big problem affecting the planning of universities education in Nigeria. Planners employed in the various ministries, agencies and commissions to carry out planning functions are not provided with adequate planning facilities. Facilities like ICT, software, calculators, and modern planning software are not available in the offices of these planners. The inability of these planners to access these facilities is affecting their planning responsibilities. Ogunode&Ajape (2021) observes that shortage of planning materials is one of the major challenges preventing effective planning of higher education in Nigeria.

3.9 Political Influence

Political influences is a major problem hindering effective planning of universities education in Nigeria. Nigerian politician both at legislative arm and executive arm of government are always influencing siting of universities in their states, local government and towns. Strategic planning on universities distribution are always been alter to favour politician in power. Educational planners are influenced to site universities in their communities. Nigerian politician have taking establishment of universities as a constituent projects. Bills are sponsored every year by honourables for universities establishment in their state and senatorial district. Ogunode&Ajape (2021) reported that political influence is a very serious problem facing the planning of education in Nigeria. Politicians both at the federal and states level especially the at the position of president and state governors influences location of higher institutions to their states and communities to attract development and achieve political gain by altering the national document on siting of educational institutions in the country. Presidents, state governors, ministers and honourable members are found with the habit of influencing the educational planners and administrators of higher institutions to locate higher institutions in their communities. This act has made the sitting of higher institutions not evenly distributed in the country. Some states have many higher institutions than the others. Ololube, (2013) submitted that the existing political arrangement has influenced the control over educational planning in Nigeria. Recently, *Abill to establish Aerospace and Aeronautics University in Oka Akoko, Ondo State, passed second reading on the floor of the Nigerian Senate. The bill was sponsored by Sanator Prof. Boro face representing northern senatorial district in Ondo state.* Okoli, Ogbondah, &Ewor, (2016) submitted that there has been political interference in the establishment of universities in Nigeria. With the return of civil rule in 1999, the spate of government's establishment of federal universities continued, beginning in 2002 when the Obasanjo administration resuscitated the National Open University, Lagos, which was suspended in 1984. The administration also established the Federal University of Petroleum Resources (FUPRE), Effurun in 2007. The political crises that surrounded the establishment of this university manifested when the Yar'Adua's regime attempted to relocate the university to Kaduna State. This attempt was met with brick walls as it was vehemently opposed by the people of the Niger Delta region through students' protests, and threats from South-South Governors' Forum. Also, in 2007, there was a proposed plan by Governor Rotimi Amaechi to relocate the Rivers State University of Science and Technology from its present site in Nkpolu to a permanent site in Ikwerre Local Government Area, as part of the Greater Port Harcourt City Project (The Port Harcourt Telegraph, 2012 in Nyewusira, 2014). It is pertinent to note here that Governor Amaechi hails from Ikwerre Local Government Area. Gbenu, (2012) observed that legislature has a direct influence on the planning processes as the body responsible for policy formulation on educational development. Generally, the legislature is compelled to serve the interest of other special interest groups. There is therefore the possibility of conflicts between legislature and the rational ideas proposed by the technical planners which has been based on statistical analysis of the education system. The legislature represents the government; the technical planner is responsible for analysis of the education system, making available projection for enrolment, physical facilities, funds and personnel required for an educational project.

4.0 Way Forward

Based on the problems identified, the following are recommended:

- 1) National Universities Commission (NUC) should develop a master plan or road map on public universities establishment in Nigeria across the federation. The document should state time, place, types and capacity of the universities to be established.
- 2) The government should ensure this government are sent to all arms of government and ministries toward policies and operate plans for it implementation. The document should guide the federal government on establishment of new universities in the country.

- 3) More professional planner with specialization in the university planning are employed and deploy to federal ministry of education and National Universities Commission(NUC) to aid planning of universities across the country.
- 4) More funding should be allocated to planning of education at all level of education especially at the university level. This will help to provide all needed human and materials resources for effective planning of university education
- 5) More planning materials and facilities should be provided for all educational planners in the federal ministries and commissions in charge of planning of university education. ICT facilities, Calculators, software on planning.
- 6) Educational policies inherited by new administration should be sustained. This will help to reduce wastage and aid educational development in the country.
- 7) Riot acts on influencing of siting of universities to one particular state without considering national need should be read to all government actors and be implemented to avoid university siting influence in the country.

5.0 Conclusion

Public Universities in Nigeria are faced with many challenges which are traced to poor planning. This paper intends to critically examine the problems hindering effective planning of public universities in Nigeria. To do, Secondary data were adopted to provide empirical facts to support points raised in the paper. Inadequate funding, inadequate data, corruption, political instability, policies instability, poor capacity development of planners, shortage of planners, inadequate planning facilities and political influence were identified as problems hindering effective planning of public universities in Nigeria. To address these problems identified in this paper, it was recommended that the NUC should develop a road map strategic plan on establishment of public universities in Nigeria, planned document should be implemented faithfully and Planner should be allowed to do their professional work. More planners should be employed, funds, planning materials should be provided adequately to all ministries and commission handling planning of university education. Educational policies and those inherited should be implemented as planned and government should reach riot act against influencing establishment of public universities in Nigeria.

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