Leadership Challenges in Tertiary Education

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ABSTRACT

This paper examined the problems facing tertiary institutions leaders in Nigeria. Secondary data were used in the paper. The data were collected from print and online publications. The paper identified inadequate funding, shortage of academic staff, inadequate infrastructure facilities, political influence, strike actions, brain-drain, oppositions from unions and Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS) as problems tertiary institutions leaders in Nigeria are faced with. To solve the challenges, the following were recommended: increment in the funding of public tertiary institutions in the Nigeria. Employment more academic staff in all tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Provision of adequate infrastructural facilities to all the tertiary institutions in in the country. Provision of adequate security in all tertiary institutions in the country.

KEYWORDS: *Leadership, Tertiary Education.*

Introduction

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) (FRN, 2013).

The goals of Tertiary Education 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 (FRN, 2013)

The realization of the tertiary education goals and objectives depends on quality leadership and other related factors. The academic leadership of any tertiary institution determines the extent to which goals and objectives of the institution are realized (Ofoegbu, & Alonge, 2017; Ogunode, Ezema, & Ayoko 2022). (Daniel-Kalioi 2019) states that Nigerian universities are established to teach, research, build capacity and provide community services in order to engender dynamic social, technological, and economic development. Performing these obligations in the face of current realities is enormous which is why Nigerian university education is considered as a complex

organization of interactions among independent bodies, groups and individuals with the aim of achieving the national educational goals. Leadership is critical in goal attainment in the university system. The leadership of any organization determines the extent to which goals and objectives are achieved. Leadership is a process of providing direction in group activities and influencing others to achieve group objectives. Anyone who is in a position of leadership must have the ability to influence other people and make them do what he/she wants them to do (Daniel-Kalioi, 2019).

Ej iogu and Ogonor (2016) viewed leadership as the process of persuading other people to jointly seek to achieve defined objectives enthusiastically. In other words, leadership has to do with the act of uniting and stimulating followers towards the achievement of particular objectives in particular situations. Leadership has to do with the ability to get things done with the support and co-operation of other people within the institution, organisation or system. Aderounmu and Aina's diary (as cited in Abdulkareem, 2016) described leadership as a force that can initiate action among people, guide activities in a given direction, maintain such activities and unify efforts towards common goals. Similarly, Szilagyi Jnr's diary (as cited in Adeyemo, Folajin, Sotannde and Adekunle, 2012)and Adekunle, (2017), explained leadership as a process involving two or more people in which one attempts to influence the other behaviour towards the accomplishment of goals. In educational institutions, leadership involves the process of enlisting and guiding the talents and energies of school personnel, students, parents, community members and material resources towards the accomplishment of the goals and objectives of the educational system. It also has to do with the engagement of school personnel (teaching and non-teaching) to get involved in the promotion of academic activities in their institutions (Adekunle, 2017; Abama, Oladipo & Gyang, 2016).

Leadership is thus very sensitive for organisational survival or failure in the educational setting, and the institutional administrator is always commended for the success of the school system and is also held responsible for any form of lapses. The school administrator as a leader therefore, is that individual who exercises more important positive influence than any other member of the institution he is in. In the context of this study, such include: the Vice Chancellors, Rectors, Provosts and other personalities within the institutions saddled with the responsibility of assisting them in the day-to-day administration of their respective institutions. Leadership in educational institutions is all about co-coordinating the workers' activities and guiding them towards achieving organisational goals. Therefore, institutional leaders are those individuals in the organisation who set the tone and culture (Adekunle, 2017).

Leadership challenges in Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria

There are many problems tertiary institutions leaders in Nigeria are faced with. Some of these problems includes; inadequate funding, shortage of academic staff, inadequate infrastructure facilities, political influence, strike actions, brain-drain, oppositions from unions and Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS).

Inadequate Funding

Inadequate funding is one of the greatest problems facing the administrators of higher institutions in Nigeria. Higher institutions administrators do not have access to adequate funding for effective running and administration of the institutions under their care. Government funding of higher education in the country have been inadequate for decades. The funding of education is shared among different levels of government and supplemented by funds from other sources such as business, community organizations and levies charged. The revenue collected through fees constitutes an insignificant proportion of the revenue of the institution. Fund allocation has not been much during the last decade. The poor funding of higher educational system in the country has rendered the higher education system incapacitated (Obadara, & Alaka, 2013; Mgbekem, (n.d); Nwekeaku, 2013). The higher education system has not had the financial resources necessary to

maintain educational quality in the midst of significant enrolment explosion. Akomolafe & Ibijola, (2014); Sarkinfada,(2020) and Ogunode & Onyekachi (2021) identified the factors responsible for inadequate funding of public universities in Nigeria to include lack of political will, corruption, increase in population, inflation, fall in national revenue and poor financial planning and the implications of underfunding of the public universities according to Ogbondah (2010); Sarkinfada, (2016); Ogunode, Onyekachi, & Ayoko, (2023) and Ogunode, Attah, & Ebute, (2023) include; inadequate infrastructural facilities, shortage of academics staff, poor quality of education, brain-drain and strike action.

Shortage of Academic Staff

Inadequate staff especially the academic staff is another major problem Vice Chancellors in Nigerian public universities is faced with. 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 programme 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 a shortage 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. Ogunode & Adamu (2021) and Ogunode & Okwelogu (2022) concluded that underfunding, poor manpower planning, poor motivation, government policy on the embargo, corruption (Ghost worker) and strike action problems are the causes of inadequate academic staff in the public universities in North-central Nigeria and the implications of the shortage of academic staff in public universities include poor implementation of teaching programme, high student-lecturers ratio, heavy workload for lecturers, poor local and international ranking, bad international image, poor coverage of scheme of work and poor academic programme accreditation.

Inadequate Infrastructure Facilities

Leaders in tertiary institutions in Nigeria are faced with the problems of inadequate infrastructure facilities. Ogunode, Ezema, & Olugbenga, (2022) observed that Academic leaders in the higher institutions also needs adequate infrastructure facilities for deployment for the implementation of teaching programme, research programme and community services. Infrastructural facilities, as observed by Sarkinfada, Amali, Okafor & Hussaini, (2017); Sarkinfada, & Kyari, (2022) and Atobauka & Ogunode (2021) are major resources the university system needs to realize its objective. Infrastructural facilities support effective delivery of teaching, researching and the provision of community services. Infrastructural facilities are among the greatest materials resources that the universities system cannot do without them. The quality and quantities of infrastructural facilities available in the universities determines to some extent the level of quality of education outcome of the universities. Specifically, Sarkinfada (2013); Ebehikhalu, & Dawam, (2017); Ogunode (2020); Ishaya, & Ogunode (2021) and Ogunode, & Jegede (2021) concluded that factors responsible for inadequate infrastructural facilities in Nigerian public universities include; underfunding, increased student population, corruption, poor infrastructural facilities planning, poor supervision and inflation.

The implication of inadequate infrastructural facilities in the Nigerian public universities includes; poor quality of education,

Political Influence

Nigerian higher institutions administrators are also faced with the problem of political influence (Ahaotu & Ogunode 2021). Sarkinfada, & Hussaini, (2019); Ajape, Ogunode & Jegede (2020) and Ogunode (2020c) noted that another big challenge facing the administration of public universities in Nigeria is the political influence. The public universities have been designed to function with political office holders or politician in the country. The school administrators of public universities are answerable to the governing council constituted by the government to manage the affair of the public universities in the country. Ekundayo & Ajayi (2009) stressed that it has been observed that universities these days are not totally free from the hand of politicians outside the university system. Government of the day, most especially the state-owned universities, interfere a lot in terms of selection and choice of the chief executive, deans, departmental heads, directors of institutes and above all the selection of vice-chancellors. Okoli, Oghondah, & Ewor (2016 p-69) observed 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 of Nigeria Lagos, which was suspended in 1984. Noun (2009) observed that the higher education system these days are not totally free from the hands of politicians. Another area of political interference is constitution of visitation panel by the visitor at will, instead of the minimum five years intervals. Tertiary institutions leaders are influenced by the political actors across the country especially the governing board and Federal ministers and their influences as affected development in the various institutions according to Ogunode Atobauka, & Ayoko, 2023; Ogunode & Musa, 2022; Ogunode & Omenuko 2021).

Strike actions

Ogunode, Haliru, Shehu & Peter (2O23) noted that strike actions in Nigerian public universities are a major problem facing the administration of public universities in Nigeria. The continuous strike actions by these different union groups are frustrating the administration of public universities in Nigeria (Uzoh, 2017; Romina, 2013; and Omotere, 2014). Vice Chancellors of public universities in Nigeria are limited by the strike actions. They are unable to carry out their plans and programme as planned for the university development. In the view of Ahaotu & Ogunode (2020) administrators of higher institutions in Nigeria are always facing the issues of incessant strike action by different unions in higher institutions. Labour unrest by different unions in Nigeria's higher institutions is slowing down the realization of the goals of the higher institutions as well as growth and development. Administrators in Nigerian higher institutions cannot boast of a stable academic calendar for a year without a strike by one union or the other. Many school administrators have ideas for transformation and innovation for their schools but the strike actions are not allowing them to fully apply the plans and programmes they have for their respective institutions. Research by leadership newspaper discloses that Nigerian universities have been shut down disrupting administrative activities for more than four years due to the frequent strikes embarked upon by the members of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) and others since the return of democracy to the country in 1999. The reasons for the strike actions by different union groups according to Ogunode (2020); Lawan, & Ogunode (2021) and Ogunode, Ugochukwu, & Jegede (2022) include; underfunding of the public universities, inadequate infrastructural facilities, poor implementation of the agreement reached with union groups and poor working conditions. The implications of the continuous strike actions on the public universities include; disruption in the academic programme, poor quality of education, bad image for the universities, poor ranking internationally and poor patronage of public universities in Nigeria.

Brain-drain

Administrators of higher institutions in Nigeria are also struggling with the issue of brain-drain in their respective institutions. Many academic staff in Nigeria higher institutions are moving out of the institutions frustrating the efforts of the administrators and managers to provide quality education. Administrators of higher institutions in Nigeria are also struggling with the issue of brain-drain in their respective institutions. Many academic staff in Nigeria higher institutions are moving out of the institutions frustrating the efforts of the administrators and managers to provide quality education (Ogunode, & Ade, 2023; Ogunode & Olaitan, 2023). Factors responsible for Brain-drain in Nigerian public universities (Offem, Anashie, & Solomon, 2018; Ogunode 2020; Ogunode & Atobauka, 2021) include; poor motivation, an unconducive working environment, insecurity, underfunding and political interferences. The implication of brain drain in the Nigerian public universities includes; a shortage of lecturers, poor quality of education and a high student-teacher ratio.

Oppositions from Unions

Leaders in tertiary institutions most time are been opposed by various unions groups in te institutions as a result of introduction of new policies. Ogunode, Haliru, Shehu, & Peter (2O23) noted Vice Chancellors of public universities in Nigeria are always faced with opposition from some stakeholders within the university community. Union groups within the universities and host communities sometimes are against the policies and programmes of the Vice Chancellors because such policies and programmes may not favour them. Some host communities decided to frustrate the Vice Chancellors because he or she is not an indigene of the state. Also, Ogona, & Oluloe, (2022) asserted that leadership is not a bed of roses, not everyone will support or like the leaders style. Leaders must be able to deal with criticism and opposition. Since they are expected to lead people with diverse opinions and backgrounds, often in difficult circumstances, they cannot expect everyone to always go along with them (Akinkugbe, 2021). All leaders will face opposition at some point. It comes with the territory. Everyone cannot always agree with you or be happy with what you are doing even if you think what you are doing is good or is in the interest of others. Here are four things to help us better handle opposition and criticism: First, you require inner strength and conviction about your purpose and goals, because the opposition can destabilise you. Sometimes opposition can be relentless and even abusive. Leaders face criticism because their deeds and omissions affect the course of individuals who fall under their sphere of influence.

Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS)

Another major problem hindering the effectiveness of higher institutions' leaders is the introduction of Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS) for all the higher institutions in the country. This platform is slowing down administrative and managerial function of school leaders. Higher institutions are not designed to be operating in a regulated system. Higher institutions especially the universities are complex and needed a flexible system to operate. Ogunode, N. J & Ibrahim, U. K. (2023) and Lawal & Ogunode (2021) noted that Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS) was introduced by the federal government and made it compulsory for all agencies, ministries and the higher institutions to enroll for their salaries and other payment. There had been resistance by ASUU to the introduction of the IPPIS into the university system. But the Federal Government continually insisted that the payment system was for transparency and neither intended to trample upon university autonomy nor designed to subsume the university into the civil service. But the union insisted that the system would harm the universities. Former President of ASUU Biodun Ogunyemi, observed that, "We challenge them to tell us anywhere in the world where IPPIS is implemented in the universities. IPPIS will shut the door against foreign scholars, contract officers and researchers that we need most dearly. The introduction of Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS) for all the higher institutions in the country have affected leaders in areas of employment and taking crucial decisions Aluko, (2020); Aluko, (2020),; Bello &

Mela, (2022); Ogunode & Emmanuel, (2023) and Ogunode, & Garba (2023) that since universities have been enrolled in the Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS) platform recruitment for tertiary institutions leaders have been come a problem due to the procedure to seek approval.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper examined the problem facing tertiary institutions leaders in Nigeria. Secondary data were used in the paper. The paper identified inadequate funding, shortage of academic staff, inadequate infrastructure facilities, political influence, strike actions, brain-drain, oppositions from unions and Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS).

To solve the challenges, the following were recommended:

1. Increment in the funding of public tertiary institutions in the Nigeria;

2. Employment more academic staff in all tertiary institutions in Nigeria;

3. Provision of adequate infrastructural facilities to all the tertiary institutions in in the country;

4. Provision of adequate security in all tertiary institutions in the country;

5. Grant autonomy to all the public universities in the country and remove tertiary institutions from Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS);

6. Managers of tertiary institutions should be allowed to operate independently without political influence;

7. Manager of tertiary institutions in Nigeria should motivate all the academic staff by increasing their salaries and welfare packages to prevent brain-drain;

8. Government should implement all agreement reached with different union groups in all public tertiary institutions to avoid strike actions; and

9. Manager of tertiary institutions in Nigeria should create an atmosphere that will ensure positive relationship between stockholder and management in all the tertiary institutions across the country.

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