

Administration of Public Tertiary Institutions in Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria: Problems and Solutions

Ogunode Niyi Jacob

Ogunodejacob@gmail.com

Ahaotu, Godwin Ndubuisi

godwinahaotu@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Public tertiary institutions in Nigeria are faced with many challenges. Public tertiary institutions in Federal Capital Territory (FCT) are more affected with administrative challenges. This paper examines the problems of administration of public tertiary institutions in Federal Capital Territory. Secondary data was sourced from print and online materials to embellish the literature. The article identified inadequate funding, inadequate academic staff, inadequate infrastructural facilities, corruption, brain-drain and weak school administrators as the problems facing the administration of public tertiary institutions in FCT. Suggestions such as; increase in funding of public primary schools, employment of professional teachers, provision of adequate infrastructural facilities and instructional materials, eradicating all forms of corruption, adequate data generation and appointment of competent school administrators in public tertiary institutions in FCT were put forward to the government and the concerned stakeholders as proactive measures for these problems identified.

KEYWORDS: *Administration, Problems, Public, Tertiary institutions.*

1.0 Introduction

The Federal Capital Territory Abuja is the capital of Nigeria, located in the North Central part of the country. The Federal Capital Territory is under the administration of Federal Capital Territory Administration (FCTA). Federal Capital Development Authority is in charge of the construction and infrastructural development of Abuja city. The Federal Capital Territory is made up of six area councils which are: Abaji, Abuja Municipal, Bwari, Gwagwalada, Kuje and Kwali area councils.

Education in Federal Capital Territory is under the administration of the Federal Capital Territory Education Secretariat. Federal Capital Territory Abuja is home to many educational institutions both public and private schools. The educational system in Federal Capital Territory follows the guidelines as stipulated in the National Policy of education (2013). Education in FCT consists of three forms: Basic Education (nine years), Secondary Education (three years) and higher education which includes universities, Colleges of education, Poly-technique education, vocational education (four, six years depending on the course of study). Other forms of education in Federal Capital Territory include adult education, special education and mass education. According to Nigeria's latest National Policy on Education (2013), the Basic Education will last for nine years of formal and compulsory education, six years for primary school and three years for junior secondary school while Senior Secondary Education lasts for three years.

The tertiary institutions in Federal Capital Territory, Abuja include the public tertiary institutions and the private tertiary institutions. The public tertiary institutions include the University of Abuja,

College of Education, Zube and the school of health.

For ensure effective administration of tertiary institutions in Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory Administration established the Department of higher education and the department is the second operational outfit at the Secretariat and performs the following functions: i. Ensuring that policies articulated by regulatory educational bodies are implemented in line with best practices in the world; ii. Facilitates the accreditation (by relevant bodies) of higher educational institutions and their programmes, in the FCT. iii. Promotes and encourage collaboration with relevant institutions on funding, technical assistance and other academic assistance. iv. Promotes equitable access to higher education in FCT. v. Initiate, coordinate and advise on the desirability of establishing of institutions of higher learning in the FCT. vi. Coordinate the establishment of any new public tertiary institutions and to regulate the activities of private institutions vii. Carry out any other related functions that will ensure good management and best practices in all tertiary institutions in the FCT. viii. The department consists of 4 professional and one service divisions.

2.0 Concept of Public Tertiary Institutions

Higher or tertiary education in Nigeria is defined by the National policy on education as the education given after Post Basic Education in institutions such as Universities and Inter-University Centres such as the Nigeria French Language Village, Nigeria Arabic Language Village, National Institute of Nigerian Languages, institutions such as Innovation Enterprise Institutions (IEIs), and Colleges of Education, Monotechnics, Polytechnics, and other specialized institutions such as Colleges of Agriculture, Schools of Health and Technology and the National Teachers' Institutes (NTI) (NPE,2013). The goals of Tertiary Education is to: Contribute to national development through high level manpower training; provide accessible and affordable quality learning opportunities in formal and informal education in response to the needs and interests of all Nigerians; provide high quality career counseling and lifelong learning programmes that prepare students with the knowledge and skills for self-reliance and the world of work; reduce skill shortages through the production of skilled manpower relevant to the needs of the labour market; promote and encourage scholarship, entrepreneurship and community service; forge and cement national unity; and promote national and international understanding and interaction (NPE,2013).

Tertiary Educational institutions shall pursue these goals through: Quality student intake; quality teaching and learning; research and development; high standards in the quality of facilities, services and resources; staff welfare and development programmes; provision of a more practical based curriculum relevant to the needs of the labour market; generation and dissemination of knowledge, skills and competencies that contribute to national and local economic goals which enable students to succeed in a knowledge-based economy; a variety of flexible learning modes including full-time, part time, block release, day-release, and sandwich programmes; access to training funds such as those provided by the Industrial Training Fund (ITF), Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund); Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) that is well structured, coordinated and supervised; maintenance of minimum educational standards through appropriate regulatory agencies; an all-inclusive credible admissions policy for national unity; supporting affordable, equitable access to tertiary education through scholarships and students' loans; inter-institutional co-operation and linkages; and dedicated services to the community through extra-mural and extension services (NPE,2013).

3.0 Problems Facing the Administration of Public Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria

In Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, there are many administrative problems facing the public tertiary institutions in the territory. Inadequate funding, inadequate academic staff, inadequate infrastructural

facilities, corruption, brain-drain and increased in student population will be used as the problems facing the administration of public tertiary institutions in FCT, Nigeria.

3.1 Inadequate Funding

Inadequate funding is a very big problem facing the administration of public tertiary institutions in Federal capital Territory. The budgetary allocation released for the internal administration of the various higher institutions in the territory is inadequate to implement the programmes of the respective institutions located in the territory. The public tertiary institutions in FCT are not the only public institutions facing the problem of inadequate funding. According to the Ogunode (2020) who cited Udida, Basse, Udofia, & Egbona (2009) observes that the major issue in educational development is shortage of funds. One of the most serious problems threatening the survival of the educational systems is that of dwindling level of public funding in the face of rising demands and hence rising cost of higher education. This shortage of funds affects job performance and the growth of the institution. Higher educational institutions cannot perform optimally without funding. This situation calls for increased fund initiative from both the government and educational stakeholders so as to sustain the tempo and growth of education industry. The inability of the Nigerian government to objectively accept and implement the 26% funding formula for education recommended by the UNESCO impact negatively on the performance and sustainability of higher education. Thus, it has become obvious that Nigeria's neglect of the funding formula is detrimental to higher educational institution performance and development aspiration as quality performance is the veritable instrument for sustenance of education system. This neglect has further precipitated crises in the entire higher educational systems as effective teaching, research and service are no longer taking place seriously. Okani, Ogunode, & Ajape (2021) submitted that the university education is one of the most expensive forms of educational system in the World. The university education is very complex and capital intensive. The public universities in Nigeria are under-funded, and this is affecting the development of the system. They went further and identified; lack of political will to implement UNESCO 26% for education, poor internally generated revenue, corruption and insecurity problems as causes of shortage of funds in the public universities. The effects of shortage funds in the administration of universities according to Okani, Ogunode, & Ajape (2021) includes; inadequate infrastructural facilities, inadequate manpower, poor quality of education, strike actions and brain-drain.

3.2 Inadequate Academic Staff

Inadequate academic staff is another major problem facing the public tertiary institutions in federal capital territory, Abuja. Majorities of the public tertiary institutions do not have adequate academic staff Ogunode & Adamu (2021) sees academic staff as teaching staff in the higher institutions. Academic staff are the implementer of the school curriculum and lecture presenter. Academic staff are the teachers and deliver of instruction in the higher institutions. Academic staff are the knowledge and character builder imparter in the higher institution. The academic staff are the engine room of the higher institutions. They are the pillar and foundation of the higher institutions. The academic staff determines the quality of the higher institutions as well as proper solutions to Nation Economic and social problems e.g. Boko haram and food security, COVID 19 and the economy. The functions of the academic staff include to lecture, to prepare the lecture note, to prepare the lesson note, source for instruction materials, gives assignment to students, to assess the students through continuous assessment and examination, set exams questions, marks the answer sheet, supervise students research work especially projects, theses and dissertation and prepares the students grade points. The academic staff conducts different levels of research, presents their findings and contribute to the development of knowledge in the higher institutions. The main duties and responsibilities of academic staff in the higher institutions include: a. To teach at undergraduate and

graduate level in areas allocated by the Head of Department and reviewed from time to time by the Head of Department; b. To carry out research and produce publications, or other research outputs, in line with personal objectives agreed in the Staff review process; c. To obtain research funding support; d. To engage with the broader scholarly and professional communities; e. To supervise or assist with supervision of undergraduate, taught graduate (Masters) or research graduate (MPhil/PhD) students; f. To contribute to the development, planning and implementation of a high quality curriculum. g. To assist in the development of learning materials, preparing schemes of work and maintaining records to monitor student progress, achievement and attendance (Ogunode, Jegede & Abubakar, 2020). The problem of shortage of academic staff in the public higher institutions in FCT have led to high lecturer students' ratio. Ogunode & Adamu (2021) cited NEEDS (2014) report who observed that 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 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). Ogunode & Adamu (2021) identified; inadequate funding, lack of strategic manpower planning, braindrain, poor motivation, unconducive working environment and corruption as the reasons for shortage of academic staff in the Nigerian higher institutions. Ogunode & Adamu (2021) also identified; low productivities, poor quality of teaching, overcrowdings, poor quality of education as the effects of shortage of academic staff in the Nigerian public higher institutions. In order to solve this problem identified.

3.3 Inadequate Infrastructural Facilities

Inadequate infrastructural facilities is a major challenge facing the administration of public tertiary institutions in Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. Many tertiary institutions in the in Federal Capital Territory, Abuja do not have adequate infrastructural facilities. Ogunode& Nathan (2021) defined school infrastructural facilities as social capital within the school environment. They include school buildings/complexes such as classrooms, tables, exam hall, chairs, auditoria, desks, staff offices, seminar/conference/board rooms, laboratories, workshops, studios, farms, gymnasia, central libraries, specialized/professional libraries, faculty libraries, departmental libraries, etc., Institute/centers' specialized facilities e.g. ICT infrastructure, special laboratories, conference facilities, etc., and Boards e.g. interactive, magnetic, screen and chalk, etc., ICT that is computer laboratories and services, network connectivity, multi-media system, public address system, slide, and video projectors, and Ergonomics furnishing in laboratories, libraries, and lecture rooms/ theaters, moot courts, and studios, etc. Ogunode& Nathan (2021) also listed the importance of infrastructural facilities in educational institutions include: It aids effective delivery of administrative functions in schools; It makes the delivery of services fast and reliable; It enables teachers to deliver lessons fast; Infrastructural facilities provide a conducive working environment for both teachers and students; Infrastructural facilities enable learners to learn at ease and learn well; and Infrastructural facilities enable the teachers to teach well, prepare their lessons, and deliver them online (ICT). Many students in FCT higher institutions due to inadequate infrastructural facilities receives lectures outside while lecturers shares offices in the various institutions. The problem of inadequate infrastructural facilities is a general problem facing higher institutions in Nigeria. Ishaya & Ogunode, (2021) identified inadequate funding, corruption, increase in population, poor infrastructural planning, poor maintenance culture and uncompleted projects as the causes of shortage of inadequate infrastructural

facilities in Nigerian public universities. Poor academic performance of students, poor performance of academic staff and non-academic staff and poor quality of education as the effects of inadequate infrastructural facilities in Nigerian public universities (Ishaya & Ogunode, 2021).

3.4 Corruption

Corruption is another challenge facing the internal administration of public tertiary institutions in Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. The funds released for internal administration of public higher institutions across the country is been mismanaged and misappropriated. Ishaya & Ogunode, (2021) opined that corruption in the higher institutions especially in the public universities is another reason for the shortage of infrastructural facilities in majorities of the Nigerian public universities. The funds released for the provision of all forms of infrastructural facilities in the public universities are mismanaged, misappropriated and looted by some school administrators and managers. Ishaya & Ogunode, (2021) and Ebehikhalu and Dawam, (2016) observed that many of the stakeholders in the university system in Nigeria are also responsible for the rot in the university system. ASUU has struggled to force the government to properly fund the universities, but these funds are poorly managed, embezzled and stolen. This high level of corruption is a practice common among the universities' administrators. The corrupt practices are similar to what obtains in the civil service and in the political world. The symptoms of these corrupt practices are manifested in the dilapidated, very substandard and poorly delivered buildings and other infrastructure. Majority of the universities' administrators have seen their positions as opportunity to amass wealth, caring more on how to enhance their financial wherewithal than protecting the integrity of the university system. Ahmodu and Sofoluwe, (2018) submitted that University administrators have been accused of financial scandals. From vice chancellors to bursars, various officials of major Nigerian universities have been accused of corruption with some of them already being prosecuted. The recent prosecuted Universities are; Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta (FUNAAB), Federal University of Technology Akure (FUTA), University of Calabar (UNICAL), Obafemi Awolowo University Ile-Ife (OAU) and University of Ibadan. The Vice Chancellors and Bursars have been accused of mismanaging funds which were part of the N100 billion released by the Federal Government in 2013 to universities in response to agitations by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) for upgrade of facilities at the tertiary institutions in Nigeria (Telegraph News Paper, 2016).

3.5 Brain-drain

Brain-drain problem is another problem facing the internal administration of public tertiary institutions in Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. Ogunode & Adamu (2021) defines Brain drain refers to massive movement of professional (academician) from developing countries to developed countries for a better employment opportunities and security. Hundreds of academician are leaving the Nigerian public higher institutions especially the universities leaving to the institutions starve of lecturers. Ogunode & Adamu (2021) observed that brain-drain problem is another major factor responsible for the challenge of inadequate academic staff in the Nigerian public higher institutions. The mass movement of lecturers to other sector of the economic like the banking sector and oil sector is responsible for the shortage of academic staff in the Nigerian public higher institutions. Ogunode (2020) quoted Tribune online paper that reports that the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) has warned the Federal Government against encouraging brain drain with a lingering strike and nonchalant attitude towards the yearnings of ASUU. Prof. Biodun Ogunyemi (ASUU President) said Ethiopia has already recruited 200 professors from Nigeria while South Africa, Ghana, Egypt, etc have a sizeable number of Nigerian professors. In 2006, Ethiopia engaged the services of 600 professors, according to Olusegun Akinsanya, the former Nigeria's Ambassador to Ethiopia. He added that over 3,000 Nigerians were living in Ethiopia and that most of them were professionals who were doing very well in their chosen career. A few months ago, Ethiopia came to

recruit 200 professors from Nigeria. "I don't want to talk of South Africa. Go to Ghana, Egypt, you will see them there. We treat our scholars with discontent. Each time they step out, they are highly valued and highly-priced (Tribuneonline, 2020). Ogunode & Ishaya (2021) identified the causes of brain-drain in the Nigerian higher institutions to include but not limited to; poor salary, unconducive working environment, poor staff development, inadequate infrastructural facilities, strike actions, insecurity and inadequate funding while the identified effects of brain-drain on the higher institutions administration to includes; poor quality education, high student-teacher ratio, shortages of academic staff, poor research development and poor programme development. Also, Ogunode & Ishaya (2021) observed that in order to ensure higher institutions sustainability in Nigeria hereby recommended among others the following: government should increase the motivation of academic staff, implement all reached agreement with trade union groups or civil society organizations in the country, ensure adequate life and job security in all higher institutions and provide more infrastructural facilities.

3.6 Increase in Population

Increased in the students population is a very serious challenge facing the internal administration of public tertiary institutions in Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. Many public tertiary institutions in FCT admitted students above their carrying capacity and this is causing problem on the existing human and materials resources. Ishaya & Ogunode, (2021) observed that increase in the population of students admitted into the various public universities in Nigeria yearly is also responsible for the inadequate infrastructural facilities. The numbers of students admitted into the public universities are more than the carrying capacity of the universities. Ishaya & Ogunode, (2021) and Moja (2000) submitted that Demand for greater access to higher education continues unabated due to its social benefit, especially in a society in which social mobility depends largely on the level of education acquired. Nigerian higher education institutions operate at a higher capacity than they were originally established for, yet the demand for access continues to rise. Ishaya & Ogunode, (2021) cited Noun (2009) who opined that the increase in demand for tertiary education especially university education resulted in continuous increase in enrolment. Jaiyeoba and Atanda (2009) observed that the demand for university education has gone far beyond the supply. In 1960, there were 1,399 students in Nigeria's two universities (Ibadan and Nsukka). In 1961, the enrolment increased to 2,406 (Adesina, 1977) to 1.7 million students in 2020 across the universities in the Country. Ishaya & Ogunode, (2021) cited Eneh, Ngozi, (2009) who lamented that student enrolment grows with the national population, more staff are not recruited to match the rate of growth of the student enrolment. This leads to an unmanageable student-teacher ratio. At the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, for example, the Faculty of Law once recorded a 104:1 student-teacher ratio, as against the 29:1 student-teacher ratio recommended for the 2002/2003 session. Consequently, the quality of education or learning and teaching dwindles because the increase in student enrolment does not receive a corresponding increase in material and staff inputs, but rather battles with decaying infrastructure and dwindling inputs.

4.0 Way Forward

To solve the problem identified in this paper, the following were recommended: the federal and Federal Capital Territory Administration should increase the funding of public tertiary institutions, employ more academic staff, provide adequate infrastructural facilities, fight all forms of corruption in the internal administration of public tertiary institutions, increase the salaries of the academic staff and facilities expansion in all the tertiary institutions in the territory.

1. The government should increase the funding of public tertiary institutions in Federal Capital Territory. This will help in the provision of both human and materials resources in the various higher institutions in the territory.
2. The Federal and Federal capital territory administration should direct public higher institutions in the territory to employ more academic and non-academic staff to improve the quality of education in the Territory.
3. The Federal and Federal capital territory administration should intensify efforts in providing more physical facilities. Corporate bodies, philanthropists and alumni associations should assist in the provision of these facilities to aid effective teaching learning activities.
4. Institutional corruption in the public tertiary institutions is one of the major factor responsible for the poor quality of education in Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. The government should use all her anticorruption institutions in the country to fight corruption in the higher institutions across the country.
5. The government should increase the salaries of lecturers and provide conducive working environment for them to prevent them from moving out to other countries to seek a better job.
6. There is need for a serious expansion of physical facilities and equipment to meet the increasing student population in the various higher institutions across the territory.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the public tertiary institutions in Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, were established to produce manpower for the social, economic and technological development of the territory and across the country. The realization of this objective depends on effective administration of the public tertiary institutions in the territory. It is unfortunate that the administration of public tertiary institutions in Federal capital Territory, Abuja is faced with many administrative problems. This paper identified inadequate funding, inadequate academic staff, inadequate infrastructural facilities, corruption, brain-drain and increased in student population as the problems facing the administration of public tertiary institutions in FCT, Nigeria. To solve the problem identified in this paper, the following were recommended: the federal and Federal Capital Territory Administration should increase the funding of public tertiary institutions, employ more academic staff, provide adequate infrastructural facilities, fight all forms of corruption in the internal administration of public tertiary institutions, increase the salaries of the academic staff and facilities expansion in all the tertiary institutions in the territory.

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