

The Roles of Social Sciences in Managing the Challenges of Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria Amidst Insecurity

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Abstract

The paper looked at various challenges confronting tertiary institutions in Nigeria such as insecurity, cultism, examination malpractice, corruption, poor funding among others. The paper highlighted importance of social sciences education in overcoming these challenges. Emphasis was laid on acquiring the social sciences knowledge which helps in having effective management of tertiary institutions in Nigeria subject to their limited resources couple with their numerous needs (challenges) and by extension focus on the skill acquisition through socio-economic programmes that helps in provision of employment to our teeming youths. The paper concluded by suggesting some recommendations for tackling tertiary institutions' challenges in Nigeria such as funding of educational programs in Nigerian tertiary institutions; organizing trainings, seminars and workshops for the staff on current security issues and judicious use of scarce resources.

Keywords: social sciences education, security, corruption, cultism, skill acquisition

Introduction

The history of Nigeria runs parallel to the history of Nigerian education, because of the realization by the early nationalists that the country could not develop without a proper grounding in a national education system that can guarantee the production of the desired high quality workforce without which national development is impossible. Olayanju (2014) opined that education is the major agency for both personal and national socio-economic development. Investments in human capital development and plays a critical role in long term productivity growth at both micro and macro levels.

The state of education in Nigeria continues to dominate our national discourse at all levels. The implication of the declining education quality at all levels has far-reaching implications on our moral, civic, cultural, and economic sustainability. It is therefore, imperative for education at various levels to prepare future leaders and develop the high level technical capacities needed for economic growth and development (Osokoya, 2008). The utmost importance attached to education in Nigeria was clearly underscored in the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004). The Federal Republic of Nigeria, in this policy adopted education as an instrument —par excellencel for effecting national development.

Security Situations in Nigeria

The phenomenon, security challenges operate a revolving-door policy these days. As soon as one goes away, another turns up. Since Nigeria has returned to democratic system of government, the security situation in the country has been deteriorating drastically. Arguably, considerable progress has been achieved in the areas of freedom of speech and liberty, but series of resource based conflict (e.g., Niger Delta militant, ethno-religious crisis, Jos crisis and communal conflicts, banditry, cattle rustling, kidnapping e.t.c) persisted thus, a considerable effort to end the violence and build a sustainable peace to steer the economy to sustainability seems far from realization. The basic question is why development has continued to elude Nigeria in spite of numerous amount of human and material resources?

Security is considered as any mechanism deliberately fashioned to alleviate the most serious and immediate threats that prevent people from pursuing their cherished values. In Nigeria, the achievement of desired level of internal security particularly from 2007 -2020 was elusive.

Perhaps a critical looks at the table below helps in the concise understanding of security threats in Nigeria from 2007-2020.

Source: Igbuzor's field survey and Ofor-douglas (2020)

S/N	Security Threat	Year	Political Zone
1	Niger Delta	1999- till date	South-South
2	Jos Crisis	1999-till date	North-Central
3	Kidnapping, ritual killing ,armed robbery and cattle rustling	2009- till date	North-East, North-Central and North-west

From the above table, some scholars seem to place emphasis on absence of threat to acquire values or tendencies that would undermine national cohesion and peace as criteria for determining what security connotes (Davies, 2006). Security is the condition or feeling of safety from harm or danger, the defence, protection and the absence of threats to acquire values (Igbuzor, 2011).

Conceptual Clarification: Higher Education- Nigerian Perspective

Higher education or continuing education plays a necessary and an increasingly important role in human, social, and economic development (Escrigas, 2008). The role of Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) in development is not only vital but also complex, fluid and dynamic. HEIs exhibit numerous capabilities and scope, and can affect processes of development both directly and indirectly through teaching, research and service. Furthermore, HEIs operate within different contexts in which they can play different roles towards societal development. In this context, higher education institutes include a wide variety of universities, vocational and technical colleges, amongst other formal, nonformal, and informal institutions.

According to Alemu (2018) higher education is tertiary education leading to the award of an academic excellence. It is also called post-secondary education, third-level or tertiary education. It is an optional final stage of formal learning that occurs after completion of secondary education.

New Public Management (NPM)

New Public Management was largely adopted in the public sector in the 1980s when there was growing dissatisfaction with increased public spending with little accountability (O'Flynn, 2007). Some reforms under the NPM include budget cuts, accountability for performance, privatization or quasi-privatization and improved financial management systems (Gruening, 2001; Kelly, 1998). The NPM believes that market-oriented management should lead to greater cost-efficiency for the public sector. NPM is used as a —recipe for correcting the perceived failings of traditional public bureaucracies over efficiency, quality, customer responsiveness and effective leadership (Hood, 2000, p. 4).

The NPM is defined as 'The entire collection of tactics and strategies that seek to enhance the performance of the public sector' (Behn, 2001, p. 26). Some describe NPM as 'an interdisciplinary study of the generic aspects of administration ... a blend of the planning, organizing, and controlling functions of management with the management of human, financial, physical, information and political resources' (Garson & Overman, 1983, p. 275). The NPM favours decentralized administration, delegation of discretion, contracting for goods and services, and the use of market mechanisms of competition and customer service to improve performance (Canaan & Shumar, 2008).

Some of the Major Tertiary Institutions Challenges in Nigeria

Is'haq et al. (2019), maintains that the socio-political and economic development of a nation or her health is in many ways determined by the quality and level of educational attainment of the population. Good and quality education will lead to a class of citizens that are hardworking and innovative and as such will contribute to the massive economic growth of a nation. These objectives are not fully realized hence led to the emergence of critical challenges facing tertiary institutions in Nigeria. These major challenges which this paper focuses on are outlined as follows: i. Examination malpractice, ii. Cultism, iii. Poor funding, iv. Corruption v. Insecurity vi. Incessant strikes i .

i. Examination Malpractice

Examination malpractices are rampant in the country institutions of learning as argued by Bello (2006) that, even in teachers training institutions this is being practiced. Students don't

want to read and they want to pass by all means resulting into all forms of examination malpractices. Shameless staffers of institutions also participate in this ugly act because of wealth. It has become very difficult to conduct any free and fair examination in the institutions because of examination malpractices. The result of this is producing half baked individuals as doctors, engineers, lawyers, bankers etc. Furthermore, the effects of examination malpractices are obvious as graduates of many institutions cannot live up to expectation in their various professions after graduation because they do not merit the certificate they are holding. Many of Nigerian institutions are not respected outside the country even within Africa; they make mockery of Nigerian certificates only because those who really worked for the certificate are few.

ii. Cultism

Cultism is very rampant in most Nigerian institutions of higher learning nowadays as observed by Ajuwon and Oyeniya (2010) that cultists have made Nigerian higher institutions become a place of worry to everybody. Cultists are making campuses insecure for everybody including staffers of the institutions. The most painful thing about this cultism is that staff including heads of the institutions are involved in cultism; this makes their activities difficult to curb.

Cultism has devastated academic programs of tertiary institutions in Nigeria in many ways; lecturers can no longer do their work objectively because of fear of cultists; serious students are no longer committed to their studies due to cult activities; institutions are closed down and academic activities paralyzed for long period as a result of violence caused by cultists (Ofor-Douglas, 2020).

iii. Poor Funding

Funds are not made available for research and teaching in our tertiary institutions as opined by Oziegbe and Sharimakin (2010) that Nigerian public institutions and universities are not well funded by the government and supported by Adedibu (2001) that tertiary institutions are poorly funded. Budgetary allocation to education in Nigeria is generally very low when compared with other Africa countries.

Nigerian government has not been sincere to education. Obiajulu (2012) said government lack sincerity and that is why the quality of education is poor. Faborode (2012) was worried that country like Ghana committed 31 per cent of its budget to education as against Nigeria's eight per cent. Lecturers' allowances and salaries are not given priority forgetting that; role of teachers cannot be compared with that of politicians. Oloyede (2007) posited that, in any stable political system, teachers and their education system are well catered for; teachers are not well catered for in Nigeria because of lack of fund.

iv. Corruption

There is corruption everywhere in the nation as opined by EL-Rufai in Aina (2012) that corruption and terrorism have taken over the nation. According to Olagunju (2012) corruption is everywhere in Nigeria, tertiary institutions inclusive. Admission into tertiary institution is on whom you know not on merit. Again; award of contract in the institutions is no longer for the best contractor but to the rogues. Aina (2013) observed that purchases of science equipment to schools are no longer done transparently because it is either the chief executive of the institution or any of his or her relation who did the supply.

Nigeria, which has a population of 168, 883, 776, according to 2006 population census is ranked 135 out of 176 most corrupt countries in the world which is slowing the pace of development

(TransparencyInternational, 2013). In Ogundele and Shehu (2013) presently, in an effort to assess the basic human development achievements in the world, Nigeria ranked 153 among 193 countries in the world. The implication is that Nigeria's poverty index will get worsen the more because presently, her multidimensional poverty index is 0.31% while 68.0% of her population is living below \$1.25 per day (United Nations Development Project, 2013).

Mfon (2007) lamented that recruitment to job is tied down to criteria such as political favouritism, geographical area or quota system. Many of the teacher training institutions, polytechnics and universities are devoid of best academic staff because the best probably do not have godfather who could help.

Some lecturers are corrupt; they have left their primary duty of lecturing and research to business of selling books and handouts to students at any price of their choices; they are promiscuous and committing immorality with female students with the view to give them marks. Corruption has ruin our tertiary institutions except something is done urgently the system may collapse soon.

Judging by the most corrupt institutions in Nigeria from an indices of 5% as high while 1% as low corruption index, recording the political parties and the police as most corrupt institutions in Nigeria with 4.7% respectively, the Education institution's level of corruption is 3.4%.

(TransparencyInternationa, 2013).

v. Insecurity

Azih and Nwagwu (2015) opined on some of the causes of insecurity in Nigeria. These are high levels of unemployment, poor leadership, high level of moral decadence, religious fanaticism, poor quality of education, inadequate provision of welfare package, lack of spirit of patriotism, high level of poverty, the negative effects of foreign culture and poor parenting upbringing.

Insecurity is the greatest challenge of Nigerian tertiary institutions. Security is very important and germane to academic excellence (Aina, 2012) Gone are the days when Nigerian campuses were saved and secured; today lives and properties in campuses are not saved because of the types of students and workers we have in the institutions. Many students are already spoiled from home and parents thinking were that institutions will re-mould the life of such students but instead they turn out to be terrorists in the institutions.

There is decline in academic performance of students in the institutions thereby turning those who could not cope into a problem in the institutions. Many students had been in the institutions for many years without graduating; they remained there to cause security problem for the serious students and the entire learning community.

Effect of insecurity is great and incalculable. Consider the gruesome murder of three professors in a university in the northern part of Nigeria few years ago and lots of infrastructure that were destroyed by some people. The students in higher institutions of

learning have been now become vulnerable and victims of abduction by kidnapers as witnessed in 2021 in federal university Dutsinma.

Managing the Challenges of Tertiary Institutions through Social Sciences Education

The roles of social sciences education in managing the tertiary institutions in the midst of insecurity cannot be over emphasized. The global trends indicate that social sciences education helps in ensuring effective utilization of scarce resources subject to unlimited needs of the institutions. Thus tertiary institutions ought to utilize their limited scarce resources both human and material at their disposal efficiently and effectively. They also help in improving the general productivity of the staff across the board. The objectives of social sciences education as enshrined in the minimum standard of the National Commission for Colleges of Education (N.C.C.E) (2012) are outlined below:

- i. To prepare recipients for good citizenship
- ii. To provide intellectual training which, would create critical thinking
- iii. To prepare recipients for vocation

- iv. Acquisition of social and economic competence

However, there are other areas which social sciences education could also help, prominent among them includes:

- i. It ensures that both the staff and students of higher institutions of learning are trained to be good citizens and their concerns are to serve their father land.
- ii. It encourage them to pursue vocational professions that can reduce their over dependence on government
- iii. It groom them on having very good leadership qualities. Just to mention a few

Conclusion

Considering the afore-mentioned discussed, it is evident that Nigerian tertiary institutions are facing severe challenges of cultism, examination malpractice, insecurity etc, that if not contained appropriately, it will lead to their total collapse. The social sciences education are seen as the catalyst of addressing such pressing challenges they are facing today.

Recommendations

The needs for managing the tertiary institutions in Nigeria in an era of critical burning national issues of insecurity are very necessary. Thus the following recommendations need to be applied by the government and other relevant stakeholders: This paper also recommends a functional higher education which trains the individual for a better appreciation of his own cultural traditions whilst at the same time equipping him with the ability to absorb new ideas, new information and new data for resolving the constantly changing problems of his environment. This will promote understanding of cultural diversity and multi-ethnicity that pervade Nigeria as a nation. Other recommendations could be seen below:

- i. Adopting a very good financial control system: the financial regulations of the institutions must be adhered to and whoever violate it, must be punished in accordance with the provision of the law.
- ii. Enlighten the institutions' communities on security consciousness
- iii. Decongestion of the institutions by adhering to the NCCE, NBTE and NUC guidelines
- iv. Provisions of important facilities such as student viewing centers, sport facilities, mini markets within the institutions in order to minimize the massive movement of students on campus from going out of the institutions which could limit the miscreant elements to get access to the institutions premises.
- v. Organizing of trainings, workshops and seminars for the security officers of the institutions and other stakeholders on the current security challenges and how to overcome them
- vi. Recruitment of relatively adequate number of security officers and provision of enough security facilities
- vii. The institutions ought to use their scarce resources judiciously

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