

Administration Economics Programme in Nigerian Universities: Problem and Suggestion

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ABSTRACT

The article discussed the problems facing the administration of Economics programme in Nigerian higher institutions. Secondary data was used to support the points raised in the article. The secondary data were sourced from print material and online publication by recognized institutions and individual author. The article identified inadequate funding of Economics programme, inadequate Economics lecturers, and shortage of infrastructural facilities in Economics, institutional corruption, unstable academic calendar, poor staff development and brain-drain as the challenges facing the administration of Economics programme in the Nigerian higher institutions. To solve these challenges, hence, this article recommends: that the government should increase the funding of Economics programme, employ more lecturers, provide more infrastructural facilities in the Economics department, ensure stable academic calendar and fight all institutional corruption in the university system.

KEY WORDS: Administration, Economics, Programme, Problems

I. Introduction

Higher education (tertiary education) can be defined as the education after secondary school. Higher education is the education for the production of manpower for the social, economic, political and technological advancement of a country. Higher education is an organized education system that deal with provision of teaching services, research services and community services. Higher education is the education for the development of the country. Higher education is the final level of education. Higher education is the education that gives certificate after completion of the programme. Higher education is an expensive educational system. According to National policy on Education (2004) higher education is the post-secondary section of the National education system, which is given of Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of technology including courses as are given by the Colleges of Education, advanced teachers training colleges, correspondence Colleges and such institutions as may be allied to them. The Nigerian higher education includes the universities, Colleges of education, polytechnic and mono-technique. The Nigerian higher education is the largest in Africa. According to (FGN, 2004) the objectives of Higher education: the acquisition, development and inculcation of the proper value

orientation for the survival of the individual and societies; the development of the intellectual capacities of individuals to understand and appreciate environment; the acquisition of both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to develop into useful members of the community; the acquisition of an overview of the local and external environments. The other objective of higher education include: to provide post-secondary school education, to inculcate national values and aspiration on the people that pass through the system, to empower the people with skills and knowledge, to contribute to the development of the country and the world at large and to provide teaching and research services.

The realization of the objectives of teacher education programme in Nigeria objectives depend on the effective administration. The success of the educational institutions hinge comprehensive planning, quality administration, effective supervision and proper funding. Administration of School refer to an organized process that deals with effective utilization of educational resources to actualize the objectives of educational institutions. School administration as the application of human and material resources and programmes available for education in the realization of educational goals. School administration is the systematic arrangement of both human and materials resources in the scientific ways of using them to actualize the objective of educational institutions (Ogunode, & Agwor, 2020).

The objectives of school administration include: (a) to realize the objectives of educational system (b) to ensure proper coordination of human resources (c) to ensure effective and efficient application of both human and materials resources in the management of education (d) to eliminate wastages in the management of education (e) to promote accountability in the management of education (f) to ensure effective plan action for the implementation of educational programme (g) to ensure quality policies that will aid the management of educational programme (Ogunode, & Agwor, 2020)..

Higher institutions administration in Nigeria takes two dimension. The external and internal administration. The external administration deals with supervision of the institutions through the agencies established by the government such as the National Universities Commission (NUC) for universities, colleges of education National commission for colleges of education (NCCE) while the National Board for Technical Education for the polytechnic (NBTE). These agencies ensure quality, standard, effective programme accreditation and supervision in all the higher institutions in the country. The internal administration is handled by the school administrators who are appointed by the government to coordinate the activities of the institutions with support from management team and governing councils (Ogunode, & Agwor, 2020).

Economics programme is one of the social science programme offering in higher institutions in the country. The programme is facing many administrative challenges and this challenges is affecting the development of the programme. This article is aimed to discuss the challenges facing the administration of Economic programme in the Nigerian higher institutions.

2.0 Concept of Economic Programme

Economics programme is a social programme that deals with the studies of human activities relating to economic development. Economics programme is one of the popular programme in the universities. It is

been offered in all the higher institutions both for first degree, master with specialization and PhD with specialization. It is offered at some institutions as advance programme with a diploma certificate.

3.0 Problems facing Administration of Economics Programme in Nigerian Universities

There are many challenges facing the administration of Economic programme in the Nigerian higher institutions and some of the challenges include: inadequate funding of Economics programme: inadequate Economics lecturers, shortage of infrastructural facilities in Economics, institutional corruption, inadequate instructional, unstable academic calendar, poor staff development and brain-drain.

3.1 Inadequate Funding of Economics Programme

Inadequate funding is a problem facing the administration of Economics programme in the Nigerian universities. The annual vote or impress released by each universities for the administration and management of Economics programme in many Nigerian universities is not adequate and this problem can be trace to the problem of underfunding of the university system by the government. The annual budgetary allocation by the government for the administration and management of the public universities in Nigeria is not adequate. Generally, the funding for the entire educational sector for the past ten years has been below the 15% of the Nigerian budget. The inability of the government to meet up with the 26% of UNESCO requirement for the development countries like Nigeria is seriously affecting the development of the entire university system. The administration and implementation of programme like Economics requires a lot of capital investment in both human and materials resources.

3.2 Inadequate Economics Lecturers

Inadequate Economics lecturers is another major challenge for the administration and management of Economic programme in many Economics departments in the Nigerian universities. According to the National Universities Commission Benchmark (2007) for programme accreditation and commencement of programme stated that at least there should be six academic staff which include professors, Readers, Senior lecturers, Assistant lecturers and Graduate Assistant and other non-teaching staff. It is amazing that in many Economics departments in the Nigerian universities do not have adequate Economics lecturers to deploy for effective teaching and research service delivering at the departmental level. It is common to see that there is shortage of lecturers in Econometrics, Human resources, Developmental Economics and Micro-Economics just to mention few. Ogunode & James (2020) cited NEEDS (2014) report which disclosed that universities, colleges of education, polytechnics, secondary and primary schools are faced with shortage of professional teachers. According to the report, infrastructural problem and manpower problems are factors responsible for the decline and poor in scholarship in Nigerian universities and other form of educational institutions. The NEEDS (2014) report on the assessment of higher institutions in Nigeria revealed that majorities of the higher institutions are facing problem of staff shortage. The report indicated that there were 37,504 academic staff in the 74 public universities in the country. This numbers compare to the student population is inadequate. The shortage of the academic staff resulted to the high students-teacher ratio in most of the universities in the country. For instance, University of Abuja had staff to student ratio 1:122, Lagos state university had a ratio 1:144 and National Open University had a ratio 1:363. The report also showed that 43% of the lecturers in the Nigerian universities had PhD and above, while others have less qualification. The reported also revealed that only 50% of the academic staff have required skills and pedagogical skills, counselling and ICT competencies required for efficient service delivery in tertiary institutions. The

inadequate lecturers in majorities of the higher institutions in the country is responsible for the falling standard of higher education. There are many reasons responsible for shortage of academic staff in the Nigerian universities, some of the reasons include; low salaries and poor motivation compare to other institutions in the country where they pay high salaries and allowances. Teaching of large classes and rising workload in the universities are also some of the reasons. Brain-drain and poor working environment and lack of manpower planning for higher institutions in the country. The Nigerian higher institutions need about 22,496 teachers to improve the quality of teaching and academic service delivery in the higher institutions (NEEDS, 2014).

3.3 Shortage of Infrastructural Facilities in Economics

Another problem facing the administration of Economics programme in the Nigerian universities is the problem of shortage of infrastructural facilities. Infrastructural facilities refer to classrooms, libraries, ICT facilities, lecture hall, theatre, exam halls, light, water, good road network, offices and laboratories. Infrastructural facilities are strong component of the educational system. Infrastructural facilities aid in the administration of educational programme. It also helps to provide support for the implementation of programmes in the educational institutions. According to the NUC Benchmark (2007) for programme to be accredited, the programme must have adequate infrastructural facilities like offices for the academic and non-academic staff and enough lecture halls, libraries and exam halls. It is unfortunate that Economics department in the Nigerian universities do not have adequate infrastructural facilities to be deployed for effective teaching and research services for students. Ebehikhalu, & Dawam, (2016) submitted that it is a well-known fact that ninety percent (90%) of what exist 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 fund for research work (Ebehikhalu, & Dawam, (2016, Jiduwah, 2010). Recent reports on our universities portray a general lack of infrastructural facilities. An average public university in Nigeria lacks basic infrastructure like 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 are in need of refurbishment. Libraries are poorly equipped and are short of modern books and equipment. Laboratory equipment are obsolete and inputs for teaching are in short supply. Roads and building 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 the Nigerian Universities. It is therefore not surprising that the products of these infrastructures often fail to rise up to the occasion when put to test and task. Likoko, Mutsotso and Nasongo (2013) observed that lack of adequate physical facilities for teaching and learning have negative effect on the quality of graduates produced. They are of the opinions that these facilities are educational inputs that have strong relationship with high academic performance of students.

3.4 Institutional Corruption

Institutional corruption is another problem preventing effective administration of Economics programme in the Nigerian universities because funds budgeted for the administration of the Economics programme are been diverted or mismanaged by the some school administrators. The limited funds allocated to the public university system often go down the drain through the corrupt practices of those entrusted with the implementation of university programmes due to inadequate monitoring of university income and expenditure, such is the grim state of affairs, thus the future will need a paradigm shift

(Okoli, Ogbondah, & Ewor, 2016, Uzoka, 2007, Dare 2008, Ogbondah, 2010). The Nigerian public institutions are known for corruption practices. This practices have penetrated almost all the educational institutions especially the higher institutions. The Nigerian higher institutions which is made up of the universities, colleges of education and the polytechnics are not exempted from the evil of corruption. Various forms of academic corruption found in the Nigerian higher institutions include; examination malpractices, bribing of lecturers for unmerited scores, fiscal extortion from students, sex for marks, mismanagement of funds, funds diversion and forgery of certificates. Among of this forms of corruption, fund diversion and mismanagement is the worst affecting the development of infrastructural facilities in the higher institutions. Corruption within an educational institutions such as funds diversion, funds misappropriation and mismanagement are major problem preventing effective administration of higher education in Nigeria. Ogunode, Ahmed, Deborah, & Abubakar, (2020) observed that at the higher institutions, a former Provost, Federal College of Education, Zaria, Kaduna State, Dr. Moukhtar Ibrahim Maccido, has been arraigned over alleged corrupt acts by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) Kaduna zonal office. The commission levelled against them, a five-count charge bordering on conspiracy, diversion of funds meant for the college through award of funny contracts and receiving gratification Ripples Nigeria (2020). All the above examples are allegations of funds diversion that took place within the public educational institutions. The implication of this is that education quality will not be assured since funds meant for services like recruitment of teachers, procurement of instructional materials and for supervision services are not deliciously used for its purpose, rather diverted to private pockets. It will be difficult to achieve the objectives of education in the situation. Ogunode and Abubakar (2020), Ogbondah (2010) and Dare (2008) also submitted in their respective papers that corruption is a challenge facing the higher institutions in Nigeria.

3.5 Unstable Academic Calendar

Unstable academic programme caused by the continuous strike actions of unions groups within the various universities is another major problem preventing effective administration of Economics programme in Nigerian universities especially at the departmental level. Okoli, Ogbondah, & Ewor, (2016) observed that it has become a known fact that students across various universities in Nigeria are constantly faced with industrial actions embarked upon by the Academic and Non-Academic Staff Unions of various institutions. The disagreement or lack of understanding between government and unions arising from non-implementation of agreement reached, often results in deadlock that usually disrupts academic calendar. As academic activities are suspended for a long period, the students reading abilities will definitely fall. Even the previous knowledge acquired is even forgotten by some students. This mostly turns some students into certificates seekers than knowledge seekers. Ogunode (2020) discovered that ASUU/NASU Strike, students' election, communal crisis, increase in school fees, cultic conflict, National programme and public holidays are factors responsible for unstable academic calendar in higher education in Nigeria. It was also established that half bake graduates, poor coverage of syllabus, resources wastage, students' involvement in criminal activities and students prolonged years of graduation are the effects of unstable academic calendar. The following were recommended that the government should always try to honour whatever agreement reached provided strikes can be averted if necessary steps are taken to build a good relationship between both parties.

3.6 Poor Staff Development

Poor staff development programme is another problem facing the department of Economics in several

universities in Nigeria. Many academic and non-academic staff working in the Economics department in some universities has not been given the opportunity to go for staff development programme or training due to inadequate funding. Professional development programme is very important for academic and non-academic staff. The need for lecturers to improve their knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours while on the job is even more critical now in developing nations than ever before for a number of reasons. For instance, academic programmes in our universities rarely adequately prepare candidates as “finished” products for their future positions and their accompanying responsibilities (Heiss 1970, and Peretomode, 2001). Academic staff that constantly go for staff development programme performed better than those that do not go for such training. Akuegwu, Udida and Basseyy’s (2006) study that lecturers’ attitude towards conference attendance is significantly high and that it is in conferences that lecturers learn new skills, techniques, and knowledge that enhance their professional career. The research publication that arises from conference participation facilitates capacity building of universities and culminates in their rankings among the best or otherwise in the world. It is unfortunate that many lecturers in the Nigerian universities especially in the department of Economics have not been going for regular staff development programme due to poor funding. Basil, Felix, and Nwi-u, (2013) submitted that low participation of lecturers in capacity building programmes in universities can be attributed to poor funding which universities have been grappling with over the years; a situation Udeaja (2005) described as a reoccurring decimal especially since 1998. As a result of this, universities find it cumbersome to sponsor their lecturers to these programmes or even organize some themselves, with a consequence of low capacity building to universities. However, it is pertinent to point out that poor funding affects lecturers’ participation in workshops, seminars, conferences and ICT training, and not mentoring (Basil, Felix, and Nwi-u, 2013). The poor implantation of welfare policies on training and developments of academic staff in the Federal Universities manifest in lack of regularly training and development programmes, inadequate provision of research grants, low level of provision of post graduate scholarships, inadequate funding of internal and external training and development programmes, non-payment or delay payment of training allowances and many more (Bernadette C.N Ukaegbu 2017). The inability of many universities especially the departments to sponsor their academic staff for training is responsible for non-accreditation of many programmes in the Nigerian universities. When training and development are not enhanced regularly, it leads to delay in promotion of some members of staff. Some of the federal Universities under study were found to have an inadequate staff to student ratio. In some departments, there were only two professors, few Ph.D. degree holders with a large number of masters’ degree holders teaching courses meant for senior lecturers and professors. This leads to non-accreditation of some courses or fluctuation in the accreditation of programs because the growth and development of the academic staff does not correspond with retirement, death and resignation of academics staff particularly lecturers (Bernadette C.N Ukaegbu 2017).

3.7 Brain-Drain

Brain-drain is another problem facing the administration of Economics programme in many Nigerian universities. Brain-drain refers to the mass movement of professionals from developing countries to developed countries for a better job that offers better working condition. Many academic staff which includes professors and other professional within the Nigerian higher institutions are leaving the countries for a better offer in other countries across the world and this is affecting the administration of teacher education programme in Nigeria (Ogunode & James 2020). Professional teachers and

experienced professors are now few and limited in major teacher education institutions across the country due to brain-drain. Many academic staff in the Economics department are leaving because the working condition is poor, the salaries and motivation packages are un-attractive. Many of the lecturers are leaving because of poor funding of education, insecurity, lack of modern infrastructural facilities and poor welfare. Okoli, Ogbondah, & Ewor, (2016) submitted Nigerian public universities are faced with rapid faculty exodus or brain drain. Some faculty members abandoned universities for other sectors of the economy where professionals and scientists receive higher salaries and greater social recognition. The result of the faculty exodus is observed in the quality of graduates that our universities produce. The brain-drain problem is seriously affecting the quality of teacher education programme in Nigeria because students do not have adequate professional teachers and professors that will mentored and grown them up. There are many factors responsible for brain-drain problem in the Nigerian higher institutions and they include: poor working condition, poor motivation, insecurity challenges and strike actions.

4.0 Ways Forward

To solve this challenges, this article recommends: that the government should increase the funding of Economics programme, employment more lecturers in the Economics department, provide more infrastructural facilities in the Economics department, ensure stable academic calendar, motivation of Economics lecturers, and fight all institutional corruption in the university system.

4.1 Adequate Funding of Economics Programme

The government should increase the funding of the universities in the country. This will enable the various school administrators to increase the votes and impress of the administration and management of Economics programme in the Nigerian universities. This increment will also help to allocate more slots for staff development programme in the universities.

4.2 Employment of More Economics Lecturers

The government should directs the school administrators to employ more lecturers in the Economics department. This will help to raise the quality of education and reduce lecturers-students ratio to minimum standard.

4.3 Adequate infrastructural Facilities for Economics Department

The government should provide more infrastructural facilities in the Economics department. This will allows lectures and students to have adequate offices and lecture halls for delivering of effective teaching and learning in the universities.

4.4 Implement All Agreement with Unions

The government and school administrators should be proactive to implement all agreement reached with different union groups in the country to avoid the problem of strike which is among the factors responsible for poor quality of education in the university system.

4.5 Motivation Economics lecturers

Lecturers in the universities should be motivated with good welfare packages especially the lecturers in the Economics department. This will help to prevent brain-drain in the universities system.

4.6 Fight all Institutional Corruption in the University System

Corruption practices have done more harm to the educational institutions. Corruption within the educational institutions have created bad image for the Nigerian educational institutions. Corruption is also responsible for the poor quality of education because funds meant for development of facilities that

supposed to have improved the quality of education have been diverted. So, the government and school administrators should design an effective monitoring and valuation system that will monitor the movement of funds within the system. The government should direct all its anti-corruption agencies to work with the educational institutions with the aims of eradicating diversion of funds.

5.0 Conclusion

The article discussed the problems facing the administration of Economics programme in the Nigerian universities. Secondary data was used to support the points raised in the article. The secondary data were sourced from print material and online publication by recognized institutions and individual author. The article identified inadequate funding of Economics programme, inadequate Economics lecturers, shortage of infrastructural facilities in Economics, institutional corruption, unstable academic calendar, poor staff development and brain-drain. To solve these challenges, this article recommends: that the government should increase the funding of Economics programme, employ more lecturers in the Economics department, provide more infrastructural facilities in the Economics department, ensure stable academic calendar and fight all institutional corruption in the university system.

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