

Article

The sustainability of university education toward national development: The Nigerian perspective

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Abstract: In regard to national development (ND), this review article (which is basically a perspective approach) presents retroactive and forward-looking perspectives on university education in Nigeria. In the past, particularly during the 1970s, the Nigerian university (NU) sector was among the most outstanding in Africa as well as globally. The best institutions drew students from around Africa, who flocked to Nigeria to study. The NU structure evidently contained four essential components for an international and effective university system, viz., world-class instructors, world-class students, a conducive learning environment, and global competitiveness. The NU structure, nevertheless, has undergone some neglect over the past thirty years and lost its distinctive identity, which raises questions about its function and applicability at the current stage of ND. Hence, some retrospective and forward-looking observations on university education in Nigeria in connection to ND are conveyed in this perspective article uses basically published articles and other relevant literature, as well as other sources and data from available literature. Hitherto, there is an urgent need for reinforcement of the university system in order to give it the desired and comparable international quality and functionality needed to meet the demands of current issues and the near future. However, this article conveys an intense belief and conviction that the NU system is still important for both the political and socioeconomic development (growth) of the nation. The article concludes by recommending the way forward in this regard.

Keywords: education; faculty; national development; student; universities

1. Introduction

The demands of quality, equality, and funds are persistent sources of strife for higher education institutions across the world (Ndunagu et al., 2023). Both supply-side factors—primarily the belief that higher education is important for the knowledge economy—and demand-side factors—namely the growing proportion of secondary school graduates who view university degrees as the primary vehicle for economic and social mobility—drive strong pressures for an equitable expansion of enrolments. Since massification means both an increase in the number of students overall as well as an increase in the variety of new students, including in terms of academic preparation for university, the universities are struggling to retain quality in the face

of such swift expansion. The problem is made much more complex by restrictions on public funding and the unpredictability of alternative private sources (Schendel and McCowan, 2016).

The importance of university education and other educational institutions for the development and growth of a country continues to garner attention and interest (Nnadozie et al., 2023; Asanga et al., 2023; Emeka et al., 2023; Ako and James, 2018; Boyi, 2014). This is due to the fact that universities have been and continue to be important and potent forces behind global innovation, socioeconomic progress, and cultural and political advancement. Nigeria has seen an increase in the number of universities, which are anticipated to aid in the socio-economic, cultural, and political growth of the nation (Nnadozie et al., 2023; Nneji et al., 2022; Uzoma, 2018; Eduwen and Osagie-Obazee, 2016). However, there have been significant doubts about the function and applicability of Nigerian universities (NU) and other tertiary/higher education institutions to the advancement of the country due to the historical development of the NU education, past successes and performances, and recent tendencies and experiences (Nnadozie et al., 2023; Olusegun et al., 2023; Odinakachi et al., 2023; Ogbonnaya, 2020; Bamiro, 2012; Otonko, 2012). Hence, some retrospective and forward-looking observations on university education in Nigeria in connection to national development (ND) are conveyed in this perspective article wherein published articles and other relevant literature, as well as other sources and data from available literature were basically used. Hitherto, there is an urgent need for reinforcement of the university system in order to give it the desired and comparable international quality and functionality needed to meet the demands of current issues and the near future. However, this article conveys an intense belief and conviction that the NU system is still important for both the political and socioeconomic development (growth) of the nation. The article concludes by recommending the way forward in this regard.

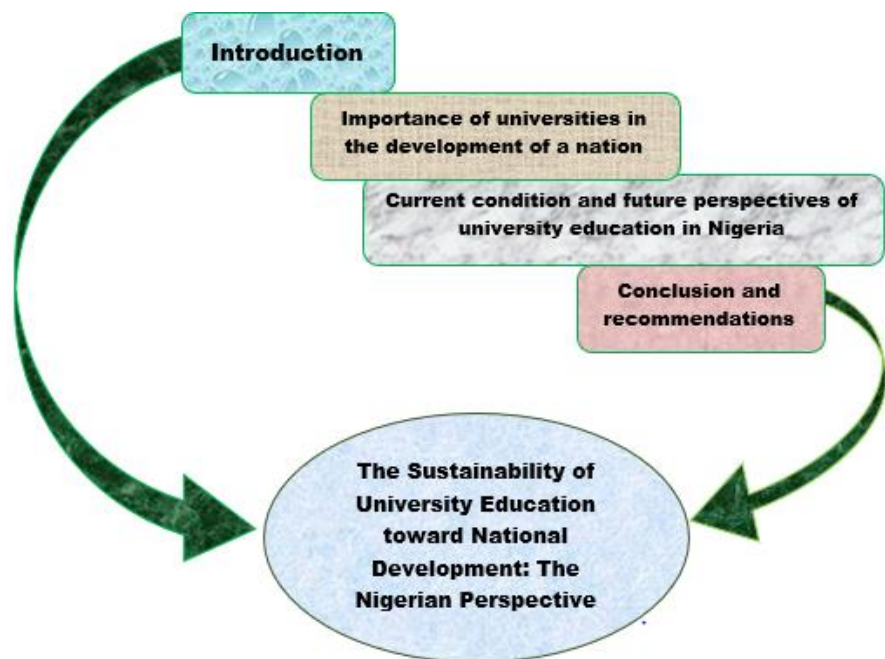


Figure 1. Diagrammatic representation of the sections of the perspective article.

There will be four sections in this perspective review article (which is basically a perspective approach), as illustrated in **Figure 1**. The introduction in the form of a brief background comes first (Section 1), followed by Section 2, which emphasizes the importance of universities in ND. The current condition and future perspectives of university education in Nigeria are covered in Section 3, while Section 4 concludes the article by recommending the way forward for the NU system.

2. Importance of universities in the development of a nation

2.1. University's involvement in the development of a nation

The first university in the Middle Ages (medieval period) was founded in Salerno, Italy, in the ninth century. This was swiftly followed by the University of Paris in the latter half of the twelfth century, and then Oxford and Cambridge on the continent of Europe. Initially, universities began as clubs or guilds for mastering certain skills and then evolved into establishments for the development and transfer of knowledge. Universities' importance grows as knowledge gradually supplants other resources as the primary engine of economic progress and education steadily establishes itself as the cornerstone of personal wealth and social mobility (Nnadozie et al., 2023; Ako and James, 2018). As a result, universities gained widespread recognition and were associated with research, information collaboration, and technological advancement.

Universities currently play a key role in the service of society on a local, national, regional, and international level as they work to fulfil their objectives of knowledge development, distribution, advancement, and application (Nnadozie et al., 2023; Bawa, 2016). For the correct and adequate development of human capital, the fundamental transformation of an economy, technical innovation, the creation of democratic nationality, cohesiveness in society, building a nation, and preservation of the environment, universities are turned to. Indeed, there is mounting evidence that a university education is essential to a nation's efforts to boost social capital, promote advancement in society, and sustain social cohesion. It also appears to be a significant factor in determining economic growth and development due to its roles in empowering local constituencies, creating institutions, and fostering favourable regulatory contexts and governance structures (Nnadozie et al., 2023).

From the aforementioned and reiterating the primary roles of universities in the development procedures at any stage as reported by Nnadozie et al. (2023) include:

- a) Acting as repository of knowledge and power sources.
- b) Preparing and empowering graduates so they are able to find feasible employment.
- c) Offering promptly and sound critique in domains such as public policy and socioeconomic existence.
- d) Acting as significant and dominant bodies in civil society as well as the state.
- e) Producing graduates that foster consistent and forbearing societies.

According to Otonko (2012), the advantages of an effective and efficient system of universities include the following:

- a) Promote the transformation of communities into knowledge-based societies by providing not just qualified employees but experts who can greatly contribute to ND.

- b) Accelerate the industrializing process of the economic system by providing manpower with suitable expert, technical, and administrative skills.
- c) Foster positive attitudes and engender behavioural modifications that are essential for the societal integration of the individuals, consequently ensuing to the modernization.
- d) Aid in the development, absorption, propagation, and implementation of knowledge via teaching and focused research.
- e) Support globalization while also assisting in the development of an effective nation-state;
- f) Enable people to live more mentally fulfilling lives, providing the larger society with both socioeconomic and political advantages.

The study at the empirical level by Egorov et al. (2017) showed that universities are legitimate economic factors that contribute favourably to the expansion of Russia's gross regional product (GRP). They came to the conclusion that the growth of regional institutions of higher learning would be beneficial for the expansion of the local economy. Eight different factors contribute to higher education institution's effects on GRP, according to Goldstein et al. (1995), including knowledge generation, human capital creation, know-how transfer, technical innovation, capital investment, regional leadership, environmental impact, and the building of knowledge infrastructure.

2.2. The development of a nation and Nigerian universities' education

The Elliot Commission of 1943, which resulted in the founding of the University College Ibadan (UCI) in 1948, is credited with bringing higher education to Nigeria. The University of California in Irvine was a member institution. During the late 1950s, it became clear that Nigeria would require more universities to accommodate the country's large population of secondary school leavers. The "Ashby Commission (AC) which was the Commission on Post-School Certificate and Higher Education." finished its thorough investigation of the situation with regard to education in Nigeria in April 1959. The AC made a number of suggestions, one of which was to build new institutions (Nnadozie et al., 2023).

The first independent and complete university in Nigeria (University of Nigeria, Nsukka; UNN), was later founded in October 1960, immediately after Nigeria's independence. Many other universities were thereafter established. In 1962, Ahmadu Bello University was founded. The University of Ife, Ife-Ife (now known as Obafemi Awolowo University) and the University of Lagos, Lagos, were both founded in Nigeria in the same year. The term "first-generation universities" refers to all five of these institutions. In 1975, seven additional institutions were established in response to suggestions from Nigeria's Third Development Plan. Calabar, Ilorin, Jos, Kano, Maiduguri, Port Harcourt, and Sokoto universities are among them (Nnadozie et al., 2023).

The governments of the states began establishing university systems in 1979. The regulation that prevented non-federal and state organizations from founding universities was repealed in 1999, opening the door for the development of privately held universities. Babcock, Igbinedion, and Madonna Universities were the first privately owned universities to be granted licenses in 1999. It can therefore be seen

that the NU is basically composed of two contexts: the public and private systems of universities. The public university systems are those owned by the government, which comprises federal and state universities, while the private are those owned by non-governmental organizations and individuals.

As of the end of 2022, based on data obtainable on the internet site of the National Universities Commission (NUC), which is responsible for the licensing and accreditation policies of universities in Nigeria, there were 170 universities, including 111 private universities, 59 state-owned universities, and 49 federal universities (Nnadozie et al., 2023). However, the NUC still has a lot to do if Nigerian universities are to meet international standards. Suggestively, the management of the NU system (NUC to be specific) needs to have cross-reference data that could possibly be analysed from labour surveys, such as how many people in Nigeria want to be university professors or teachers in general, as well as a database that can assist in distinguishing the role of the teacher who not only teaches but also the teacher who does administrative duties and who is a teacher-researcher. In this sense, there would be a first source of information on the perception of choosing a university teaching career, as well as some other information at other educational and/or technical levels that could be of assistance in this regard.

NU were anticipated to play a significant role in meeting their nation's demands for human resources. The development of human resources for government agencies and public sector professions was first given special attention. Due to the egregious inadequate development of universities during colonialism and the withdrawal of colonial leaders and experts after independence, there were severe shortages in these fields that needed to be addressed (Nnadozie et al., 2023). The main reason for founding universities in these nations was, and still is, for the institutions to take the lead in addressing issues of inadequate development, such as poverty, social disorder, inadequate production, unemployment, starvation, and diseases, which emerged to be widespread on the African continent.

Otonko (2012) gave a clear explanation and details regarding how UN education has aided in ND. He claims that they have provided and continue to provide not just the advanced skills vital for every job market but also the instruction required for educators, medical professionals, nursing staff, government employees, engineers, humanists, business owners, scientists, social scientists, and a variety of other professionals. These professionals are involved in building the competence and analytical abilities that support civil society, power local economies, educate youth, run efficient governments, and influence national policy. Additionally, and perhaps most significantly, UN education has contributed to the development of numerous Nigerians into accountable and efficient citizens through improved interpersonal relationships, increased awareness of national issues, and efficient citizenship. In general, Nigeria's universities have advanced their cultural, economic, social, political, scientific, and technical development. The nation is increasingly fortunate to have experts in a variety of sectors, including education, medical, law, technology (science and engineering), arts, philosophy, management, and social sciences, which makes the country more and more dynamic and independent as time passes.

In order to construct an envisioned united and equitable nation that motivates every Nigerian to make contributions to the growth of the nation (or ND) as a whole,

NU education has additionally been at the forefront of providing possibilities for the vast Nigerian populace. The educational system at universities has consistently produced researchers who have made significant contributions to the body of knowledge across the world. However, it has been noted that the focus on creative works and entrepreneurship, as well as the monetization of research discoveries, has been quite underwhelming at NU. This is due to the fact that they have kept their attention only on their historical responsibility of developing academics and leaders but have lagged behind in the application of knowledge in real-world situations and are unable to meet the demands of the labour market. In addition, concern over the declining levels of NU education is rising (Nnadozie et al., 2023).

3. Current condition and future perspectives of university education in Nigeria

3.1. The present level of university education quality in Nigeria

According to Nnadozie et al. (2023), the effectiveness of higher education is frequently evaluated across the board using a group of four related measures. These include:

- a) Quality students
- b) Quality teachers
- c) A conducive learning environment
- d) International competitiveness

World-class academics who are invested in one another through exciting lectures, conferences, seminars, workshops, and other academic activities make up a high-quality university education. According to historical accounts, Nigeria's top universities were formerly run in this manner, but now, with a few notable exceptions, the majority of NU, particularly the older ones, suffer from subpar research outputs and bad instruction delivered by subpar lecturers (Nnadozie et al., 2023).

In fact, according to Otonko (2012), it is historically known that NU do quite poorly in continental research. NU generate 44% as much knowledge as South African universities and 32% as much as Egyptian universities, despite the fact that Nigeria has over six times as many universities as South Africa and nearly four times as many as Egypt. Overall, NU are far behind comparable economies throughout the world. They are also behind established international leaders. As a result, the prognosis for the country as a whole is exceedingly depressing and disappointing (Nnadozie et al., 2023).

Despite acknowledged attempts to raise the calibre of students entering universities as a result of deteriorating standards in primary and secondary education, there are still considerable gaps. Many universities, especially those that are privately owned, enrol students who had extremely low grades on the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) entrance examination (100–120 out of 400; 30% passing rate). According to Nnadozie et al. (2023), this represents a serious issue. Additionally, indigenous talent leaves NU and is not replaced.

Nigeria sends the greatest percentage of students abroad of any country on the African continent, and the number of outbound migrants is increasing quickly,

according to data from the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS). **Figure 2** as adapted from Nnadozie et al. (2023), indicates that, from 26,997 to 71,351, the total number of Nigerian students studying abroad rose by over 100% (164%) in the ten years between 2005 and 2015.

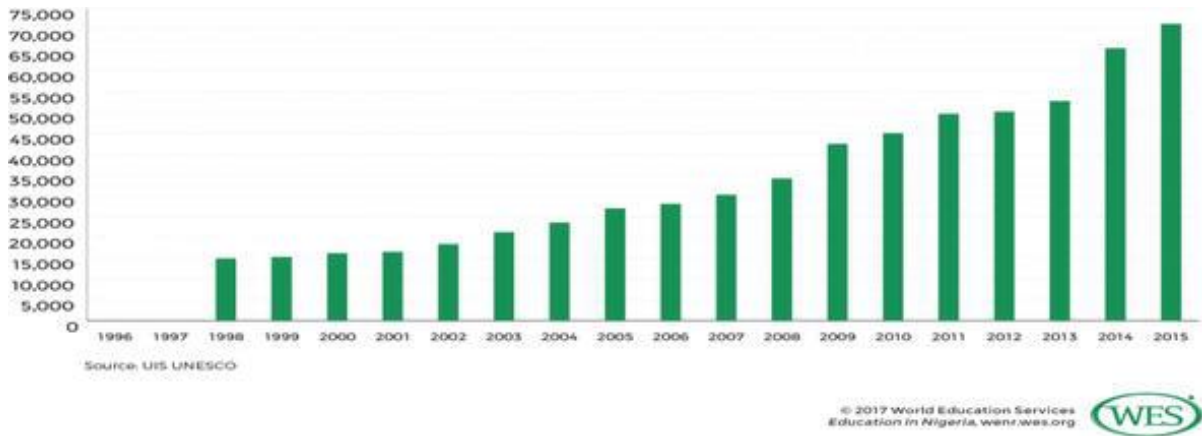


Figure 2. The number of students from Nigeria who left for abroad to study between 2005 and 2015.

The three (3) main option countries’ trend between 2014 and 2015 to 2020 and 2021 is illustrated in **Figure 3** as adapted from Nnadozie et al. (2023). Both numbers reveal a high percentage of departing students. However, because there aren’t foreign students at NU, the system is unable to attract a comparable number of international students. Therefore, “brain drain” rather than “brain exchange” has occurred.

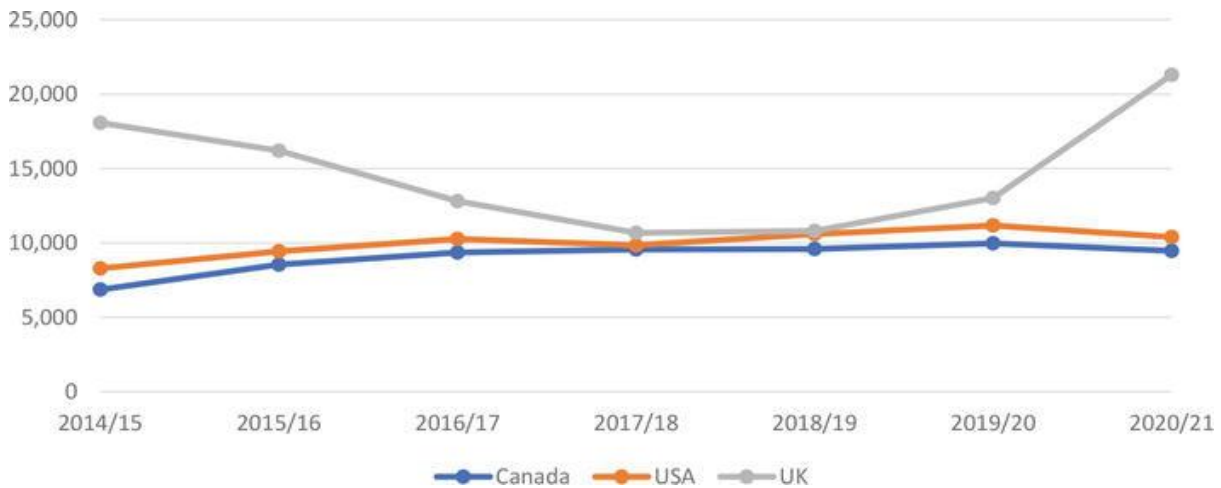


Figure 3. The main option countries’ trend of Nigerian students studying abroad.

The atmosphere for learning has become progressively less supportive. Despite the fact that universities are springing up everywhere, the majority of them are doomed from the start, while older ones languish with deteriorating and continually deteriorating basic infrastructure and amenities (Nnadozie et al., 2023). In fact, most colleges lack the necessary resources. According to a study by the NUC, only approximately 30% of Nigeria’s student population has appropriate accessibility to classrooms, lecture halls, laboratories, workshops, and libraries. The “University Systems Chronicler” reports that between 1960 and 1980, about 70% of the library books and laboratory supplies in use now in NU were purchased and installed.

Additionally, there is a lack of other facilities, including power, clean water, decent hostel accommodations, and health care facilities.

In terms of international competitiveness, NU rank very low in the world university rankings by the Centre for World University Rankings (CWUR). Surprisingly, no NU was listed among the top 1000 of the CWUR of 2021–2022. Only two NU, the University of Ibadan (UI) on position 1167 and the University of Nigeria (UNN) on position 1861, were listed among the first 2000 universities in the world by the CWUR in 2021–2022 (CWUR, 2022). Even at this level, the positions occupied by these two universities in the CWUR say a lot about the depressing conditions of UN education. More instructively, some African universities were included in the top 1000 of the CWUR of 2021–2022, while Nigeria has none, South Africa and Egypt have seven and four, respectively, and Uganda and Tunisia have one each (CWUR, 2022). According to historical accounts, NU in the 1970s were among the best in Africa and the whole globe.

3.2. University education's anticipated responsibilities in Nigeria

Inevitably, like every other nation, Nigeria needs a university education system in order to achieve its targets for development and transform into a developed country considering the enormous potential she possesses and the numerous challenges she faces (including high and pervasive poverty, a high unemployment rate, substantial infrastructural shortages, low technological and scientific development as well as slow technological and scientific adoption, poor governance and management across all layers of government, raising internal disputes, etc.) (Nnadozie et al., 2023).

Firstly, universities continue to play a crucial role in undertaking important research—especially innovative research and in producing highly competent employees. At the local, national, and international levels, universities continue to actively support innovative cultures. By aiding countries in catching up to more technologically advanced cultures, higher education can accelerate economic development via technological recuperation. Investments in higher education in Nigeria will hasten the spread of technology, which will close knowledge gaps and aid in the country's fight against poverty. The nation's development plan must be guided by the growth of its infrastructure. Universities play a significant role in equipping Nigerians with the information they need to work independently to develop the nation's infrastructure.

Furthermore, educational institutions like universities continue to play a crucial role in society by acting as the intellectual hub for the development of political ideas and political dialogue. In order to restore the frayed social fabric, it is essential to replace the defective value systems of the past. By cultivating students devoted to democratic principles and human rights, universities may help with this. As a result, maintaining higher education is crucial for the country's development in general.

3.3. Factors diminishing Nigerian universities' quality

There are significant and unsettling issues that are weakening university quality in Nigeria. There is a clear decline in the standard and quality of university education in Nigeria. Due to a variety of reasons, NU have been unable to offer students an

educational experience of the desired and current calibre. Some of these main factors are as adapted from Nnadozie et al. (2023) are highlighted below:

Funding:

In Nigeria, funding for education is typically inadequate. From 1992 to 2019, the fiscal allocation to education as a percentage of the overall government budget is shown in **Figure 4** as adapted from Nnadozie et al. (2023). It could be observed that the UNESCO suggestion that between 15% and 20% of a country’s budget be devoted to the educational sector was rarely followed. Poor funding for education has an obvious effect on universities, particularly given the growth in their student population over time.



Figure 4. Fiscal allocation to the educational sector as a % of the total budget in Nigeria for 1992–2022.

As stated by Nnadozie et al. (2023), it is reported that the Nigerian federal government budgeted N495, 456, 130, 065 for 49 federal universities and the universal basic education (UBE), which amounted to 40.88% of California State University’s budget allotment for that year. Financial limitations, which force many academics and non-academics to labour under challenging conditions, are thus a significant barrier to the standard and accomplishment of academic achievement at NU. In fact, many institutions are unable to construct lecture halls and dorms for students, offer adequate and functioning offices for teaching staff, outfit workshops and laboratories, pay entitlements and allowances, cover medical expenses, or offer funds for research.

Staff members for teaching (faculty members):

Due to insufficient resources to hire a suitable number of instructors, the majority of institutions in Nigeria are short on lecturers to effectively manage teaching and learning activities. The NU educational system has an extremely high student-to-lecturer ratio, which is against the norm for high-quality education across the world. The staff-to-student ratios in the majority of the best universities internationally are very low and exceptional. In fact, the staff-to-student ratios at the top universities globally are the following: the California Institute of Technology and the University of Chicago, both in the USA, are 6:9. At the universities of Oxford and Harvard, it is 11:6 and 8:9, respectively. The student-to-lecturer ratios at several NU, however, are

300:1 or even higher. Given this situation, it is obvious that the few faculty members who are still accessible are severely overworked. The NUC does not accredit several institutions' academic programs because of a lack of lecturers (teaching staff or faculty members). Bamiro (2012) made a connection between the observable and growing issue of de-intellectualization in academics and the subpar personnel at several NU. He said that it will be challenging to achieve excellent standards in higher educational institutions in areas with a lacklustre teaching staff and lecturers of poor calibre. A staff development program for staff training and retraining is lacking in the majority of NU. However, staff development is of utmost significance in this era of the explosion of knowledge and the emergence of a knowledge-based economy. Academics and non-academics may clarify and alter their behaviour, attitude, value, abilities, and competences with the support of dynamic staff development programs on a continual basis, according to Asiyai and Oghuvbu (2009).

Labour conflicts and university closures:

The frequent staff union conflicts and resulting closures of higher educational institutions, especially universities, pose a significant obstacle to the provision of high-quality university education in Nigeria. Student excesses like rioting, financial difficulties involving the government and the numerous staff unions, and other problems that cause strikes and temporary shutdowns of universities have plagued the system since the 1980s. As adopted from the study of Nnadozie et al. (2023), there have been a total of 29 strike records accounting for over 65 months between 1988 and 2022 for academic staff of NU (the public ones). Over time, these shutdowns have led to a drop in efficiency, ambiguity at the end of programs, low-quality graduates, impairment of academic activities, lost time and academic sessions, a shaky academic calendar, and a departure of talent from the system (brain drain) for both students and staff members, especially faculty members.

Brain drains:

In NU, brain drain has always been a concern that dates back to the beginning of the military period. Over 10,000 experts are thought to have left Nigeria's higher education institutions between 1986 and 1990 (Chigozie, 2014). Recently, this has become much more common as institutions lose academic expertise to other sectors for political or economic reasons. Talented professors escape the difficulties of academia for more lucrative fields or look for better prospects abroad. Some NU' structures of administration have been altered by brain drain. The academic divisions of NU are often in a state of anarchy with no direction due to brain drain. The top-middle cadre of academics in several disciplines at NU have gone due to brain drain, while the majority of the younger lecturers have remained. More importantly, many Nigerian academics who travelled to pursue doctoral degrees overseas were employed by the universities where they studied, so the likelihood that these individuals will return to Nigeria to fill the void left there is quite slim (Adebayo, 2010).

Management and administration:

Regardless of the importance of effective governance to the growth of universities, the majority of NU are experiencing administrative crises. This crisis frequently takes the form of intermittent disagreements between administration and students and staff over issues such as; "living allowances, pay, terms and conditions of service, limited representation in university governing bodies, and the perception

of university authority as a defender of state interests as opposed to the interests of the university”. Evidence already in existence demonstrates that many African nations, notably Nigeria, consistently and frequently violate the norms of good governance, which leads to poor administration. Adherence to the principles of good governance is particularly difficult due to frequent political meddling, especially in public institutions. The widespread “sexual molestation” and/or “grades for gratification” phenomenon is an additional issue that is intimately related to the university system’s deteriorating quality. Recent investigative expositions and other news stories from the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) supported this. It is essential to examine this condition before it worsens. It is acknowledged and laudable that the National Assembly is still working to draft a measure that will formally ban these actions and subject perpetrators to just punishment (Nnadozie et al., 2023).

Counsel and leadership:

Higher educational institutions in Nigeria experienced a period of tremendous structural upheaval as well as financial and administrative issues in the two turbulent decades of the 1980s and 1990s. Simultaneously, the sector underwent unplanned growth amidst crumbling infrastructure, poor working conditions, low staff self-confidence (morale), deteriorating academic quality standards, and confounding budget deficits, all of which were exacerbated by incredible enrolment growth and the ongoing devastation caused by the historical brain drain issue. In the 1980s and 1990s, systematic disregard and rot in NU worsened and came to be seen as official policy. This development was entirely justified by the mistaken assumption and outside counsel that higher education in the sub-Saharan region of Africa had no discernible effects on social equity, ND, or poverty reduction. Regrettably, the government and management of these nations—especially Nigeria—took this unsupported and incorrect advice and sharply reduced the fiscal support for higher education. International organizations, other significant development organizations, and industrialized nations have now realized the need for higher education and knowledge generation for any nation’s rapid development.

Supply and demand:

The supply-demand mismatch is a significant problem, mostly because of the country’s expanding population, which the World Bank’s most recent estimates put at 201 million, with more than 60% of people under the age of 25. Because of these factors, there has been a rising yet unmet demand for higher education. The number of applicants for appointments is rising, but institutions are limited by their institutional carrying capacity for prospective appointments. The nation’s educational system faces both the issue of quality and the issue of access. Despite being acknowledged and applauded, the quality of the Open University and the Distance Learning Initiatives is questioned because a major portion of their staff is from full-time institutions and is responsible for running the organizations and delivering the programs. Therefore, the university system has to be more inventive in order to find more efficient ways to enhance access, especially for the throngs of potential students looking to enrol in universities.

4. Conclusion, implications of the findings of the study, and recommendations on the way forward

4.1. Conclusion

NU were supposedly among the greatest universities across Africa and the entire globe in the 1970s, looking back. The educational institutions were so stunning and alluring in those days that other Africans travelled to Nigeria to study. In universities, they put the concept of universality into reality, emphasizing “quality teachers, quality students, an enabling environment for, and international competitiveness”. All four elements worked together to guarantee that Nigeria had top-tier universities at the time. But over the past thirty years, starting in the 1980s, with less funding, insufficient capacity, a history of disregard, and other difficulties, quality has been thrown off the educational system as a whole, raising serious concerns about the benefits and significance of NU and other higher-education institutions to ND.

4.2. Implications in the findings of the study

The university system’s potential for technological advancement and research, as well as its ability to employ them for ND, is one of its key challenges. Numerous reasons that undermine university quality in Nigeria and other ongoing issues were noted and described. The views in this perspective article led to the conclusion that universities were once magnificent, contributed to national progress, and are now important and necessary for the socioeconomic and political development of the nation. As a result, the article makes the case that they should be strengthened in order to achieve the needed level of functionality and competitive global standards that would enable them to fulfil the expectations and obstacles of Nigeria’s goals for development in the years ahead. It is important to highlight that there is not much literature on university education in African countries, so the contributions of this perspective review study contribute to this aspect. Hence, the management of NU (NUC in particular) must refocus their mission and value in today’s world if they are to stay resilient, relevant, and have the greatest impact on society.

The contribution of this perspective review study on an international level is quite limited, as it focused only on the Nigerian case, owing to the nature of the study. However, owing to the fact that the educational system of Nigeria can possibly be slightly different from other countries on an international level, it is suggested that future scopes look at other countries on an international level, as well as their practical contributions.

4.3. Recommendations on the way forward

In conclusion, to rebuild a good and efficient university education system in Nigeria, the following are suggested as the way forward:

On the part of the government:

Provide sufficient funding: In order to revitalize or invigorate the NU system and consequently support sufficient engagement of staff in the needed mix, improve environments of service for staff, and provide basic or fundamental infrastructures (i.e., modern research and teaching facilities), virtual libraries, technological advances, and

interns, the government must place a major emphasis on education, especially university education.

Control frequent strikes and university closures: Controlling frequent strikes and industrial disputes by upholding all agreements made with the different unions. Additionally, the government must effectively encourage staff (both financially and by enhancing their working conditions and regulations) in order to increase their commitment and effectiveness in their duties.

Control faculty (educator) and students brain drain: Since they hardly ever return home after finishing their education, the majority of students who study abroad are ultimately lost to the nations where they do so. Consequently, this tendency has to be reversed in order to take full advantage of these students' perspectives and use them to the benefit of the growth of the nation. In particular, steps must be taken to stop the faculty (educator) brain drain from the nation's universities in order to stop the flow of highly skilled workers abroad. This will entail skill-appropriate remuneration. Spending public money to train highly skilled workers only for those workers to have their skills "drained" by alluring outside entities and nations is wasteful.

Increase access to university (higher) education for the thronging young people: In order to increase access moving forward to a larger percentage of applicants on a sustainable basis, innovative measures are required. Through significant financial infusions for infrastructure upgrades and the creation of more institutions without sacrificing academic standards, the overall capacity of the current universities must be expanded. Another option is to promote and license additional private-owned institutions while also providing these institutions with subsidies or grants to enable them to accept more students at reduced rates.

Hold university management and leaders responsible: There is little doubt that particular universities in Nigeria are badly run, and their internal frameworks, particularly governing bodies, are unable to hold the leaders responsible. Therefore, the government must ensure that the ranks of university officials comply with every requirement of adequate accountability and effective administration. In particular, federally owned universities that have turned into local ethnic institutions where only natives and/or the dominant local ethnic communities are allowed to apply for the position of vice chancellor must re-evaluate and overhaul the criteria they use for selection and procedures. Historical evidence indicates that only outstanding academics and those with a variety of tribal or ethnic tendencies were appointed heads at various points over the illustrious years that comprised the chronicles of NU throughout the country. Consequently, the system of universities has to be reorganized using this approach.

Create connections amongst universities and the private and commercial sectors/industries: Governments have to create a climate that rewards such connections through, among other things, technological and scientific policies, laws protecting intellectual property rights, and financing for research and development.

On the part of the private and commercial sectors/industries:

Create partnerships with universities: To enhance linkages between academic institutions and private enterprises, the private and commercial sectors/industries must also make contact with universities. Universities and other educational institutions must significantly contribute to a vibrant, productive private sector in order to generate

knowledge and improve labour skills. By supporting and funding research that may be helpful to their operations, profitability, and growth, businesses (private and commercial sectors/industries) must work with the university system.

Provide faculty (staff) and students with internship opportunities: Private and commercial sectors/industries could also help the system of universities by providing possibilities for industrial attachments, visitation programs for staff (faculty) and students, and opportunities for staff development as well as program and infrastructure development.

On the part of the university system:

Emphasize funding: In light of the government's dwindling contributions, universities must give other funding sources top priority. The top institutions in the world are supported by the private and commercial sectors and have enormous endowments. With an endowment fund of \$38.3 billion in 2018, Harvard University had an endowment per student of \$1.736 million in 2015. Yale University came in second with an endowment per student of \$29 billion (\$2.073 million in 2015), and Stanford University came in third with an endowment per student of \$26.4 billion (\$1.323 million in 2015). Although comparable numbers for universities in Nigeria are not accessible, evidence suggests that endowment funds at these institutions are relatively low and that they should increase their efforts to get private support.

Support active developmental and training programs: university employees, particularly academic staff, must stay current on the state of knowledge in both their teaching and their research responsibilities. This necessitates that the lecturers have appropriate and sufficient exposure via seminars, workshops, participation in both national and international conferences, joint research, and mentoring. Consequently, the institution has to offer free, ongoing staff development and training programs that are thorough and all-inclusive.

Launch more creative and innovative initiatives to enhance accessibility to admission: The university system has to be more creative and imaginative about finding more efficient ways to help the hordes of aspiring students who are vying for admission.

Stem the trend of sexual assault and/or "grades for gratification": It is acknowledged that a number of universities are making attempts to address this issue or dilemma. The entire educational community has to focus on a comprehensive solution to the issue.

Foster closer collaboration between the academic system and business to strengthen links between the two sectors of society: In order to achieve this, it is necessary to start a series of studies looking at the industrial sector's labour demands and skill specifications over a 5-year timeframe. Every university ought to additionally start doing regular monitoring of its graduates in industry. These methods can be used to narrow the present gap between industry demand and the university supply of skill sets. These measures would also serve as the cornerstone for the nation's appropriate educational and manpower planning activities.

Boost relevance: In order to drive relevant innovations and ND, universities must become more pertinent by contributing evidence-based input to the creation and execution of policies. In order to be ready for the fourth industrial revolution that is currently under way and the worldwide move toward robots, cloud computing, and

artificial intelligence, a new agenda must place a strong emphasis on competent human resources for economic development, particularly in scientific and technological fields. Due to the manner in which they are taught and the lack of curricular evaluations that should address the demands of the country and business today, many NUs merely create partially baked graduates who are unprepared for the workforce. If colleges are to make genuine advancements in this area, they must abandon outdated ideas, some of which date back to the era of colonialism.

Establish and sustain a globalization and diversification program: High standards, high quality, and international colleges and universities are characterized by diversity in the student and teacher bodies that transcends different nations. Most universities in Nigeria now have little diversity among their faculty or students. It is similarly low within the select few, especially the first-generation universities. The university system must consequently support and sustain diversification and globalization programs at every institution.

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