

# University Education Policies in Nigeria: Challenges Preventing the Implementation and the Ways Forward

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## Abstract

This paper discussed the challenges preventing the implementation of University education policies in Nigeria. Secondary data were used in the papers. The secondary data were sourced from print materials and online journal and articles. The paper identified inadequate funding, inadequate infrastructural facilities, inadequate professional lectures, institutional corruption, lack of political will, insecurity challenge, political instability, poor policy formulation, strike actions, weak regulatory agencies and political influence as the challenges preventing effective implementation of Universities education policies in Nigeria. To address these challenges, the paper recommends the following; adequate funding of education, provision of adequate infrastructural facilities, fight institutional corruption, ensure adequate security in educational institutions, political officeholders should have positive political will towards implementation of higher education policies, employment of more professional teachers, implement agreed with different union groups, and political officeholders and school administrators should have political will to continue with educational policies on groups.

**Keywords:** *Challenges, Education, Implementation, Policies, Programme*

## Introduction

The National Policy on Education (2014) defines tertiary education as the education given after secondary education in Universities, Colleges of Education, Polytechnics, Mono-technics, as well as those institutions offering correspondence courses. World Bank (2004) argued that higher education is fundamental to all developing countries if they are to prosper in a world economy where knowledge has become a vital area of advantage. Bernett (1997) views higher educational institution as unique institutions which is differentiated from others in terms of research, while designate its managers as Provost, Rector, and Vice chancellor. Higher education is the education for the production of manpower and for aiding social, economic and technological development of a country. Scott (2005) stated that tertiary or higher education has two meanings. First, it means the next academic level (without research component) after secondary education. Second, it signifies the system of institutions that provides post-secondary

school courses and also engages in research. The second meaning is most relevant to university education. From the above definition, the higher education can be viewed as an organized educational system that deals with production of manpower and act as a catalyst for socio-economic, political, cultural and industrial development of a nation. The higher education institutions are key mechanisms increasingly recognized as wealth and human capital producing industries.

The National Policy on Education (2014) outline the following as the goals of higher education: to contribute to national development through high level relevant manpower training; develop and inculcate proper values for the survival of the individual and society; develop the intellectual capability of individuals to understand and appreciate their local and external environments; 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 unity, and to promote national and international understanding and interaction. The National policy document added that, tertiary institutions shall pursue these goals through teaching; research and development; virile staff development programmes; A variety of modes of programmes including full-time, block-release, deny release, sandwich, etc; Access to training funds such as those provided by the Industrial Training Fund (ITF); Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) and Maintenance of minimum educational standards through appropriate agencies.

In order to ensure quality education in the Nigerian higher institutions, the government established some commissions and agencies for supervision and inspection under the Federal ministry of education. The agencies include National universities commission (NUC) for universities supervision, while colleges of education are supervised by the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE). The National Board of Technical Education (NBTE) oversees polytechnic education. These commissions are responsible for policy decisions affecting institutions under their supervision, maintenance of standards through a system of periodic accreditation of courses, distribution and monitoring of government funding, appointment of members of governing councils, and the day-to-day running of the institutions (Ogunode, Dilmurod & Abubakar 2021).

These commissions and agencies have formulated different policies for the development of the higher institutions in Nigeria. For example, the National Universities commission came up with a Benchmark Minimum Academic Standards (BMAS) 2007 for all the Nigerian universities. This document contains policies programmes in the universities. The National Universities commission also has draft policies on University administration in Nigeria. There are many policies formulated for the development of higher institutions in Nigeria, but implementation has been the challenges. The aim of this paper is to discuss the challenges preventing the implementation of higher education policies in Nigeria. This article discusses the following policies namely recruitment policies-entry qualifications, professionalism and welfares, Staff Development Policies, infrastructural facilities policies and lecturers-Students Ratio Policies.

## **Concept of Educational Policy**

Educational policy is an instrument for the development of education. Educational policy is use to achieve the objectives of education. Educational policy is an administrative tools use for delivering of quality education. Terry (1977) looked at a policy as an overall guide that gives the general limits and direction in which administrative action will take place". According to him, "a policy defines the area in which decisions are to be made but it does not decide". Noun (2011) viewed policy as a written or unwritten statement that guides present and future thinking, initiatives, actions and decisions of managers. They are written when there are documents somewhere for reference purposes and are unwritten when in form of pronouncements, i.e. policy statements by people in power or position of authority. Policies are guides that usually provide the latitude of operations of managers. It makes managers understand the extent to which they can go in the process of decision making. Osokoya (1987) viewed education as a distinctive way in which the society inducts its young ones into full membership. So every modern society needs some educational policies to guide it in the process of such initiation. Noun (2011) defined educational policy of Nigeria as a general statement containing principles, regulations and rules, that govern many of the decisions on how to educate children, where to get them educated, where to get them employed, who to teach them, how to finance their education, what to teach, how to impart skills, goals, objectives and even the philosophy. Educational policies are initiatives mostly by governments that determine the direction of an educational system (Okoroma 2000). There are many objectives of educational policies. Awokoya (1981) observed that educational policy is directed towards increasing the quality of life of a people. Awokoya opined that the objective of any policy is to satisfy individual needs, community pressures, and complexity and sophistication to which socialized personnel must be educated to meet these demands (Okoroma 2006). Meanwhile, educational policies are designed to actualize the objectives of education. The policies are instruments that give direction to the coordination of educational system. Educational policies are tools for implementing educational goals and programmes. Okoroma (2006) cited Awokoya (1981), who listed the guide for the formulation of adequate educational policy: (a) It should be formulated and adopted through a political process which acknowledges the reality and legitimacy of conflicting interests and desires among its participants. (b) It should portray some elements of guidance for properly directed and coordinated action towards the attainment of the desired goals (c) It should contain information on the broad objectives that should be reached (d) It should be a binding guide on the actions of those implementing it (e) It should be enforceable and enforced by the society which formulates it.

## ***Concept of Implementation***

Implementation is the systematic ways of carrying out policies and programme with the aims of achieving the objectives of the programme. This is the act of executing organized plans and programmes within a timeframe with the objective of realizing the aims of the projects or programmes. Implementation ensures that actions plans, policies and programme are carried out as specified. Noun (2012) observed that formulating a policy or designing a plan is meaningless, except it is implemented. Implementation is

the transformation of education plan or policy into action. Plan implementation is a critical stage in the policy planning process. Implementation links the policy plans to their actual performance.

During implementation, the following are rules rather than the exceptions (Haddad 1994)

- Circumstances related to implementation cause policy or plan modifications to take place;
- Feedback obtained during implementation causes a reassessment of aspects of policy or plan decision and subsequent modifications by policymakers;
- The mere translations of abstract policy intentions into concrete implementation cause reassessment and redesign. These changes occur with great frequency because implementation problems are often underestimated during the stage of policy planning. Poor policy implementation is a challenge to quality delivery in education. The poor quality delivery is responsible for the abysmal low performance of graduates of university in Nigeria in their world of work and the alarming incidence of examination malpractice (Noun 2012).

### ***Universities Education Policies and Level of Implementation***

There are many policies formulated for the development of higher education in Nigeria. This paper discusses the following policies and their levels of implementation in the Nigerian higher institutions using universities education as case study:

- a) Recruitment Policies- entry Qualifications, professionalism and welfares
- b) Staff Development Policies
- c) Infrastructural Facilities Policies
- d) Lecturers-Students Ratio Policies

### ***Recruitment Policies***

According to the National Universities Commission policies on recruitment into the universities, the policies regarding qualifications of academic staff are stated below. The minimum entry qualification of a teaching staff into polytechnic is Bachelor's degree in relevant field. In Colleges of Education, the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) requires that candidates to be considered for appointment should have, besides first degree, acquire some qualification in education. This means that they have to be certified as professional teachers. The minimum academic qualification required for appointing a university teacher in Nigeria is Master's Degree. Occasionally, "persons who earned high quality Bachelor's degrees are given positions of Assistant Lecturer", while sometimes, "those who have Second Class (Honours) Upper Division are given the job of a Graduate Assistant" (Mgbekem, 2004). Mgbekem further noted that those appointed without the doctoral degree are expected to work and grow through promotions and acquisition of Master's and Doctoral Degrees in their areas of specialization. For university lectureship, there is an emphasis by the NUC that the minimum requirement should be a doctoral degree. Government expects that "persons

with Third Class (Honors) and Pass degrees are never considered for lectureship appointment (Mgbekem, 2004).

The level of implementation of higher education policies on entry qualifications is poor considering the number of unqualified lecturers in the Nigerian higher institutions. Many lecturers in the Nigerian higher institutions are not professional teachers. The NEEDS (2014) confirms that teachers in colleges of education were perceived to be deficient in evaluation skills, pedagogical and ICT competencies, with less than 50 percent of them being competent in these areas. Over 50 percent of university teachers did not have pedagogical skills, counseling and ICT competencies required for efficient service delivery in tertiary institutions. The numbers of lecturers with PhD in the higher institutions are few and inadequate. This is against the position of National Universities Commission that for university lectureship, the minimum requirement should be a doctoral degree. The reports of the Federal Government's needs assessment of Nigerian public universities carried out in 2012. According to the reports, only about 43 percent of university lecturers have PhD qualifications. The remaining 57 percent have qualifications below PhD. Only seven universities have up to 60 percent of their teaching staff with PhD qualifications. There are universities with fewer than five professors. For instance, the Kano State University of Science and Technology, Wudil, established 11 years ago and has been turning out graduates, has only one teaching staff with a professor ranking and 25 lecturers who are PhD degree holders. Similarly, the Kebbi State University of Science and Technology, established in 2006, has only two teaching staff in the professor category and five lecturers who have PhD qualifications. It has been estimated that additional 22,496 teachers will be required to improve quality of teaching and academic productivity in Nigerian universities.

### ***Staff Development Policies***

To demonstrate her keen interest in teachers' professionalism, government emphasized in the National Policy on Education. The emphasis is to encourage all teachers in tertiary institutions to undergo training in the methods and techniques of teaching". To this end, some teachers in the universities who are not certified teachers have enrolled for courses leading to the award of a Post-Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) (NUC, 2007). Having recruited the best scholars from diverse sources, the conditions of service should be such that would ensure that these scholars are kept in the system and are motivated to high level of performance. After the employment, quality teachers can be encouraged to stay on the job through these means: Provision for research grants, sponsoring them to attend conferences and organising capacity building workshops/seminars for them, and so on. The policies also stated that regular payment of salary and allowances and involving them in decisions that affect them and allow them to use their initiatives (Noun, 2009). The policy on staff development programme in the Nigerian higher institutions is poorly implemented. Many lecturers in the Nigerian higher institutions have not obtained Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) to qualify them as professional teachers. The level of staff development is low. According to Basil, Felix &, Eno (2013) university lecturers take part mostly in conferences than any other capacity building programme. Lecturers' participation in capacity building programmes is significantly low regarding to workshops, seminars, conferences, ICT training and mentoring. There is no significant difference between male and female

lecturers' participation in capacity building programmes. Many lecturers in the Nigerian universities sponsored their training and paid for their paper publications. Charles, Ijeoma & John (2010) did a study that investigated the sources of research funding available to lecturers in Nigerian Universities, the challenges faced by lecturers in accessing them and strategies for improvement. Result of the study revealed self-funding as a major source of research funding in Nigerian Universities, followed by government sector and foreign agencies. Self-funding was also identified as the most potent source of research funding accessed by University lecturers. The study showed that a greater percentage of lecturers, 246(76.35%), had not benefited from research grants for many years. Inadequate funding of research and stringent conditions attached to research grants were identified as two major constraints to accessing research funds by lecturers. Bako (2005) in his study shows that the bulk of University research has been self-funded by graduate students, staff-in-training and academic staff, and over 80% has been from salaries and parents. Akpochafo (2009) submitted that research in the Universities is funded by graduate students, staff-in-training, and academic staff who are poorly paid. Charles, Ijeoma & John (2010) and Okebukola (2002) identifies difficulty in accessing research funds and diminishing scope of mentors junior researchers by seasoned and senior researchers due to brain drain as factors contributing to the decline in research interest of lecturers in recent time. Inadequate funds/research grants constitute challenges to lecturers in accessing research funds (Charles, Ijeoma & John 2010, Okebukola, 2004, Egwunyenga 2008). The higher education on welfare and motivation has not been fully implemented as designed for the higher institutions workers. Lecturers embark on strike actions because of poor welfare and poor working conditions.

### ***Infrastructural Facilities Policies***

According to the National Universities commission Benchmark policies (2007) stated that adequate Lecturers' offices, classrooms, functional and well equipped language laboratory, soundproof rooms and studios, audio-visual rooms. Language laboratory, Studies books, journals, reference books in the main and departmental libraries and internet connectivity facilities. Others are tape recorders/players, public address system, computer units/ and other IT facilities should be in every department. The policies also stated that lecturers will be given good office accommodation, provision of necessary tools such as desktop, laptop, scanner, printer, Internet facilities. This policy is poorly implemented in the higher institutions in Nigeria. Many academic and non-academic staff does not have offices. Many lecturers are sharing offices meant for one person. Ebehikhalu & Dawam (2017) observed that universities suffer from a critical shortage of classrooms, lecture theaters, laboratories, offices, student's hostels and other physical facilities. This explains the overcrowding and absence of space which is common in almost all the lecture rooms, laboratories, hostels and other buildings. Many lecturers either share or lack offices. The university direly needs of new and fully equipped Laboratories in The Departments of Physics, Chemistry, Geology, Micro Biology, Computer Science, Biochemistry and Environmental Biology if standards are to be met. Learning resources, i.e. machines, equipment, library services, books journals and so on, are unavailable, inadequate or outdated. Machines and equipment in laboratories and workshops are obsolete and, not functional. The university needs almost all resources

for teaching and learning. The university library does not have current books, journals, and periodicals. There is near absence of students' hostels and absence of staff quarters on campus. The living condition of the students is precarious. Basic municipal facilities like water, electricity, transportation, market etc. are lacking or highly inadequate in the University. Currently, the University relies heavily on the epileptic national grid for its electricity needs (Ebehikhalu & Dawam 2017).

### ***Lecturers-Students Ratio Policies***

The National Universities Commission Benchmark Minimum Academic Standards (BMAS) of 2007 stipulated the following teacher/students ratio: 1:20 in science; 1:15 in Engineering and technology; 1:10 in medicine, veterinary medicine and pharmacy, 1:15 in agricultural and environmental sciences and 1:30 in education, management science, social sciences, law and arts. The Benchmark Minimum Academic Standards (BMAS) on lecturer students' ratio have not been fully implemented in many higher institutions in Nigeria. Lecturers lecture over a hundred students per class in many higher institutions in Nigeria. The FME presented the needs for assessment of Nigerian public universities to the Federal Executive Council in 2012. According to the report, the faculty-to-student ratio is very low in many Nigerian universities. For instance, the National Open University of Nigeria was reported to have a faculty-to-student ratio of 1:363; the University of Abuja, 1:122; and Lagos State University, 1:114. When compared with the faculty-to-student ratio of some highly rated universities such as Harvard University (1:4), Massachusetts Institute of Technology (1:9), Yale University (1:4) and Cambridge University (1:3), the reports concluded that the most of universities in Nigeria were grossly understaffed. There are 71,000 lecturers in Nigeria alone, with 10,500 of them as professors (Punch, 2020).

The Nigerian educational system especially the higher institutions is blessed with many sound policies that if fully implemented should have transformed the entire higher institutions in Nigeria. The higher education in Nigeria is having many sound and implementable policies, but there are many challenges preventing the implementation of higher education policies in Nigeria. Ibrahim (2018) submitted that the development of any nation and its achieving greatness depends largely on the development and the effectiveness of implementing appropriate education laws. For this reason, most governments all over the world placed much emphasis on educational policies as instruments of national development. In the Nigerian context, despite the importance attached to education policy development, certain challenges affect the implementation of the education policies which adversely affects academic excellence. UNICEF, (2017) observed that Nigeria is a policy-rich environment but poor in implementation. The capacity and commitment of government to implement educational policies and processes has been limited because of inadequate resources and political will. Nigerian government is good at making policies but lacks the political will to implement the educational policies.

## Challenges Preventing Implementation of Universities Education Policies in Nigerian Higher institutions

This paper identified inadequate funding, inadequate infrastructural facilities, inadequate lecturers, institutional corruption, lack of political will, insecurity challenge, political instability, poor policy formulation and strike actions as the challenges preventing effective implementation of universities education policies in Nigeria.

### *Inadequate Funding*

Inadequate funding is one of the major problems facing the full implementation of universities education policies in Nigeria. Implementation of universities education policies requires a lot of financial commitment. There are many policies of the higher education that if fully implemented the entire Nigerian higher education system will be transformed, but poor funding is responsible for the higher institution's inability to implement some policies. A break-down of Nigerian education budget for decade revealed the following:

| Years | Education Budget | %     | Naira               |
|-------|------------------|-------|---------------------|
| 2010  | N234.8billion    | 5.10  | N4.6trillion        |
| 2011  | N306.3billion    | 6.20  | N4.972trillion      |
| 2012  | N400.15billion   | 8.43  | 8.43 N4.749trillion |
| 2013  | N426.53billion   | 8.60  | N4.987trillion      |
| 2014  | N493billion      | 10.70 | N4.69trillion       |
| 2015  | N392.2billion    | 8.91  | N4.4trillion        |
| 2016  | N369.6billion    | 6.01  | N6.1trillion        |
| 2017  | N448.01billion   | 6.00  | N7.3trillion        |
| 2018  | N605.8billion    | 7.04  | N8.3trillion        |
| 2019  | N620.5bn         | 7.05  | 8.83 trillion-      |
| 2020  | N652.94bn        | 6.9   | N10.50 trillion.    |

Sources: Ogunode & Samuel (2020)

Nigerian government needs billions of naira to successfully implement the higher education policies in the country, and the annual budgetary allocation for the educational sector is inadequate. Ibrahim (2018) observed that from 1999 up till 2014, the budgetary allocation to education in Nigeria is less than 12% for every fiscal year. This is against the 26% of budgetary allocation recommended by UNESCO. Again, to further support the point of inadequate funding in the Nigerian education system, it is on record that out of the twenty world sampled countries on education funding in the year 2012,

Nigeria was the least with 8.4% of budgetary allocation to education as stated in table 1. Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire and Uganda top the list with budgetary allocation of 31%, 30%, 27% and a rank of 1st, 2nd and 3rd position respectively (World Bank, 2012). However, no system of education can perform well without adequate financial support. Generally, poor funding of the educational sector in the country is responsible for poor implementation of educational policies. Akinmusuru, (2009) pointed to the low quality of Nigerian universities graduates to little attention given to teaching effectiveness, stressing that institutional policies are not geared towards making students learning a priority. Okoroma, (2001) observed that money the government votes for running the institution does not get to the institutions and the little that gets there is normally wasted by education managers. In addition, Nigerian university little attention is paid to teaching effectiveness of academic staff. The "publish or perish" syndrome, which places more emphasis on research makes Lecturers to be more committed to research. Inadequate funding constitutes a major problem facing the administration of higher institutions in Nigeria, (Ahaotu & Ogunode 2020, Ogunode, Yiolokun, & Akeredolu, 2019, Akinola 1990, Ogunode & Musa, A (2020))

### ***Inadequate Infrastructural Facilities***

Inadequate infrastructural facility is another problem facing the implementation of higher education. The higher institutions need a lot of infrastructural facilities to implement the National universities benchmark of lecturer-students ratio across the country. The infrastructural facilities available are not adequate to fully implement the higher education policies. Effective implementation of higher education policies hinged on the quality and quantity of human and material resources put in place in the various higher institutions in Nigeria. The inadequate of infrastructures facilities such as tables, chairs, offices, power, water, hostels, science laboratories, students' hostels, workshops, libraries and internet services will affect the implementation of higher education policies. For full implementation of higher education policies, facilities stated by the National Universities Commission (NUC) must be provided. Asiyai, (2005) and Odetunde (2004) observed the undesirable conditions of university in Nigeria have been worrisome. In Nigeria, many higher institutions students are learning under dilapidated buildings which are poorly and not conducive for effective teaching and learning to take place. Many of the classrooms and lecture halls are not well furnished, ventilated and illuminated. It is obvious that Academic Staff and Non-Academic staff of many Nigerian higher institutions share small offices. Worried about the poor quality of graduates of university in Nigeria, Okebukola, (2005) reported the need assessment survey of national universities commission and identified the following: (a) only about 30% of Nigerian students' population has adequate access to classrooms, workshop, lecture halls, laboratories and libraries.(b) Deficient libraries in terms of currency and number of books, journals, and electronic support facilities.(c) Inadequate academic calendar resulting from staff unions' industrial action premised on low salary, wages/welfare and students strikes often time related to inadequate facilities.(d) Lack of practical experience, often times resulting from deficient facilities. The above listed factors are all challenges to full implementation of higher education policies in Nigeria.

### ***Inadequate Lecturers***

Inadequate lecturer is among the major problem preventing implementation of universities education policies in Nigeria. The number of academic staff in the Nigerian higher institutions is not adequate to implement the National Universities Commission academic standard Bench Mark on teachers-students ratio. NEEDS, (2014) reported that the proportion of unqualified teachers is higher in the tertiary level. Over 50 percent of teachers in colleges of education and universities did not possess the minimum qualifications for teaching at these levels. Shortage of qualified teachers in Nigerian universities is well articulated in the reports of the Federal Government's needs assessment of Nigerian public universities carried out in 2012. According to the reports, only about 43 percent of university lecturers have PhD qualifications. The remaining 57 percent have qualifications below PhD. Only seven universities have up to 60 percent of their teaching staff with PhD qualifications. There are universities with fewer than five professors. For instance, the Kano State University of Science and Technology, Wudil, established 11 years ago and has been turning out graduates, has only one teaching staff with a professor ranking and 25 lecturers who are PhD degree holders. Similarly, the Kebbi State University of Science and Technology, established in 2006, has only two teaching staff in the professor category and five lecturers who have PhD qualifications. The understaffing of universities in Nigeria has serious implications on quality instruction and academic productivity in the institutions. The situation has led to an increasing culture of visiting lecturership in the system. Few available qualified lecturers are recycled as visiting, adjunct, sabbatical and contract lecturers to work in many universities at the same time. Many of them are always on the road travelling from one university town to another and unable to meet their primary obligations with their tenure-employer (Federal Ministry of Education, 2012). Ogunode (2020) cited NEEDS, (2014) who revealed that as at November 2012, there was 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. This is contrary to the National Universities Commission Benchmark Minimum Academic Standards (BMAS) of 2007 stipulated the following teacher/students ratio: 1:20 in science; 1:15 in Engineering and technology; 1:10 in medicine, veterinary medicine and pharmacy, 1:15 in agricultural and environmental sciences and 1:30 in education, management science, social sciences, law and arts. Even though these teaching staff/students ratios are provided by the benchmark based on carrying capacity, some universities admit students above the carrying capacity, thereby increasing the teacher/student ratio. This has a negative effect on the quality of university education in Nigeria. Inadequate academic staff is a major challenge to the realization of higher education policies in Nigeria. Bamiro, (2012) observed that the problem of de-intellectualization of the academia to low quality of staff of some universities in Nigeria. Where there is inadequate teaching staff and poor quality of Lecturers, the attainment of good quality in the university will be difficult. Ajayi (2007) submitted that good teachers are needed for good education which in turn is indispensable for social change, social transformation and national development. The importance of teachers cannot be over emphasized. Despite the importance of teachers in the attainment of good education,

universities in Nigeria are short of Lecturers to adequately handle teaching and learning activities. The institutions because of inadequate funding are not able to employ additional Lecturers. The few available Lecturers are seriously over worked. Even in some universities in the country, because of shortage of Lecturers their programmes are not accredited by the accreditation agencies. Attainment of good quality in higher education requires teaching staff of adequate quantity and quality. There is shortage of lecturers in many of Nigerian higher institutions, Ogunode & Musa, 2020, NEEDS, 2014)

### ***Institutional Corruption***

Institutional corruption is another challenge preventing effective implementation of universities education policies in Nigeria. Corruption has penetrated the Nigerian higher institutions. Funds made available for implementing some universities education policies ended up in the private pocket. There are many corruption practices going in the higher institutions in Nigeria that are hindering the full implementation of higher educational policies. Ogunode & Adah (2020) observed that institutional corruption is another problem preventing the full implementation of educational policies in Nigeria. Funds allocated for the implementation of educational policies and programme are been diverted by some officials in the ministries of education into private pocket. Ogbonnaya (2010), observed that some heads of educational institutions receive 10% gratification for the execution of any project in their institution. Some parents even give bribes to secondary school principal to have their children admitted in the school. Teachers also give bribes to officials in the school board, so that they will not be transferred. School proprietors give bribes also to officials of education board for them to approve their private schools. There is even sexual harassment among students and teachers in schools. With this, implementing of educational policies is jeopardized. The deep corruption in the system should concern ASUU as well. Much of the little funds that go into the system are stolen. In the course of the face-off, the government claimed “the fraud in the universities is amazing and you will be shocked. ICPC did a system check recently, and it was so shocking. In fact, the worst two organizations they mentioned are the Teaching Hospitals and our universities.” In 2018, the Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project claimed that there were allegations of corruption in several federal universities relating to the unfair allocation of grades; contract inflation; truncation of staff's salary on the payroll; employment of unqualified staff; certificate scandal; examination malpractice; sexual harassment; and issuance of results for expelled students to graduate (Punch, 2019). Osunyikanmi, (2018) opined that Nigeria has been experiencing underwhelming development amidst overwhelming corruption. Education is not insulated from this malaise. Corruption allows a high percentage of the funds allocated to the sector to get diverted into the private accounts of public officials. Ogbondah (2010) submitted that despite the inadequacy of allocations to the public university system, any fund made available often go down the drain through the corrupt practices of those entrusted with the implementation of university programmes because of inadequate monitoring of university income and expenditure, such is the grim state of affairs, thus the future will need a paradigm shift. The report Teaching and Learning: Achieving Quality for All indicates that Nigeria is among the 37 countries that are losing money spent on education, because children are not learning. UNESCO disclosed that the menace is already costing governments USD 129 billion a year. Hence, the amount

being spent on education is much lower than the figure in the budget. Transparency International says 66 percent of the money Nigerian governments allocate to education is stolen by corrupt officials (NEEDS, 2014). According to A report, corruption is commonplace in education systems across the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). "This affects education access, quality, inclusion and learning outcomes with devastating consequences, not only for national economic growth but also for the life chances of children, their families and communities," the report said. The report highlighted "Resource misallocation, corrupt procurement, exchange of sex for grades, examination malpractices, fake qualifications, teacher absenteeism, and corrupt recruitment practices" as the various corruption risks and challenges facing education systems in all the countries (Premiumtimes 2020).

### ***Lack of Political Will***

There is a lack of political will on the side of the government to fully implement the universities education policies in the Nigerian higher institutions. There are many other sectors of the economy that the government consider more important than the educational sector and that needs more allocation than the educational sector. Ade-Ajayi, (2003) stated that politics is having a tremendous influence on Universities in Nigeria. This could because a result of political instability particularly during the Military era. The Nigerian society comprises different political parties. At any time in point that a political party comes to power, it tries to keep to its own agenda or campaign promises. Hence, the ruling party lacks the political will to fund, carry out the programme of activities outside its agenda and therefore no continuity. Even in the universities, different unions operate, those in the minority groups lose out while the majority dances with the ruling system for political appointments. The system is affected negatively because there is no unity or cordial relationship for the performance of the institutional objectives because of on fighting and lack of understanding to sustain the system (Udida, Bassey, & Udofia, 2009).

### ***Insecurity Challenge***

Insecurity challenge facing the country and many higher institutions across the country is another challenge that is slowing down the implementation of many higher education policies in the country. There many projects that the security problems have prevented to take off in many higher institutions and without such infrastructural facilities down the policies cannot take place. For example, many ICT projects have been abandoned in many higher institutions in the Northern part of Nigeria due to insecurity. Osunyikanmi, (2018) submitted that the insurgency masterminded by Boko Haram has persistently taken peace away from north-eastern Nigeria. The problem singly accounts for over 60 percent of 10.5 million out-of-school children in Nigeria. Majority of the affected children live in the hotbed of the crisis. Ogunode & Adah (2020) observed that insecurity challenge is another major challenge facing the implementation of educational policies in Nigeria. Many educational policies designed and formulated to improve the access to education and improve the quality of education have been frustrated due to the insecurity problem in the country. Many educational programmes like safe school initiative, girl child education, women education and universal basic programme have been slowed down by the various forms of insecurity problem facing the country.

According to the thisday (2018) the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) says Boko Haram has killed 2,300 teachers in Nigeria's northeast since the start of the insurgency in 2009. In the 2018 UNESCO global education monitoring report (GEM), the UN agency said 19,000 teachers have been displaced in the region, affecting access to education. "In north-eastern Nigeria, as of late 2017, there were 1.6 million IDPs, including about 700,000 school-age children, as a result of violent attacks on civilians by Boko Haram, which began in 2009,." The report read in part. "Boko Haram has destroyed nearly 1,000 schools and displaced 19,000 teachers. Reports show that Boko Haram had killed almost 2,300 teachers by 2017). "Latest education needs assessment found that out of 260 school sites, 28% had been damaged by bullets, shells or shrapnel, 20% had been deliberately set on fire, 32% had been looted and 29% had armed groups or military in close proximity." Insecurity challenge is preventing effective monitoring and evaluation of educational institutions across the country. The insecurity challenge facing the country is another challenge preventing effective administration and management of higher institutions in Nigeria (Obi 2015, Abubakar 2016, Ogunode & Musa, 2020, Ogunode, Ahmed, Deborah & Abubakar 2020)).

### ***Political Instability***

Political instability in the country is also responsible for low implementation of universities education policies in the country. Often, government in power would suspend the continuity of many higher education policies and plans developed by the previous administrations. There was a time in Nigeria that the minister of education came up with a policy of one student one laptop for all the Nigerian students. That policy was stopped when the new administration came on board due to different in political agenda. Political instability is another major problem preventing effective implementation of educational policies in Nigeria. Political instability is one feature of third world countries like Nigeria. Odukoya (2011) observed that politics and frequent changes in government tend to affect the implementation of the National Policy on Education negatively. He argued that the instability in the system of governance, coupled with constant changes in ministers and commissioners, led to the level of the crises the national education system has witnessed over the years and the inconsistency and often contradictory nature of the educational policies and practices. Ogunode & Adah (2020) observed that many educational policies have been put to hold due to changes in government or administration from one political party to another political. Manafa, (2011) submitted that is, constant change in power or system of government in the past has contributed to the problem of ineffective implementation of the policy statement of Education For All (EFA). Variation in non-uniformity in the system of primary education, instability which characterized the Nigerian Political Scene has always led to changes in educational policies, most especially the primary school level. Each government rationalized the policy on education on its own accord.

### ***Poor Policy Formulation***

Poor policy formulation is another problem affecting the implementation of universities education policies in Nigeria. Many higher education policies were drafted without considering the local environment, the economic factors, the social factor and

the political factor. The inability of the designers of the policies to consider a critical factor that will determine the implementation will hinder the implementation of the policies. Some of the policy programmes, however, failed to produce the desired results and became the unenviable target of public criticisms and conduit pipes for siphoning public funds by a powerful education mafia. The failure of some of these policy programmes typifies the wide gap existing between policy pronouncements and policy implementation in Nigeria. Tijani (1995) describes the failures of some of the educational programmes to poor implementation strategies in terms of planning, execution and the adaptation of the policy objectives to societal needs and expectations. Sani (1994) argued that it is always at the implementation stage that most policy programmes of the Government on education experience obstinate problems. Akpa and Udoh (2003) submitted Nigeria the country was in dire need of trained, experienced and seasoned educational administrators at all levels of the system, among others, was rightly recognized by. In further concurrence.

### ***Strike Actions***

The continuous strike by the different union groups in the Nigerian higher institutions is another problem preventing the implementation of higher education policies in Nigeria. Some educational policies are designed for implementation within a timeframe. When the time for implementation comes and the various higher institutions that are supposed to participate fully in the implementation are on strike. Such programme and policies objectives may not be realized due to strike actions. The National Universities commission came up with ICT capacity development programme for both academic and non-academic staff in the Nigeria universities. Many times this programme has been suspended due to strike actions in the Universities. 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 a 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. An enormous challenge to quality higher education in Nigeria is the incessant staff union disputes and subsequent closures of the institutions. Closure of the institutions affects staff productivity and the realization of educational aim and objectives (Romina, 2013).

### ***Weak Supervision Agencies***

The various commissions and agencies were established with the responsibilities of ensuring that university education policies are implemented as drafted are weak. Meanwhile, the inability of these agencies and commissions to discharge their functions effectively is also responsible for poor implementation of higher education policies in the Nigerian higher institutions. The National Universities Commission seems to have been ineffective in performing its regulatory roles, as organizational effectiveness is a measure of the extent to which an organization realizes its goals (Olaleye & Oyewole, 2016). Moja (2000) observed that planning, supervision and monitoring mechanisms for

the entire education system have been very weak. According to Ogunode, Dilmurod & Abubakar (2021) there are many challenges facing the supervision of higher institutions in Nigeria and the challenges include; inadequate funding of supervisory agencies, inadequate staff in the supervisory agencies, institutional corruptions, insecurity challenges, weak supervisory agencies, opposition from higher institutions and poor capacity development of staff as the challenges facing the supervision of higher institutions in Nigeria.

### ***Political Influence***

Another challenge preventing effective implementation of the higher institutions policies is the political influence. Political officeholders and politicians like to violate educational policies in the country especially the higher institutions through their actions and activities. Politicians in Nigeria influence admissions for their family members and themselves even when they don't meet the standard. Politicians have at least a slot in any recruitment processes in the Nigerian higher institutions. Sometime their candidates may not qualify; they influence their employment against the policies. The activities of political officeholders and politicians in the Nigerian higher institutions are a threat to the sustainability of higher education policies. Ekundayo and Ajayi, (2009) observed that universities these days are not totally free from the hand of politics outside the university system. Government of the day, most especially in the state-owned varsities, interfere a lot in terms of selection and choice of the chief executive, deans, departmental heads, directors of programmes and above all the selection of vice-chancellors. A situation whereby the members of the university are not totally free to choose who their head without government intervention would not augur well for the university system. Ekundayo and Ajayi, (2009) and Adegbite (2007), submitted that another area of political interference is constitution of Visitation Panels by the Visitor at will instead of the minimum five years intervals, the main aim of which is to witch-hunt or crucifies the vice-chancellors and the university authorities.

### **Way Forward**

To address these challenges, the papers recommend the following; adequate funding of education, provision of adequate infrastructural facilities, fight institutional corruption, ensure adequate security in educational institutions, political officeholders should have positive political will towards implementation of higher education policies, employment of more professional teachers, implement agreed with different union groups, and political officeholders and school administrators should have political will to continue with educational policies meet on groups.

#### **Adequate Funding of Higher Education**

The government should increase the funding of higher institutions in the country.

#### **Provision of Adequate Infrastructural Facilities**

The government should provide adequate infrastructural facilities to all the public higher institutions in the country.

### **Fight institutional Corruption**

The government should fight all forms of corruption in the higher institutions through the various anti-corruption agencies in the country.

### **Ensure Adequate Security**

The government should ensure adequate security in all the part of the country to allow safety of lives and properties. This will enable school administrators to implement the various policies in the higher institutions;

### **Political Will**

Political officeholders should have positive political will towards implementation of higher education policies,

### **Employment of More Professional Teachers**

The government should employ more lecturers in all the higher institutions in the country;

### **Implement Agreement Reached with Different Union Groups**

The government should ensure it implement all agreement reached with different unions in the universities to prevent strike actions by the unions;

### **Policy Continuity**

The political officeholders and school administrators should have political will to continue with educational policies meet on groups.

### **Strengthen the Supervisory Agencies**

The government should restructure and strengthen regulatory and supervision agencies or commissions that are weak. This will help such agencies to improve in their responsibilities. The NUC should be rigorous about its accreditation role, and ensure that it improves its monitoring and evaluation strategies. The Nigerian University system must be ready to operate by the rules by giving total compliance to NUC regulatory roles on minimum academic standard (Olaleye & Oyewole, 2016).

## **Conclusion**

This paper discussed the challenges facing the implementation of university education policies in Nigeria. This work used Secondary data. It sourced the secondary data from print materials and online journal and articles. The paper identified inadequate funding, inadequate infrastructural facilities, inadequate professional lectures, institutional corruption, lack of political will, insecurity challenge, political instability, poor policy formulation, strike actions, weak regulatory agencies and political influence as the challenges preventing effective implementation of higher education policies in Nigeria. To address these challenges, the paper recommends the following; adequate funding of education, provision of adequate infrastructural facilities, fight institutional corruption, ensure adequate security in educational institutions, political officeholders should have positive political will towards implementation of higher education policies, employment of more professional teachers, implement any agreement with different

union groups, and political officeholders and school administrators should have political will to continue with educational policies meet on groups.

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