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## Problems Facing Research Programme In Nigerian Tertiary Institutions

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**Abstract:** This paper examined the problems facing research programme in Nigerian tertiary institutions. Secondary data were used to gather data for the paper. The data were sourced from print and online publication. The paper identified inadequate founding, infrastructure facilities, poor synergy between universities and private institutions, unattractive working conditions for research workers, insecurity, poor mentorship, corruption and mismanagement, weak research institutions, Brain-drain and poor technological advancement/ poor ICT literacy as problems militating in against reassert development in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. To solve these problems, the paper hereby recommended among others that, the government should increase the research funding in tertiary institutions in Nigeria and also create alternative sources for research funding. There is a need for multiple streams of funding, say scientists in Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Problems, Research Programme and Tertiary Institution

### Introduction

Tertiary institution is a form of education where students from post-secondary education acquire more knowledge and specialty. Is the arm of education where the students are majorly prepared for the society, labour forces and research to cover new grounds. These new grounds are persuasively the brain behind tertiary institutions, and it is referred to as research in education language. Tertiary education according to National Policy on Education (FGN, 2013), is the Post -Secondary Section of the National education system, which is given of Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Technology, Colleges of Education, and other tertiary institutions inclusive such as Colleges of Agriculture,

Schools of Health, and the National Teachers' Institutes and others. Development around the world today has placed a demand for research as a necessity for covering new grounds in art, science, social science, and other areas of specialization. Which means the role of education and higher institutions should be re-fertilized for greater productivity to abolish lack of prestige and drift in research.

Education all over the world has become an imperative possession, if the generation that will understand the trend of all aspect of life that is, the political, economics, social much more must emerge (Ubom, Haruna & Aregbesola, 2013). The goals of Tertiary

Education shall be to: Contribute to national development through high level manpower training; provide accessible and affordable quality learning opportunities in formal and informal education in response to the needs and interests of all Nigerians; provide high quality career counseling and lifelong learning programmes that prepare students with the knowledge and skills for self-reliance and the world of work; reduce skill shortages through the production of skilled manpower relevant to the needs of the labour market; promote and encourage scholarship, entrepreneurship and community service; forge and cement national unity; and promote national and international understanding and interaction (FRN, 2013). The capability and productivity of a nation sit on the shoulder of the researchers which are majorly from higher institutions, they gather data that are reliable for analysis and to provide possible solution and further suggestions. It is pertinent to note that research is one of the basic functions of higher institutions, thus neglecting this cogent aspect of the higher institution may turn it to a classroom for singing and dancing, this is not to abuse the performing art but to give research priority in higher institutions and brace-up intellectual properties of knowledge into product and commodities. Societies today depend on research for advancement and sustainability (Ojelade & Aregbesola, 2020).

The research programmes of universities are to aid the social, economic, and technological advancement of the country. Yusuf (2012) noted that the roles of higher institutions' research in national development cannot be overemphasized. However, research in Nigeria's higher institutions (universities, polytechnics, monotechnic, and colleges of education) has yet to make real impact on the technological development of the country and the socio-economic well-being of its citizenry. For instance, research in science have been seen as a one of the key pivotal to drive the vehicle of the nation successfully to the destination of

among the advanced countries of the world (Ojelade, Adams & Aregbesola, 2021). Ebele, Aregbesola & Adams (2014) noted that for developing countries to ensure quality standard of living for citizens, research in science and technology must be taken very serious and paramount among the students, lecturers, and researchers in higher institutions. This necessitates Nigeria as a nation with her wealth of resources and knowledge to be awake to the clarion call of research in higher institution to develop manpower, and to think outside the box as a producer not a consumer.

According to Bachioggi (2016), achieving sustainable development in the world requires knowledge through good research. Research and education bring solutions to challenges nations face in their sustainability (Ibrahim, 2017). The research function of academia remains a prime source of knowledge and critical to sustainable development in education. Research is a curiosity-driven activity that has the purpose of discovery and advancement of knowledge. Similarly, research leads to productivity and creativity that promotes entrepreneurship and technological advancement (Ubom, Ojelade & Aregbesola, 2019). Obviously, there is a crucial need of research in Nigeria particularly the higher institutions as a ground to expose students to work in small groups and cooperate to strengthening body of knowledge, creativity, and innovations. Ojelade, Aregbesola & Akinola, (2017) pointed that our society depends on educational research for sustainable development, to obtain reliable data and to fill existing gap in research. Paul, (2015) see research as a systematic investigation including development, testing and evaluation, designed to develop or to contribute to knowledge, While Aregbesola, (2023) affirmed that research helps science students to be at the center of their learning activities and be fully participated in every step of the way to improve on new,

existing knowledge and to discover novelty in their areas specialization.

Ogunode & Ade (2023) noted research is regarded as the second most important part of the academic programme after the theoretical background. They are carried out to advance the social, economic and technological development of their immediate community and society at large; research is conducted by both staff and students in the university system. Students do their research work as part of their academic programme while staff do research based on their individual interests and specializations. Academic research enhances the intellectual base of researchers while also priming them for promotions and societal recognition. Because of the significance of research, universities are expected to invest heavily on research and conduct research on pressing society challenges. Nigerian universities, in the early 1950s, 1960s and 1970s were identified as among the best universities in the world in terms of teaching and research. Also, Charles *et al.* (2009), while Nigerian universities have focused more on the theoretical composition of academic programmes, research have suffered and declined considerably. Hence, Nigerian Universities which should exist as centers for knowledge creation and dissemination through research have not maintained their full savour. Presently, it has been observed that research in Nigerian universities has declined in terms of quality and quantity. The level at which research is conducted in Nigerian public universities is poor and not encouraging; the research performance is below par in many public universities.

### **Problems of Research in Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria**

There are many problems militating in against reassert development in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Some of them includes; inadequate founding, infrastructure facilities,

poor synergy between universities and private institutions, unattractive working conditions for research workers, insecurity, poor mentorship, corruption and mismanagement, weak research institutions, Brain-drain and poor technological advancement/ poor ICT literacy.

### **Inadequate Founding**

Poor research funding in Nigerian tertiary institutions have affected research development. Research efforts in education and other sectors of the economy hardly attract adequate government funding. In support of this submission, Christian, Reuben, Nwachukwu, (2015) and Ogunode, Jegede, Samuel, Audu & Solomon, (2020) argued that there is a general lack of commitment by government at all levels to the effect that researchers are not given adequate financial support, researches carried out by professionals and associations are usually frustrated due to lack of funds. The annual government budget on education is not adequate, let alone provision of research grants to researchers and research institutes. This has negatively affected the development of the human capital in Nigeria. Okafor (2001) and Charles, Ijeoma & John (2009) noted that lack of funds has affected research in the universities and that there is no sign that these problems will not continue in the future.

A study published by *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications* on 6 January 2022, it was revealed that, though Nigeria has a very large research system, with nearly 200 universities that employed more than 60,000 academic staff at the end of 2019, the country's social science research production does not match the size of its social science research system because of general lack of funding for higher education in Nigeria. Inadequate government funding for education, which is affecting infrastructure at universities, including laboratories to conduct research is a problem according to *University World News* (2022). Ogunode & Onyekachi (2021) and

Ogunode, Onyekachi, & Ayoko (2023) identified the factors responsible for inadequate funding of public universities in Nigeria to include lack of political will, corruption, increase in population, inflation, fall in national revenue and poor financial planning and the implications of underfunding of the public universities include; inadequate infrastructural facilities, shortage of academics staff, poor quality of education, brain-drain and strike action.

### **Infrastructure Facilities**

Shortage of infrastructure facilities in tertiary institutions has contributed to poor development to research in Nigerian tertiary institutions. Attesting to this, Christian, et al (2015) noted that in Nigeria, the necessary equipment, facilities, and materials needed for meaningful research are either lacking or grossly inadequate.

However, adequate facilities will assist lecturers, learners and the society develop knowledge, skills, equipment and freedom to perform noble task useful for improving socio-economic standard of the nation (Ojelade, Aregbesola, Olatunde-Aiyedun & Haastrup. 2022). This is particularly the case in sciences where teachers and lecturers complain seriously of lack of science equipment's to carry out their experiments. This has contributed to low human capital development in the sciences which is the bedrock of any technological advancement of any country. Also, current journals, periodicals and textbooks are difficult to get in the libraries.

Also, Ebehikhalu & Dawam (2017) submitted that the abysmal state teaching and learning infrastructure in Nigerian Universities is a consequence of the financial imbroglio in the nation's ivory tower, due to government refusal to accord the university its pride of place in terms of funding, and the high level of corruption in the management of universities' resources. Nigerian universities have been grossly underfunded and the consequence of this has manifested in the deficiency of teaching

and learning infrastructural facilities development in the universities. Specifically, Ogunode (2020) and Ogunode, & Jegede (2021) submit that factors responsible for inadequate infrastructural facilities in Nigerian public universities include; underfunding, increased student population, corruption, poor infrastructural facilities planning, poor supervision and inflation. The implication of inadequate infrastructural facilities in the Nigerian public universities includes; poor quality of education, poor teaching and learning, low productivity, brain drain and overcrowding of lecture halls.

### **Poor Synergy between Tertiary institutions and Private Institutions**

In Nigeria, another factor that has contributed to poor research development is poor synergy between tertiary institutions and private institutions. Somadina, Ndayebom, & Ogunode (2023) and Ogunode & Ade (2023) lamented the poor relationship and collaboration between research institutes and industries in Nigeria which has affected the development of the research output or outcome of various research institutes. Ikwaakor and Akunna (2022) observed that industry/business support of research in Nigerian universities is relatively non-existent, compared with the level of partnership between industry/business and universities in developed countries. The oil and gas industry, however is an exception, as it provides support in the form of technical workshops, buildings, vehicles, computer hardware and software to affiliated departments of Nigerian universities. But the oil industry can do better by sponsoring and facilitating intentional and strategic research projects that develop local technologies.

Among the issues aggravating the inadequate funding of research institutes in Nigeria according to Ragasa, Babu, Abdullahi,, Abubakar,(2010) is the lack of collaboration between the research institutes and the private

sector/industries. About 74% of research institutes in Nigeria have no international collaborators, and 61 have no regional or national collaborators. National Centre for Technology Management, or NACETEM, found in 2011 that scientists attributed a decline in research productivity to various constraints, including a lack of funding for research (87%); inadequate supply of electricity (82%); lack of research facilities (78%); obsolete facilities (67%) and poor attitude to collaboration among researchers (29%).

### **Unattractive Working Conditions for Research Workers**

Researchers in various tertiary institutions in Nigeria are likely exposed to unfriendly research environment which has affected research development. Christian, et al (2015) asserted that the pitiable conditions under which research workers operate is another problem that militates against research development in Nigeria. Research workers are not well paid, and they lack incentives on the job. Both those who reside in official government quarters and those that live inside the town are faced with catalogue of problems ranging from shortage of water supply, epileptic power supply, poor transportation system to family problems. All these problems serve as potent sources of distractions to the best brains. Given these problems the research worker in Nigeria will not be able to perform as well as their counterparts in the developed countries where the conditions are very conducive. A study published by *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications* on 6 January 2022, revealed that the country's social science research production is underperforming compared to its size. The reason for this, according to this study, is because research is poorly funded, researchers devote too little time to research as a result of a poor organizational climate, and the research support system is weak in Nigeria.

### **Insecurity**

Insecurity is a major problem affecting the

administration of research programmes in the Nigerian public universities. Many research programme in the Nigerian public universities have been put to hold or stopped, especially in the universities in the Northern part of Nigeria because of the insecurity challenges leading to close of universities. Ogunode & Abubakar (2020) noted that the insecurity challenge facing the country is another challenge preventing effective administration and management of higher institutions in Nigeria. The insurgent in the Northern part of Nigeria have attacked many higher institutions disrupting their academic programme, killing students and destroying infrastructural facilities meant for teaching and learning. Insecurity in Nigeria and in the Northeast has done more damages to the educational infrastructural facilities.

The insurgent has destroyed many school facilities from basic to higher education. Insecurity has contributed to poor deployment of ICT facilities and administration in the various educational institutions in the northern part of Nigeria. The insurgent kidnapped some lecturers and researchers on their way to survey an oil site in Borno state. A local media reported that lecturers were kidnapped by the Islamist militant group while on an oil exploration trip to Magumeri, in the Northeastern Borno State in July 2017, while the police officers were kidnapped in a raid on a convoy (Sources, Africa 2017). BB-www.projecttopics (undated) submitted that insecurity problem is another big problem affecting the development of research programme in the Nigerian public universities. Another major challenge for research in Nigeria is insecurity. Researchers' inability to move freely within the country while carrying out research affects many researchers in Nigeria. When you couple insecurity with the research work.

### **Poor Mentorship**

Another factor that has slow down the development of research in various tertiary institutions in Nigeria is poor mentorship.

Ogunode & Ade (2023) opined that Mentorship is very important in the development and sustainability of research programmes in the universities and it helps to preserve the culture and value of research in the universities. Mentorship provides the platform for young researchers to grow in the research profession. However, poor mentorship in the Nigerian university system have affected the development of research programmes in the various institutions. The relationship between the experienced researchers and the young researchers is not as cordial as before due to many barriers that have crept in to create the gap that is now visible. According to Okebukola (2002), brain drain can be attributed as one of the main reasons for the diminishing scope of mentoring of junior researchers by seasoned and senior researchers. Furthermore, Ola (2012) submitted that many experienced and young lecturers do not see the need in mentoring the junior lecturers and this has affected the quality of research programmes in the universities.

### **Corruption and Mismanagement**

Corruption in the administration of research programme in Nigeria have also affected research development. Ogunode *et al.* (2021) concluded that corruption is another problem that is preventing the administration and development of research in Nigerian public universities. Funds released by the government for the administration and development of research programme in the public universities have been mismanaged and misappropriated. Some funds are being looted by the researchers or lecturers. Corruption in tertiary institutions, especially in the public universities is a challenge to the development of research programme. Nwakpa (2015) ascertained that Nigeria's problem of funding education is not the lack of sufficient money, but that of too much money wasted through mismanagement and fraudulent practices. According to Lamido (2013), the level of corruption in the country

has assumed a threatening dimension which is also disastrous and destructive to the economy.

This has negative effects on education and research. Corruption has eaten so deep into the fabrics of the national life that even the education sector is not spared. Ultimately, this has affected the quality and quantity of scientific findings, up-to-date equipment and infrastructure and facilities for good research. The removal of these constraints will bring a glorious future to Nigeria. Ogunode *et al.* (2021b) submitted that corruption in the university system have affected volume of funds allocated for research programme. Ogunode, Josiah, & Ajape (2021) and Ogunode, Ohunene & Olatunde-Aiyedun (2022) identified the following as the reasons for high financial corruption in the public universities in Nigeria: corrupt school administrators, lecturers and students; weak monitoring and evaluation system; weak trade unions; political interference; weak educational system; and poor accountability system. Also, they identified the implication of financial corruption on the public universities in Nigeria including a reduction in the volume of funds, inadequate facilities, shortage of staff, poor quality of university education, poor academic programme accreditation status, strike actions, and bad international image.

### **Weak Research Institutions**

There are many public institutions established for carrying out research and many others are to support research programmes in the universities. Many of such institutions are weak. According to the study, a lack of interest from policymakers is a reason for the limited research funding. Instead, researchers use their salaries to conduct research, publish articles and to attend conferences. Consequently, they lack motivation and training to do research, and this could hinder the country's achievement of sustainable development goals, according to the study published by the open-access

publication *Frontiers* in October 2021. Also, Ikwuakor, and Akunna (2022) noted that governments play a vital role in research and innovation. They are partners, as well as providers and supporters of resources. Governments also constitute a huge marketplace for products of research and innovation. When governments fail to act in any of these capacities, research and innovation falter. This is the case with Nigeria. The Nigerian government has a wonderful science, technology and innovation policy published by the Federal Ministry of Science and Technology (National Science, Technology and Innovation (ST&I) Policy, 2012). If the policy were implemented by 50%, Nigeria would be in a great research position. But that is not the case; the policy appears to be on paper only.

Furthermore, bureaucratic bottlenecks persist. The agencies that fund and manage research activities, such as TETFund, Petroleum Technology Development Fund (PTDF), Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), Ministry of Science and Technology, Ministry of Education, and National Universities Commission (NUC) lack proper structure and focus for research procurement and management of their grants. TETFund, for example, grants billions of Naira as interventions for Institutional Based Research (IBR) and National Research Fund (NRF). But these interventions are neither regular nor well managed. The agency lacks research or program managers that one can call anytime and get proper answers. Indexed or catalogued repositories of final reports are either missing, or not made available to the universities, leading to missed collaborative research opportunities. The above inefficiencies, in part, account for little or no return on Nigeria's research investments.

### **Brain-drain**

The study in *Frontiers* titled 'Focused Research on the Challenges and Productivity of Researchers in Nigerian Academic Institutions revealed that Nigerian scientists attributed the

decline in research productivity to various constraints, including a lack of research funding (42.98%); a lack of motivation (8.85% and brain drain (17.11%). Ogunode & Abubakar (2020) viewed brain drain as massive movement of professional from developing countries to developed countries to work because of a better working condition. The brain – drain problem has affected many higher institutions in the country, losing many of their professors to foreign universities. The massive movement of these lecturers is causing major lecturer gap in the Nigerian higher and in the research programme. Also, Okebukola (2002) concluded that there is diminishing scope of mentoring junior researchers by seasoned and senior researchers due to brain drain. Factors responsible for Brain-drain in Nigerian public universities according to Ogunode (2020); Ogunode & Atobauka, (2021) include: poor motivation, an uncondusive working environment, insecurity, underfunding and political interferences. The implication of brain drains in the Nigerian public universities includes a shortage of lecturers, poor quality of education and a high student-teacher ratio. Ebele, Aregbesola and Adams, (2013) stated that inadequate research is holding back Africa's economic growth per year, reducing productivity and the number of young inventors because of brain drain yearly.

### **Poor Technological Advancement/ Poor ICT literacy**

Most researchers in Nigeria have not developed with technology. Most researchers in Nigeria are only well versed with pen and paper, which is a challenge of research in the country. This is because most of the materials needed to carry out a study are now stored on a technological database. A lack of understanding of how this database works can lead to spending a lot of time surfing the internet for information without results to show for it. To combat this problem, there is a need for technological training to be inculcated into the educational curriculum to train the

researcher on technological advancements (Ogunode, Jegede, Samuel, Audu & Solomon, 2020).

### Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper examined the problem facing research programme in Nigerian tertiary institutions. The paper concluded that inadequate founding, infrastructure facilities, poor synergy between universities and private institutions, unattractive working conditions for research workers, insecurity, poor mentorship, corruption and mismanagement, weak research institutions, Brain-drain and poor technological advancement/ poor ICT literacy as problems militating in against reassert development in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

To solve these problems, the paper hereby recommended the following:

1. The government should increase the research funding in tertiary institutions in Nigeria and also create alternative sources for research funding. There is a need for multiple streams of funding, say scientists in Nigeria.

2. The governments should provide adequate infrastructure facilities in all the in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. This will help to carry out research effectively.

3. government should ensure tertiary institutions calendar are stable The government should direct managers of tertiary institutions to harmonize the calendar of tertiary institutions in Nigeria public universities calendar and implement all agreement reached with different unions groups in the universities to avoid strike actions.

4. Tertiary institutions in Nigeria should develop a programme for mentorship. This will help to develop research programme in the tertiary institutions.

5. The private sector and non-governmental organization have a lot to contribute to the development of research in the Nigerian higher institutions. Tertiary institutions should collaborate with industries and companies. There is a need for a collaborative effort from

the government, corporate organizations, and international organizations to aid researchers' work through regular training and financial assistance.

6. Government should provide adequate security in all tertiary institutions across Nigeria.

7. The government should motivate researchers in tertiary institutions across Nigeria. This will help to prevent brain-drain in the system.

8. The government agencies and other international organization sponsoring research in tertiary institutions across Nigeria. This will help many researchers access the grants.

9. The government should provide conducive research environment by making the right policies and implementing them.

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