

Comparative Education in Nigerian Higher Institutions: Problems and way Forward

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Abstract:

Comparative education programme is one of the compulsory courses that must be offered and passed in the faculty of education before graduation. The Comparative education programme is also offered as a Masters' programme and PhD programme in many Universities across the World. The teaching and learning of Comparative education programme is facing many problems in the Nigerian higher institutions. This paper identified: inadequate funding, inadequate instructional materials, shortage of lecturers, inadequate infrastructural facilities, poor research, strike actions, brain-drain, corruption, over-population and poor curriculum development. To address this problems, the following were recommended: the government should increase the funding of Comparative education programmes, employ more qualified lecturers in Comparative education, provide adequate infrastructural facilities, adequate instructional materials, ensure periodic and effective curriculum development for Comparative education programme and Comparative education research and effective staff development for Comparative education lecturers in all higher institutions in Nigeria.

Key words: Comparative Education, Education, Implementation, Higher, Programme, Studies

1. Introduction

The national policy on Education (2013), defined higher education as the education given after secondary education in colleges of education, monotechnics, polytechnics, universities including those institutions offering correspondence courses. The goals of tertiary education include: Contribute to national development through high level relevant manpower training; Develop and inculcate proper values for the survival of the individual and the society; Develop the intellectual capability or individuals to understand and appreciate their local and external environment; Acquire both physical and intellectual skills, which will enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of the society. Promote and encourage scholarship and community service Forge and cement national and international unity; and Promote national and international understanding and interaction.

These stated goals shall be achieved through: teaching; research and development; Virile staff development programmes; Generation and dissemination of knowledge; A variety of modes of programmes including full-time, part-time, block-release, day-release, sandwich etc. For effective administration of higher institutions in Nigeria, the federal government established different agencies for supervision.

To achieve the aims and objectives of the higher education in Nigeria. The Federal government of Nigeria established some agencies for supervision and programme development in Nigerian higher institutions. Some of these agencies include:

National Commission for Colleges of Education: The National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) is a para statal of the Federal ministry of Education established by Decree 13 of

1989. The establishment of the Commission was a resultant effect of the utmost importance accorded to quality teacher education by the Federal Government of Nigeria. Since its inception, the Commission has continuously pursued the goals of quality assurance in teacher education. It has continuously reviewed and standardized the curriculum of colleges of education in the country through programme accreditation, which is carried out once in five years for all the federal colleges of education, state colleges of education and private colleges of education under the Commission (NEEDS 2014).

National Board for Technical Education: The National Board for Technical Education was established by Act No. 9 of 1977, the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) is a parastatal of the Federal Ministry of Education specifically created to handle all aspects of technical and vocational education falling outside University education. The Board supervises and regulates, through an accreditation process, the programmes offered by technical institutions at Secondary and post-Secondary school levels. It is also involved in funding of Polytechnics owned by the Government of Nigeria (NEEDS 2014).

National Universities Commission: The National Universities Commission (NUC) is a parastatal under the Federal Ministry of Education. The Commission was established in 1962 with the task of developing and managing University education in Nigeria. Its functions include: granting approval for all academic programmes in Nigerian Universities; granting approval for the establishment of all higher educational institutions offering degree programmes; and ensuring quality assurance, through regular accreditation, of all academic programmes in Universities. The Commission currently regulates the academic programmes of federal, state and private Universities in Nigeria. The Role of National Universities Commission (NUC) in system performance cannot be overlooked. The functions of National Universities Commission (NUC) include: advising the federal Government on the establishment and location of Universities, creating new facilities and post graduate units in the Universities; advising Government on the fundamental needs of the Universities; carrying out periodic plans on the general programme to be pursued by Universities staff; preparing periodic plans on the general programme to be pursued by the Universities; receiving and disbursing Federal grants to Federal Universities, establishing and maintaining the minimum academic standards; accrediting the degrees and other academic programme awarded by the universities (NEEDS, 2014; Lassa, 1992).

These agencies helps in programme development in all the higher institutions in the Country. For instance, the National Universities Commission (NUC) in (2007) came out with a documents containing all programmes that are offered in the Nigerian Universities. The BMAS documents were produced for the under listed academic disciplines: i) Administration; Management and Management Technology; ii) Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries and Home Economics; iii) Arts; iv) Basic Medical and Health Science v) Education; vi) Engineering and Technology; vii) Environmental Sciences; viii) Law; ix) Pharmaceutical Sciences x) Medicine and Dentistry; xi) Science; xii) Social Sciences; xii) Veterinary Medicine. Science programme in recent times in the Nigerian higher institutions is facing many challenges which ranges from poor supervision to poor administration.

Education programme is one of the programmes contained in the NUC documents to be offered in the Nigerian universities. To successfully offer these educational programmes, there are some courses designed as compulsory at first degree level and sometimes as elective at master and PhD level. Comparative education is among the programmes. Comparative education is one of the core educational courses that every students must offer and pass before graduating. Comparative education is also offered at masters and PhD levels in some Universities in Nigeria and across the World. The teaching and learning of Comparative education is facing many problems in the Nigerian

higher institutions. This paper will discuss the problems facing the teaching and learning of Comparative education programme in the Nigerian higher institutions.

2. Concept of Comparatives Education

Comparative Education according to Mohammed (2018) is a fully established field of study that examines education in one country (or group of countries) by using data and insights drawn from the practices and situation in another country or countries. Comparative education is a discipline that involves the analysis and comparison of educational systems, such as those in different countries. From the above definitions, the study of Comparative education allows the person involved to have a better understanding of the system of education outside his own country. Kandel (1957), viewed Comparative Education as the comparison of various philosophies of education based not only on theories but the actual practices which prevail. From this above definition, Kandel is of the opinion that comparative education goes beyond the comparison of education philosophies but also includes the comparison of the real education practices. Perhaps, from the definition, comparative Education can be regarded as being pragmatic.

The scope of Comparative Education include the following: History of Education, Philosophy of Education, Sociology of Education, Anthropology, Economics, Geography, Psychology, Statistics, Literature, Political geography, Political science and International relations. According to Noun (2011) the reasons for studying comparative education includes:

- a. To assist in the understanding of one's educational institutions as well as educational practices.
- b. To assist in the understanding of the factors that are responsible for various educational changes.
- c. To educate the students and teachers on the procedure through which educational changes occur.
- d. To contribute not only to the educational development of the society but also to the general development of the society.
- e. To serve as an academic discipline.
- f. To assist in solving one's educational problems
- g. To open one's eyes to the educational philosophies, theories and practices of other countries.
- h. To assist both the students and teachers of discipline in gathering reliable information concerning educational system.
- i. To assist in the Promotion of international relationship.
- j. To contribute to the formulation of a country's educational systems.

3. Challenges facing Teaching and Learning of Comparatives Education

There are many challenges facing the teaching and learning of Comparative education in the Nigerian higher institutions. This paper will focus on the following as problems: inadequate funding, inadequate instructional materials, shortage of lecturers, inadequate infrastructural facilities, poor research, strike actions, brain-drain, corruption, over-population and poor curriculum development.

3.1 Inadequate Funding

Inadequate funding is one of the major challenges facing the teaching and learning of comparative studies in the Nigerian higher institutions. The funds released for the administration of the problems in various higher institutions is not adequate. Many faculties and departments of education where comparatives studies is been offered cannot afford to purchase the required human and materials resources needed for the teaching and learning of comparatives studies. Ogunode (2020) observed

that inadequate funding is one of the major problems facing the administration of public universities in Nigeria. The budgetary allocation for the administration of public universities in Nigeria is not adequate to implement the programme of universities in Nigeria. The university system requires a lot of funds for effective administration to be able to realize its goals. The annual budgetary allocation for the administration of universities in Nigeria is grossly inadequate. The inability of the federal government to stick to the UNESCO 26% of national budget for education is affecting the management of Nigerian universities (Ogunode, 2020, Ogunode& Abubakar,2020). The poor funding of public universities in Nigeria is responsible for the poor quality of education and decay in infrastructural facilities. Ogunode (2020) submitted that many school administrators do not have access to adequate funds to enable them provide the human and materials resources needed for the implementation of various programme in their respective schools. The inability of the government to objectively implement the UNESCO 26% recommendation for the funding of education in Nigeria is contributing to the poor performance of the public universities in the country. The factors responsible for inadequate funding of public universities in Nigeria include lack of political will, corruption, increase in population, inflation, fall in national revenue and poor financial planning. The implications of underfunding of the public universities include; inadequate infrastructural facilities, shortage of academics staff, poor quality of education, brain-drain and strike action.

3.2 Inadequate Instructional Materials

Inadequate instructional materials are another major problems preventing effective teaching and learning of comparative studies in many Nigerian higher institutions. Current Books, journals, textbooks, new publication, national policies on education for different countries and literatures on comparatives studies are not available to both lecturers and students offering comparatives education in majority of higher institutions. The shortage of theses instructional materials is affecting effective teaching and learning of comparative education in many higher institutions in the country.

3.3 Shortage of Lecturers

Shortage of lecturers is a major challenge to the development of comparative education programme in the Nigerian higher institution. There is shortage of professors, Readers and lecturers that specialize in comparative education in the country. These inadequacies of professors of comparative education in majority of higher institutions in the country is affecting the quality of teaching comparative education. NEEDS (2014) report observed that as of November 2012, there were 37,504 academic staff in 74 public universities in Nigeria. Considering the number of staff vis-à-vis the student population, the report revealed an unmanageable lecturer-to-student ratio. For example, at the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN), the academic staff-to-student ratio was 1:363, at Lagos State University the ratio was 1:144, and at the University of Abuja the ratio was 1:122. Kano State University, which was 11 years old at the time of the needs assessment period, had one professor and 25 lecturers with PhD degrees, while Kebbi State University had two professors and five lecturers with doctorate degrees. These statistics revealed wide disparities between Nigerian universities and their counterparts in other parts of the world. For instance, the staff-to-student ratio in Harvard University is 1:4, Massachusetts Institute of Technology has 1:9 ratio and the University of Cambridge has 1:3. NEEDS, (2014) went further to observe that inadequate lecturers is a serious problem facing all the higher institutions in Nigeria. Many higher institutions do not have adequate lecturers to deploy for teaching in the various institutions. The shortage of lecturer is responsible for the poor quality of teaching and learning in most Nigerian higher institutions.

3.4 Inadequate Infrastructural Facilities

Inadequate infrastructural facilities is another problem facing the teaching and learning of comparative education in many higher institutions in the country. The infrastructural facilities

required for the implementation of teaching programme in many higher institutions is not adequate. Many faculties and departments of education where comparative education domicile do not have adequate lecture halls, libraries, light, ICT facilities, stable internet services, water and staff offices. Most education students sit on the window while many academic staff shared offices meant for one or two persons. Okoli, Ogbondah, &Ewor, (2016) lamented that University infrastructure and equipment are fast decaying in terms of maintenance. All the required resources for education production process are in short supply that poses hindrance to learning and research work. A good number of Nigerian universities are offering technological education programmes. The question is how many of these universities have basic infrastructure to run the programmes. For example, in universities offering computer course, you have students graduate without touching computer. The dearth of infrastructure in the universities is sickening and runs short of ideal academic environment. Today, students are learning in dilapidated buildings. Salisu (2001) in her study of influence of school physical resources on students' academic performance concludes that, there is significant difference in the academic performance of students in institutions with adequate facilities and those with inadequate facilities. The lack of good buildings or funds to rehabilitate collapsed structures poses threat to the system performance and its sustainability hence education to some extent is falling due to low standard.

3.5 Poor Research

Research development is very important in the educational institutions especially in programme like the Comparative education. Research leads to new knowledge and innovation in teaching and learning. Paul (2015) submitted that the conduct of research is one of the basic functions of tertiary institutions, which comprised Universities, Polytechnics, Monotechnics and Colleges of Education. The academic staffs of these institutions are compulsorily required to carry out research activities as their promotions are primarily based on their research outputs. Apart from the academic staff being promoted through research publications, research activities enhance their credibility, status, and also add value both to their immediate community and the larger global community. Ogunode, Jegede, Adah, Adu, Ajape (2021) submitted that the administration of research programme in Nigerian public universities faces many problems and these problems includes; inadequate information communication and technologies facilities among other problems. Ogunode, Babayo, Jegede, & Musa, (2021) observed that the Nigerian higher institutions are facing many challenges to fully integrate the ICT into the administration and management of the universities in the country. Many academic and non-academic staff in Nigerian universities has not been regularly using ICT to carry out their assignment due to many challenges. Based on this submission, the presentation looks at the Challenges and prospects of integrating the use of ICT in Educational Research of Educational Administration and Planning programme in Nigerian universities. Okoli, Ogbondah, &Ewor, (2016) submits that it is important to make research the hub of university education considering the problems Nigerian universities now face. Research in the higher institutions contributes to the acquisition, development and inculcation of the proper value orientation for the survival of the individual and society. It is unfortunate that many programmes in the Nigerian higher institutions are not conducting researches constantly to see towards the development of the programmes due to poor funding of researches in many universities. Okoli, Ogbondah, &Ewor, (2016) observed that research programme in Nigerian universities is saddled with poor attitude of governments towards research and inadequate funding of research programmes.

3.6 Strike Actions

Another problem facing the teaching and learning of comparative education in Nigeria higher institutions is the issues of incessant strike action by different unions in higher institutions. Labour unrests by different unions in the Nigeria 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 stable academic calendar for a year without strike by one union or the other. 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 fell. Even the previous knowledge acquired is even forgotten by some students. This mostly turns some students into certificates seekers than knowledge seekers. The strike actions prolong the academic programme of higher institutions and make it unstable for effective teaching and research programme

3.7 Brain-drain

Brain-drain is another major challenges facing the teaching and learning of comparative education in Nigerian higher institutions. Many professors, Readers and Senior lecturers of comparative education are among the professionals leaving the Nigerian higher institutions due to poor motivation and uncondusive working environment. Smah (2007) reports Professor Joseph Stiglitz, 2001 Nobel Prize winner in Economics, who, while delivering a lecture at the first Dr. Pius Okadigbo memorial lecture series in Enugu said that there is a particular university in the U.S. that has over 25 Nigerian professors. He submitted that the above pointer is instructive for any serious-minded government that wants to address the issue of brain-drain. Bangura (1994) found out that between 1988 and 1990, over 1000 lecturers left the Federal University system in Nigeria. It must be emphasized that while the best brains are leaving the university system, the broad aim of producing high level manpower from the system for national development cannot be achieved.

3.8 Corruption

Corruption is another problem preventing effective teaching and learning of comparative education in Nigerian higher institutions. Funds released for the administration and development of the programme ended up been mismanaged and misappropriated by school administrators within and outside. Funds also released for infrastructural development and for facility expansions in some universities have been diverted into private Banks. Dr. Jamila Shuara in Tiamiyu (2012), observed that there is a lot of mismanagement of fund by educational boards and the money meant for higher education are mismanaged as such that Nigerian higher education institutions have joined other public sector institutions in having a sizeable number of uncompleted or abandoned projects. Chikowore in Mapolisa, Ncube, Tshabalala and Khosa (2014), submitted that the number of cases of embezzlement and mismanagement of funds by higher education leaderships in Nigerian are quite frightening. The Budget and Monitoring Committee of the Academic Staff Union of Universities, Obafemi Awolowo University branch has accused the management of the institution of expending 3.5 billion Naira meant for hostel renovation and construction of new lecture theaters in breach of due process and transparency. The funds were part of the 100 billion Naira unrestricted funds of the federal government in 2013 for all universities in Nigeria. The fund was in response to the long drawn out cry and agitation of ASUU against the government. The implementation and monitoring committee of the federal government spelt out guidelines for accessing the intervention funds by Nigerian public universities, but the management of Obafemi Awolowo University failed to abide by the guidelines (The Budget and Monitoring Committee, 2016).

3.9 Over-population of students

Faculties of education are among the largest faculties in the Nigerian universities and comparative education is a compulsory programme at the first degree implying that every education students must

offer and pass the course. This factor makes the programme to attract more students with less lecturers and infrastructural facilities. The classes of comparative education in majorities of universities are always overcrowded. This problem have led to high students-teachers ratio which is not good for the development of higher education. In respect of high academic staff-students ratio, NEEDS (2014) observed that in the National Open University, the academic staff-to-student ratio was 1:363. At Lagos State University, the ratio was 1:144, and at the University of Abuja the ratio was 1:122. This lecturer- to-student ratio that is contrary to the requirement of BMAS (2014) cannot support the delivery of quality education in the university system.

3.10 Poor Curriculum Development

Poor curriculum development of Comparative education programmes is another problem facing the administration of Comparative education programmes. Mansur (2017) defines curriculum as the totality of lessons and academic content taught in a school or in a specific course. The curriculum for the Comparative education must produce products who have acquired a mixture of skills which include interpersonal communication, intellectual and other skills for public education analysis. Future Comparative education analyst must also possess knowledge in international education practices, international education laws, national policies, philosophy and education of education of different countries and education analysis apart from the general knowledge in educational administration, planning and supervision. Despite this noble requirement, the curriculum operational in Nigeria is adjudged not to be flexible enough to incorporate the new developments in comparatives education standards, guidelines, theories and information technology and this has affected the quality of graduates from the various higher institutions of learning (Research).

4. Way Forward

To solve these problems, the article recommends that the government should increase the funding of Comparative education programmes, employ more qualified lecturers in Comparative education, provide adequate infrastructural facilities, adequate instructional materials, ensure periodic and effective curriculum development for Comparative education programme and Comparative education research and effective staff development for Comparative education lecturers in all higher institutions in Nigeria.

- a) The government should increase the funding of the higher institutions and schools administrators should be directed to increase the funding of Comparative education programme in all the higher institutions in the country.
- b) The government should direct all schools administrators to employ more qualified Comparative education lecturers in all public universities.
- c) The government should provide more infrastructural facilities in all faculties and departments of Education where Comparative education programmes is taught. Infrastructural facilities like more administrative offices, lecture halls, accounting library, ICT facilities, stable electricity, internet services and whiteboards.
- d) The government should increase the research funding given to public higher institutions and priority should be given to Comparative education programmes. The government should provide adequate training funds for the public higher institutions to allow more lecturers to go for training.
- e) The professional bodies in the Comparative education profession in Nigeria should come up with a sound and pragmatic curriculum that is relevant to the current societal needs.

f) The school administrators and heads of department should provide Comparative education lecturers with more instructional materials for the teaching and learning of Comparative education programmes.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, comparative education programmes are part of the programmes Nigerian higher institutions offer. The objective of the programme is to produce manpower for educational planning. The article identifies the challenges of comparative education to include inadequate funding, shortage of lecturers in comparative education, inadequate instructional materials, inadequate infrastructural facilities, poor curriculum development, ineffective staff development programme and poor research development in comparative education. To solve these problems, the article, among other things, recommends that the government should increase the funding of comparative education programme; employ more qualified lecturers; provide adequate infrastructural facilities, and adequate instructional materials; ensure effective curriculum development and research programme; and promote effective staff development for comparative education lecturers in the higher institutions.

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