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Problems of Tertiary Education in Nigeria: An Impediment to Effective Management in the 21st Century

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Abstract:

One of the most enduring legacies parents and the country can pass on to its youths is education. All over the world, education is seen and assumed to be the most veritable instrument of change, as any fundamental change in the intellectual and social outlook of any society has to be preceded by an educational revolution. The fulfillment of this role lies on functional education. The mandate of higher institutions is to develop the whole man mentally, morally and physically and to confer degrees on their products who are found worthy in character and learning, to enable them assume leadership roles in their immediate and extended society. This paper recognizes the fact that in spite of this mandate, tertiary institutions in Nigeria find it difficult to provide the enabling environment for the actualization of their mission largely because of absence of quality human resource, lack of finance/funds, recruitment condition of staff, poor remuneration, dilapidated infrastructure proliferation of tertiary institutions and academics periodicals, ever increasing rate of student enrollment without accompanying support facilities, lack of adequate counselling programmes, poor welfare programmes, poor time management and study habit skills, poorly planned orientation and character development programmes, poor health and sexuality programmes etc. This paper therefore investigates the perception of female and male academic staff of higher institutions and to ascertain the problems that impede the effective management of tertiary education in the Nigeria, in the 21st century. Two research questions and one hypothesis were posed to guide the study. Data were collected from 300 respondents from academic staff in different departments from two universities, namely Abia State University and Imo State University of Nigeria using a 30 item structured questionnaire titled "Problems and Management of Tertiary Education in Nigeria" (PMTEN) developed by the researcher and administered on female and male academic staff respectively, selection was done by stratified random sampling and validated by two experts and having a reliability index of 0.81. Mean on a four-point scale and standard deviation was used to answer the research questions while the hypothesis was tested using T-test statistic. The findings revealed among others that the female and male academic staff perceives that corruption and lack of finance for adequate development are the major impediments for effective management of higher education in the 21st century. Based on the findings, the researcher, recommended amongst others that the government and education authority should increase financial allocation to the education sectors and organize training sections for staff development on management of both human and material resources were made and conclusion drawn.

Keywords: Tertiary Education, Impediment, Effective Management, 21st Century

1. Introduction

The school as an organization is a social arrangement which pursues collective goals, which control its performance and has a boundary separating it from its environment (Wikipedia, 2009), Olasumbo (2007) made bold to assert that everywhere, higher education is faced with great challenges and difficulties related to financing, equity of conditions for access into and doing the course of studies, improved staff developments, skills-based training, enhancement and preservation of quality in teaching, research and services, relevance of programmes, employability of graduates, establishment of efficient co-operation agreements and equitable access to the benefits of international cooperation. Patsula media (2001) stated that to a large extent, the survival and continued success of any business depends upon owners and managers, having a combination of leadership acumen, good judgment based on knowledge and information, and a reasonable ability to steer the business in the right direction. The mandate therefore of these institutions of learning, as specified by the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004) is to teach, conduct research development and provide community service and this requires a firm administrative/managerial grid in order to succeed. Management therefore, in all business and human organization activity is simply the act of getting people together to accomplish desired goals. (Obunadike, 2010). Making professional course contents to reflect our national requirements; Making all students, as part of a general programme for all

round improvement in university education, to offer general study courses such as history of ideas, philosophy of knowledge and nationalism. But, what we find on ground is contrary to the above. Many people are of the views that university education is grossly not functional in Nigeria. This is because its system has failed to equip its beneficiaries with the needed skills necessary for economic, scientific and technological development. It is axiomatic that the economic, scientific and technological development of any nation depends on the quality of skills offered by the school system, to the citizens of that nation. Resources are essential to get work done in schools. Yet some of these resources are in short supply, or not provided which impede efficient-effective management making management very imperative so that formal education systems be quantitatively sustained. It is no more news that resources in our nation's tertiary institutions are in short supply or grossly lacking. Consequently, Tertiary school authorities and its citizens continuously complain and lament the divesting effect of this evil wind that have refused to stop blowing despite efforts by government to supply them. Again, the human resources are less motivated, the material resources are not adequately cared for nor stored appropriately, funds embezzled, and corruption practices.

2. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to find out the major problems of tertiary institutions in Nigeria as impediment to its effective management.

3. Methodology

The study adopted an ex-post-facto and descriptive survey designs aimed at examining the problems of tertiary education in Nigeria that impedes its effective management in the 21st century. The population consists of female and male academic staff of different departments and levels from Abia State University Uturu and Imo State University, all in the southeast of Nigeria. The sample of the study comprised 300 staff of the two universities selected for the study. The stratified random sampling technique was employed to select the sample. The questionnaire was used as the major instrument for data collection. It consisted of three sections A to C. Section A described the bio-data of the respondents, section B dealt with the educational qualification, while section C highlighted the level of experience and general information. The questionnaire was titled Problems and Management of Tertiary Education in Nigeria (PMTEN), consisting 30 items and based on a four-point scale used in measuring the respondents' opinion levels of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. Scored from 4 to 1. The instrument was face validated by two experts in measurement and evaluation drawn from university of Nigeria Nsukka. Corrections were pointed out by the experts and adjusted by the researcher and thus the document was considered valid having a reliability index of 0.81. Standard deviation and mean were used to answer the research questions while the hypothesis was tested using T-test statistic.

4. Research Questions

- Research Question 1: What are the perceptions of Female and Male academic staff on the problem facing the Tertiary Education Institution in Nigeria?

S/n	Items	N	Total	X	S.D	Rank	Decision
1	Brain Drain	150	435	2.90	0.87	13 th	Accepted
2	Potential challenges of technology	150	494	3.09	0.50	4 th	Accepted
3	Lack of finance for proper development	150	297	1.98	0.56	14 th	Rejected
4	Corruption	150	531	3.54	0.56	1 st	Accepted
5	Lack of motivated leadership	150	451	3.01	0.93	12 th	Accepted
6	Lack of implementation	150	505	8.37	0.84	3 rd	Accepted
7	Weak internal government	150	458	3.05	1.06	10 th	Accepted
8	Existence of internal policies	150	460	3.07	0.79	9 th	Accepted
9	Inconsistence policies	150	229	1.53	0.79	15 th	Rejected
10	Poor academic preparation	150	494	3.29	0.46	4 th	Accepted
11	Examination Malpractice	150	494	3.29	0.54	4 th	Accepted
12	Cultism	150	517	3.45	0.52	2 nd	Accepted
13	Unconducive learning environment	150	484	3.23	0.47	8 th	Accepted
14	Enrolment Explosion	150	457	3.05	0.79	10 th	Accepted
15	Sexual Harassment	150	493	3.29	0.51	4 th	Accepted

Table 1: Mean rating of female academic staff on the problems facing the tertiary education institutions in Nigeria

The data on table 1a shows that respondents accepted items 1,2,4,5,6,7,8,10,11,12,13,14 and 15 with mean score 2.90, 3.29, 3.01, 3.37, 3.05, 3.06, 3.29, 3.45, 3.23, 3.05 and 3.29 respectively with respective standard deviations of 0.87, 0.50, 0.56, 0.65, 0.93, 0.84, 1.06, 0.79, 0.79, 0.46, 0.54, 0.52, 0.47, 0.19 and 0.51. These items were regarded as accepted since they are above the cut-off mean of 2.50. However, the respondents only rejected items 3 and 9 with respective mean scores of 1.98 and 1.53 and standard deviations of 0.56 and 0.73 respectively. Item 4 ranked first which implies that majority of the female respondents accepted that corruption is the major problem of facing the tertiary education in institutions in Nigeria. While item 9 ranked 15th implies that majority of the female respondents rejected inconsistencies of university policy as a problem confronting the university.

S/n	Items	N	Total	X	S.d	Rank	Decision
1	Brain Drain	150	278	1.85	0.68	14 th	Rejected
2	Potential challenges of technology	150	497	3.29	0.50	3 rd	Accepted
3	Lack of finance for proper development	150	531	3.54	0.65	1 st	Accepted
4	Corruption	150	451	3.01	0.93	10 th	Accepted
5	Lack of motivated leadership	150	297	1.98	0.56	12 th	Rejected
6	Lack of implementation	150	458	3.05	1.06	9 th	Accepted
7	Weak internal governance	150	397	2.65	0.96	11 th	Accepted
8	Existence of internal policies	150	293	1.95	0.76	13 th	Rejected
9	Inconsistence policies	150	278	1.85	0.85	14 th	Rejected
10	Poor academic preparation	150	460	3.07	0.79	8 th	Accepted
11	Examination Malpractice	150	484	3.23	0.47	7 th	Accepted
12	Cultism	150	493	3.28	0.51	6 th	Accepted
13	Unconducive learning environment	150	517	3.45	0.52	2 nd	Accepted
14	Enrolment Explosion	150	497	3.29	0.54	3 rd	Accepted
15	Sexual Harassment	150	494	3.29	0.51	3 rd	Accepted

Table 1b: Mean rating of male academic staff on the problems facing tertiary education institution in Nigeria

The data on table 1b shows that the male respondents accepted items 1,2,3,4,6,7,10,11,12,13,14,15 with respective mean scores of 3.54, 3.01, 3.05, 2.65, 3.07, 3.23, 3.28, 3.45, 3.29, 3.29 and respective standard deviations 0.50, 0.65, 0.93, 1.06, 1.06, 0.96, 0.79, 0.47, 0.51, 0.52, 0.54, 0.51 respectively. This was indicated as the scores where above cut-off means of 2.50. While the male respondents rejected items 1,5,8 and 9 with respective mean scores 1.85, 1.98 and 1.85 and standard deviations of 0.68, 0.56, 0.76 and 0.85. This was indicated as the mean scores were below 2.50. Item 3 ranked 1st as majority of the respondents accepted that lack of finance was the major problem facing the tertiary education institutions in Nigeria. While item 1 and 9 ranked 14th and 14th respectively indicated that majority of male respondents rejected brain drain and inconsistencies of university policies as a problem confronting the university education institutions in Nigeria.

- Research Question 2: What are the strategies for effective management of tertiary education in the 21st century?

S/n	Items	N	Total	X	S.D	Rank	Decision
1	Improvisation	150	4.60	3.07	0.79	11 th	Accepted
2	Using available funds Judiciously	150	451	3.01	0.93	14 th	Accepted
3	Involving the school communities in the provision of the resources	150	494	3.29	0.50	4 th	Accepted
4	Declaring/ requesting on time the needed resources from the authorities	150	505	3.37	0.84	2 ND	Accepted
5	Proper storage and maintenance of available resources	150	458	3.05	1.06	12 th	Accepted
6	Closer supervision of those that use the resources	150	494	3.29	0.54	4 th	Accepted
7	Involving Education programmes implementers in resources planning	150	517	3.45	0.52	1 st	Accepted
8	Conclusive learning environment	150	494	3.29	0.46	4 th	Accepted
9	Orientation programme for staff and students on the implication of social harassment, corruption and building	150	493	3.29	0.51	4 th	Accepted
10	Orientation programmes for student on the implications of malpractice, cultism and poor academic preparation	150	494	3.29	0.46	4 th	Accepted
11	Effective internal and external governance	150	451	3.01	0.93	14 th	Accepted
12	Internal policies that affect both academic and non-academic positively	150	505	3.37	0.84	2 nd	Accepted
13	Provision of Adequate Infrastructure	150	484	3.23	0.47	10 th	Accepted
14	Enrolment and employment explosion control	150	494	3.29	0.54	4 th	Accepted
15	Choice of motivational leader	150	458	3.05	1.06	13 th	Accepted
	Average mean or pooled mean			3.22			

Table 2a: Mean rating of female academic staff on the strategies for effective management

The data presented on table 2a shows that female respondents accepted items 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15 with respective mean scores of 3.07, 3.01, 3.29, 3.37, 3.05, 3.29, 3.45, 3.29, 3.29, 3.29, 3.01, 3.37, 3.23, 3.07, and 3.05 with respective standard deviations of 0.79, 0.93, 0.50, 0.84, 1.06, 0.54, 0.52, 0.46, 0.51, 0.46, 0.93, 0.84, 0.47, 0.79 and 1.06. This was indicated as the mean scores is above the cut-off mean of 2.50. Meanwhile, item 7 ranked 1st which implied that majority of the female respondents are involving in programmes implementations in resources planning which is a highly acceptable strategy for effective management of tertiary education in the 21st century. Meanwhile, items 2 and 11 ranked 14th respectively which implied that using available funds judiciously is a strategy for effective management of tertiary institution in Nigeria.

S/n	Items	N	Total	X	S.D	Rank	Decision
1	Improvisation	150	493	3.29	0.51	5 th	Accepted
2	Using available funds Judiciously	150	460	3.07	0.79	11 th	Accepted
3	Involving the school communities in the provision of the resources	150	517	3.45	0.52	1 st	Accepted
4	Declaring/ requesting on time the needed resources from the authorities	150	451	3.01	0.93	14 th	Accepted
5	Proper storage and maintenance of available resources	150	505	3.37	0.84	3 rd	Accepted
6	Closer supervision of those that use the resources	150	484	3.23	0.47	9 th	Accepted
7	Involving Education programmes implementers in resources planning	150	494	3.29	0.54	5 th	Accepted
8	Conclusive learning environment	150	494	3.29	0.46	5 th	Accepted
9	Orientation programme for staff and students on the implication of social harassment, corruption and building	150	458	3.05	1.06	11 th	Accepted
10	Orientation programme for students on the implications of malpractice, cultism and poor academic preparation	150	505	3.37	0.84	3 rd	Accepted
11	Effective internal and external governance	150	517	3.45	0.86	1 st	Accepted
12	Internal policies that affect both academic and non-academic positively	150	451	3.01	0.72	14 th	Accepted
13	Provision of adequate Infrastructure	150	484	3.29	0.54	5 th	Accepted
14	Enrolment and employment explosion control	150	494	3.29	0.54	5 th	Accepted
15	Choice of motivational leader	150	458	3.05	1.06	14 th	Accepted
	Average mean or pooled mean			3.23			

Table 2b: Mean rating of male academic staff on the strategies for effective management

The data presented on table 2b show that the male academic staff accepted item 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14 and 15 with respective mean scores of 3.29, 3.07, 3.45,3.01, 3.37, 3.23, 3.29, 3.05, 3.37, 3.45, 3.01, 3.23, 3.29 and 3.05 respectively with a standard deviation of 0.51, 0.79,0.52, 0.93, 0.84, 0.47, 0.54, 0.46, 1.06, 0.84, 0.52, 0.47. 0.54 and 1.06. This was indicated as the respective mean scores were above the mean score cut-off of 2.50. Meanwhile items 11 ranked 1st which implies that majority of the male academic staff accepted that there is effective internal and external governance, while items 4 and 12 ranked 14th respectively indicating that declaring/requesting on time the needed resources from academic staff are the least strategies for effective management of tertiary education in Nigeria.

5. Null Hypothesis

Female and Male Academic Staff do not differ in their Mean Ratings on the Possible Problems Facing the Tertiary Education Institutions.

Gender	N	Mean	S.D	DF	Standard D	T-value	P-value	Significant
Male	150	2.85	.68	298	0.0791	-2.15	0.032	significant
Female	150	3.02	.69	-	-	-	-	-

Table 3: The T-test analysis of the difference in the mean rating of male and female academic staff on the possible problems facing the education institutions

The data on table 3. reveal that with a t- value of -2.15 and p-value of 0.032 which is less than 0.05 (p | (0.05), we reject the null hypothesis which states that the male and female academic staff do not differ significantly in their mean rating on possible problems facing the tertiary institutions. Hence we accept the alternate hypotheses which states that the male and female academic staff differ significantly in their mean rating on possible problem facing the tertiary institution.

6. Discussion of Findings

The focus of this study is to investigate the problems of tertiary education Nigeria. The study was guided by two research questions. The result on table 1a and 1b determined the level of female academic staff perception on the problems of tertiary education institutes in Nigeria. The findings revealed that both female and male academic staff agreed with 11 and 15 of the listed possible problems facing the tertiary education institutions in Nigeria and disagreed with only item 9: *Inconsistence policies*. This is an indication that the academic staff are aware of these problems, if the other factors are available. Odwain (1999) noted that mismanagement, characterized by corruption, ineffective utilization of resources, poor maintenance, culture, lack of training and development of staff, modern technology (ICT), and unconducive learning environment and of finance result ineffectiveness of tertiary institutions. By implication inadequate finance can occur because of poor school management procedure and other factors external to the school administration and beyond the control of the school management.

According to Okoroma and Ibara (2008), the presence of examination malpractice, enrolment explosion, weak internal government and absence of other resources make the realization of educational goals difficult. However, it is worthy to note items 4 and 3 were rated highest with mean rating of 3.54 for female academic staff and 3.54 on male academic staff respectively, which signifies that corruption and lack of finance are the major problems facing the tertiary education institution in Nigeria. Table 2a and b indicated that involving education programmes implementation in resources planning, conclusive learning environment, involvement of the school

communities in the provisions of the resources, Enrolment and employment explosion control, improvisation, orientation for student on the examination malpractice, cultism and poor academic preparation, and closer supervision of those that use the resources would help for effective management of the tertiary education in the 21st century. Although, choice of motivational leader's item no 15 ranked 13th for both female and male academic staff in their perception of the strategies for effective management of tertiary institutions. By implication, one may rightly state that leaders know what to do in order to efficiently and effectively utilize the scarce resources in the schools to quantitatively and successfully sustain tertiary institution. However, as noted by Gromthydon (2003), due to poor motivation and adversarial work conditions, most school managers are rarely dedicated to efficient and effective management of school resources. Although effective internal and external governance was ranked 14th for female academic staff and 1st for male academic staff in their perception. It has become a top strategy for effective management of tertiary education, complementing this view, Erinoshio (2004) as cited in Awe and Ajayi (2007) noted that the problems confronting the Nigeria tertiary institutions has been linked to the role of their authorities and those that are self-inflicted by the schools; that is, internal and external problems. Although involving education programmes implementation in resource planning and involving the school communities in the provisions of the resources were ranked 1st for both female and male academic staff, respectively yet there is a serious decline in the staff training programmes in the university education in Nigeria. In his views, effective staff training programme is meant to expose lecturer to a wide range of education research which is a necessary tool for effective management while involving the school community in the provision of the resources ranking 1st was supported by Mbakwem (2005) that success teaching and learning manifests greatly when administrative support is rendered at all levels.

7. Conclusion

Nigeria tertiary institution is currently witnessing a period during which education and professional development at the university level are increasing demand and the cost of providing this education has continued to rise astronomically costs that the government cannot bear alone. The issue causing dysfunction emanates from the issue of poor funding, population explosion, influence of politics, insufficient and dilapidating facilities, and brain-drain, among others, all of which have led to poor quality graduates. The image and the certificates issued by our universities raise academic suspicious in international communities. However, all hope is not lost. It is our belief that when all hands must have been on deck, our dream of achieving the goals of tertiary institutions in the 21st century, would have been true. There is no doubt that if the higher education authorities could overcome the burden that seem to have held her captive and faithfully, purge itself, then the road to genuine transformation and development is needed much brighter.

8. Recommendations

From the findings, the following recommendations are made:

- Conducive learning atmosphere should be provided for lecturers and students and lecturers condition of service reviewed and improved from time to time to avoid brain drain.
- Appointments of vice chancellors should be based on merit rather than on political appointment.
- All cases of sexual harassment and intimidation of students should be thoroughly investigated and the culprits should be made to face the music.
- The present post JAMB test organized by various institutions should be intensified to check mate the quality of entrants into the Higher Institutions.
- Federal government of Nigeria should increase financial allocation to education sector, to enable expansion to cope with high demand of the 21st century.
- Staff development programmes in Nigeria Universities should be given priority attention so that all staff will benefit accordingly.

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