

## Accountability in University System in Nigeria: Challenges and Way Forward

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**Abstract:** This paper looked at Accountability in the University system in Nigeria and its Challenges. Secondary data were adopted for the paper. The secondary data were collected from online and print publications. The paper concluded that lack of political will, weak accountability culture, weak labour unions, weak participation of stakeholder, poor implementation of accountability policies, poor monitoring of universities by anti-corruption agencies and other regulatory institutions, political influence and lack of autonomy amongst others are the factors responsible for poor accountability in the university system in Nigeria. To address these challenges, the paper suggested that Federal and State Governments should develop the political will to ensure visitation panels are constituted every five years and the white paper released should be implemented as at when due, to promote accountability in the universities. University administrators and managers should be trained and retrained on the importance of ensuring and promoting the culture of accountability in the universities. The various labour unions in the universities should be proactive in ensuring accountability in the universities. Also, autonomy should be granted to the universities to eliminate political influence activities in the universities.

**Keywords:** Accountability, Education, University system.

### Introduction

The Nigerian universities comprised the public universities, private universities and Inter-University Centres (IUCs). The University system is classified among the tertiary education in Nigeria. University education is the highest peak of education that is characterized with teaching, researching and community services. University education is an organized education received after post-secondary school education. The university education is research inclined and agent of society transformation.

In Nigeria, the goals of the university education is captured in the goals of the tertiary education. According to (FRN 2013), the goals of Tertiary Education are 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 counselling 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).

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

The UNESCO conference on the development of higher education in the social, cultural and economic development of Africa in 1963 recommended the following goals of universities: to maintain adherence and loyalty to world academic standards; to ensure the unification of Africa; to encourage revelation and appreciation of African culture and heritage and to dispel misconceptions of Africa through research and teaching of African studies; to develop completely, the human resources for meeting manpower needs; to train the whole man for nation building and to evolve over the years, a truly African pattern of higher learning dedicated to Africa and its people. University education goals can also include manpower development, cultural development of citizens who would function as leaders in society and technological development.

University system is designed to be self-governed by insiders who are appointed as the managers and administrators. The nature of self-governed makes it compulsory for the university system to be accountable to the stakeholders and the government that have invested hugely in the system. The university system is built on a principle of accountability and autonomy. The rate of investment of human and financial resources in the universities make it to be accountable to the public. (Leveille, 2006) submitted that Universities are increasingly urged to be accountable because the school system which facilitates the objectives of education is a creation of the society which is required to maintain check and balances. Put differently, the university system is funded by society through taxes paid, thus it is imperative that it becomes accountable to society. Government needs access to relevant information on the operation of the university system to determine whether the state is getting good value for its investment. The investment is normally high. The society specifies certain expectation that the universities will provide to meet certain educational needs of the society.

In Nigeria, both the federal and state governments have institutionalized policies and programme in the university system to ensure accountability. Such policies is the appointment of governing councils as the supreme head of universities and the visitation panels. The laws of Federal Republic of Nigeria guiding the establishment of Federal Universities and Inter-University Centres in Nigeria require that, from time to time, stock taking on the activities of those Universities be carried out by a Panel of knowledgeable individuals for the purpose of improving their efficiency and effective management. The visitations to the Federal Universities and Inter-University Centres are conducted every five years. The visitation was for a period of one month, from 15th February to 15th March 2011. The Terms of Reference- for the situation are as follows:

- (i) To inquire into the level of implementation )I) of the white paper on the last visitation report ;
- (ii) To look into the leadership quality 01' each university in terms of the roles of

Governing Council, the Vice- Chancellors and its Principal Officers;

(iii) To look in 0 the financial management of each institution including Statutory Allocations and Internally Generated Revenue over the recommended period and determine whether it was in compliance with appropriate regulations;

(iv} To investigate the application of funds, particularly the special grants, loans meant for specific projects in order to determine the status of such projects and their relevance for further funding:

(v) To examine the adequacy of the staff and staff development programmes of each university;

(vi) To determine the relationship between the University and the various statutory bodies it interacts with according to its law for the purpose of supervision, planning, finance. discipline, guidance and any other relationships the university may have in dealing with the said bodies including the University Governing Council, the National Universities Commission and Federal Ministry of Education as well as the Visitor; and

(vii) To examine the "Law" establishing the University including the relationship -between the various internal organs, units and offices and indicate the ways the law has been observed by the competent authorities and also suggest any modifications to the law considered necessary or desirable to enable the University to better achieve its objectives ;

(viii) To trace the historical evolution of the University and take stock of its net achievements and problems as well as its style and sense of direction and advise on what fundamental or expedient corrections are needed to enable the University to better achieve the objectives set for it ;

(ix) To examine the general security in the University, how the University has dealt with it and recommend appropriate measures to deal with it;

(x) To examine the processes and structures of the mechanisms for the discipline of students in each University in order to ascertain compliance with due process of the rule of law (University of Ibadan 2010).

Also, federal government agencies and ministries such as NUC, the NCCE and TET-Fund are responsible for annual auditing of the universities. Despite all these policies and programme, the university system is still characterized with a lots of challenges. These problems include corruption and misappropriation, poor quality output in term of students' grandaunts, decay in infrastructure facilities, poor quality of education, strike actions and weak leaders. These problems have compounded the issues in the universities system before. It is important to examine the challenges facing accountability in the university system in Nigeria with the view of finding last solutions.

### **Accountability in University Education**

Accountability means different things to different people and it has been defined in many ways. The term accountability as a general policy construct according to (Leveille 2006) is the responsibility (if not legal obligation) of campus and system administrators, as well as governmental officials, to provide their supervisors (ultimately, the public) with reports of their stewardship of public funds. It includes a range of policy issues, not all of which are related to student outcomes. (Hanushek & Raymond (2005) defined it as a broad concept that could be addressed in many ways, such as using political processes to assure democratic accountability, introducing market-based reforms to increase accountability to parents and children, or developing peer-based accountability systems to increase the professional accountability of teachers. The most commonly considered definition of accountability involves using administrative data-based mechanisms aimed at increasing student achievement (Figlio & Loeb, 2011). (Aluede et al., 2012) stated that University accountability is a direct response to the public demand for improved educational outcomes. Policymakers generally acknowledge that schools are in crisis. Declining academic performance, increasing dropout rates, inadequate preparation for the workplace, low quality of educational output are some of the symptoms. Accountability refers to the duty to render account of work performed to a body that has authority to modify the performance by the use of sanction or reward (Leveille, 2005).

From the above, accountability in public institutions is equated to openness in resources management. Accountability in public institutions is *the acceptance of responsibility for institution's own actions*. It implies a willingness to be transparent, allowing others to observe the activities in the system. Accountability in public institutions is *the concept of answerability by the institution, individual or a department for the performance or outcomes of specific activities carried out within the institution*. Accountability in public institutions *is the state of being accountable*; liability to be called on to render an account to the public on the affairs of the institution.

The basic purposes of the concept of accountability are focusing on objectives of organization, fixing responsibility, optimizing relationship between resources -- human, physical and or fiscal results, ensuring prudent resource allocation, improved resource utilization patterns and better information on the performance qualities of personnel and teachers as they relate organizational objectives and ensure that teachers are held responsible for students' results or learning outcomes.

The basic requirements for planning accountability include development and refinement of meaningful goals for education, the translation of such goals and objectives into measurable terms; the development of criteria needed to determine the amount of progress made toward goal achievement and the development and implementation of procedures appropriate for evaluation and for reporting on the progress made (O'Day, 2002).

(NOUN 2009) outline the reasons for accountability in higher education which can be summarized as:

a) cost/value ratio of higher education; b) higher expectations of technology and scientific breakthrough; c) focus on educating the masses for higher revenues and prestige rather than educational core and academic standards; d) responsibility for local community outreach and participation; e) accountability demands from internal and external audits for educational quality; f) the general effort by the government to reduce federal domestic spending, especially for education and other social programmes; g) the concurrent devolution of responsibility for education to the states-at a time when our economy was in recession due to increasing international economic competition, high unemployment, demographic and technological changes; h) reduction in federal aid and revenue; i) skyrocketing cost of higher education, which is increasing much faster than inflation; j) the public function of higher education i.e. the preparation of students to assume professional roles and the connection to societal issues, and k) public funding/accountability versus academic freedom and institutional autonomy.

According to (Durosaro1998), the five alternative means of accountability in education are:

- (1) Goal Accountability - the focus on evaluation is on the appropriateness of the goals and objectives in relation to national policies on education.
- (2) Program Accountability - the focus is on the relevance of the set goals.
- (3) Outcome Accountability -the focus is on the outcome of the project that is measuring of educational input in relation to educational output.
- (4) Performance Accountability - the focus is on efficiency and effectiveness.
- (5) Probity and Legality Accountability - the focus is on compliance with laws and regulations and in spending funds according to the approved budget.(Trow1996) grouped accountability in university education into two dimensions. The first one is the distinction between internal and external accountability; while the second dimension involves legaland financial accountability as well as moral and scholarly (academic) accountability (Knapp & Feldman, 2012).

Accountability in the university system can also be viewed from the following;

### **Input Accountability Model**

In this input model, all resources brought into the universities in an academic session must be accounted for to the stakeholders in the institutions. These input resources include funds from the

government, private sector, alums, donations received. Infrastructural facilities available for the session, numbers of academic and non-academic staff, number of students admitted and all resources, policies document used and number of leaders inputted into the system must be written down and documented by the managers of the institutions. In this case, education quality is regarded as the natural result of achievement of quality resources and inputs for the institution. Due to the pressure of diverse expectations of multiple constituencies, an educational institution may be required to pursue different goals and conform to diverse specifications and standards. The resource-input model assumes that scarce and quality resources are necessary for educational institutions to achieve diverse objectives and provide quality services within a period of time. The education quality indicators may include high quality student intake, more qualified staff recruited, better facilities and equipment, better staff-student ratio, and more financial support from the central education authority, parents, alumni, or outside agents (Cameron,1994)

### **Process Accountability Model**

The process model demands that every resources inputted into the system should be processed as stipulated in the policies document. The supervision must be effective, resources must be used as stated and processed resources must be accounted for by the managers and administrators of the institutions. This Model assumes that an educational institution is of high education quality if its internal functioning is smooth and healthy. The process in an education institution is a transformational process which converts inputs into performance and output. A smooth internal institutional process enables staff to perform the teaching task effectively and students to gain fruitful learning experiences easily. Important internal activities or practices in the educational institution are often taken as important indicators of quality. Leadership, communication channels, participation, co-ordination, adaptability, planning, decision-making, social interactions, social climate, teaching methods, classroom management, learning strategies, and learning experiences are often used as indicators of education quality. Process in an educational institution generally includes management process, teaching process, and learning process. Thus, the selection of indicators may be based on these processes, classified as management quality indicators (e.g. leadership, decision making), teaching quality indicators (e.g. teaching efficacy, teaching methods), and learning quality indicators (e.g. learning attitudes, attendance rate) (Cheng, 1994).

### **Output Accountability Model**

Output model asks for total accountability of the final product outputted. Does the product meet up with the vision statement and the goals of the institutions as stated?. According to this Model, education quality is defined as the satisfaction of strategic constituencies. The Satisfaction Model assumes that the satisfaction of strategic constituencies of an educational institution is critical to its survival (Cheng 1990) and, therefore, education quality should be determined by the extent to which the performance of an educational institution can satisfy the needs and expectations of its powerful constituencies. In the school setting, the powerful constituencies may include teachers, management board members, parents, students, alumni, and officers at the education authorities. Since the objective measurement of quality achievement is often technically difficult and conceptually controversial, satisfaction of powerful constituency's is often used instead of some objective indicators as the critical element to assess quality in education institution. The indicators of education quality are often the satisfaction of students, teachers, parents, administrators, the education authority, the management committee, alumni, etc. If the management board demands high achievement in academic and athletic activities, the education institution can be seen to be of high quality only if these demands are satisfied (Akpan, undated).

### **Challenges Militating Against Accountability in University System in Nigeria**

There are many factors that has contributed to poor accountability in the university system in Nigeria. Some of these factors includes; lack of political will, weak accountability culture, weak labour unions, weak participation of stakeholder, poor implementation of accountability policies, poor

monitoring of universities by anti-corruption agencies and other regulatory institutions, political influence and lack of autonomy.

### **Lack of Political Will**

The lack of political will on the federal and state government to ensure accountability in both the federal and state universities across the country have resulted to poor accountability in the universities. One of the instrument set up by the federal government to ensure accountability and prudent resources management in the federal universities is the formulation of visitation panels. (Mark 2018) noted that the government had set up visitation panels to audit federal universities and inter-university centres. Visitation panels are constituted by the federal government every five years to visit and verify all financial records of the federal universities with the aims of curtaining corruption and ensure accountability in the universities. It is unfortunately that the government lacks the political will to ensure that the visitation panels' recommendations and white paper report are implemented. The Academic Staff Union of Universities, Federal University of Technology, Minna chapter, blamed poor accountability by university administrators as one of the factors impeding the development of public universities. It also said if the Tertiary Education Trust Fund monitored how its intervention funds to universities were spent, the institutions would be in a better place than they are currently. The ASUU Chairman, Prof Gbolahan Bolarin of FUT Minna observed that the failure of the Federal Government to release the White Paper on the visitation panels to federal universities and inter-university centres in the country was also an enabler of the rot in the system. The government had set up visitation panels to audit federal universities and inter-university centres. According to him, one of the reasons ASUU embarked on strike in 2022 was the failure of the government to release the White Paper on the visitation. Bolarin stated, "If the university handlers are applying funds properly and TETFund is monitoring them as expected, our universities will be better than what we have now. According to him, up till now, the Federal Government is yet to release the White Paper as required by law (May, 7, 2023. Punch)

### **Weak Accountability Culture**

The weak accountability culture in most public institutions and universities have also constituted the problem of poor accountability in the university system in Nigeria. The university system are designed to functions on the principles of objectives, academic freedom, accountability and prudent management of resources. The university system by nature and character should ensure accountability to the stakeholders in the system. (Ola 2017) lamented that it is unfortunate that most tertiary institutions in Nigeria do not exhibit the culture of accountability in term of resources management. Successful accountability in the universities starts with a shared vision, common set of goals, and clearly defined, easily measured performance indicators which are made available to the public. Poor accountability is public institution problem in Nigeria and have found its way into the universities in Nigeria. (Deji (2017; Ogunode, Ohibime & Jedege 2023; Ogunode 2023) confirmed that many institutions in Nigeria lack the culture of accountability due to Africa culture. The culture of accountability have been discovered to be lacking in most Nigerian's public institutions. The political leaders in the country have not demonstrated the accountability culture in their various position in power. So, the weak accountability culture among the leaders in the universities have aided the poor accountability and transparency in the system.

### **Weak Labour Unions**

The weakness of the different Labour Unions in the university system have also contributed to the poor accountability in the universities. The Nigerian universities are blessed with different unions namely. The academic staff is the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), the non-academic staff, is the Non-Academic Staff Union of Educational and Associated Institutions (NASU), the senior non-academic staff, is the Senior Staff Association of Nigeria Universities, (SSANU) and the Technologists, and is National Association of Academic Technologists (NAAT). All these Labour Unions exist in the public universities to protect the welfare of their members and to serve as watchdog in the system. Trade unions in any institutions ensures that institutions are accountable to

the public in all areas of the institution' mandate. These unions are among other things saddled with the responsibility of ensuring accountability in the system in term of resources management and question the unethical practices in the system. When trade unions are not effective in the system, the results are often wastage, corruption and maladministration. (Ola 2017) posited that the trade unions in the universities are supposed to be the watchdog in the system and ensuring things are done properly. (Musa 2014) and (Faith 2017) argued that majority of stakeholders that are supposed to be agitating for accountability in the universities are weak and ineffective and that has led to the situation where we find ourselves. Suffice it to say that the ineffectiveness of the unions in the university system have given birth to the poor accountability in the system.

### **Weak Participation of Stakeholders**

The weakness of university' stakeholders in participating in the activities and programme of the universities have also contributed to poor accountability in the universities. Those who participate in the process of achieving educational goals and objectives of higher education are known as the stakeholders. They are people whose concern is for the progress of the institution (Oduwaiye, & Famaye, 2023). According to (Lee 2021) stakeholders reduce the emphasis from the entire community to those individual in the community who have vested enthusiasm in what is happening in higher education and those who are affected by policies in higher education. These are people who are involved in the process of achieving educational goals. (Mc Cowan, Janmaat, & Rao 2016) listed stakeholders in higher education to include lecturers, government, students, school owners, parents, Nigeria Universities Commission and the community leaders. Also, Stakeholders in the Universities in Nigeria include; students, parents, government institutions, private institutions, international institutions and regulatory agencies. Stakeholders play an important role in the overall functioning of the university. They have major influence in decisions that affects the school culture. They are responsible for providing quality leadership opportunities that transcend the college experience and are applicable in one's future career path. Lack of interest on the part of the parents and students on what goes on the universities and poor input from the various stakeholders have affected the development of accountability in the system. A study by (Adeoye 2012) established that some universities in Nigeria do not engage stakeholders in matter of decision making of the universities. They went further and concluded that non-participation of the stakeholders in the decision making of the universities is responsible for most internal crisis in the universities. Also, Adeola & Bukola (2014) in their study discovered that students' participation in the university' governance is low in some universities in Nigeria. (Ogunode, Jedge & Solution (2020) concluded that many school administrators do not invite the students' unions to discuss issues affecting the students rather, they impose policies on the students. Olayem (2011) did a study that investigated students' participation in university management and organizational effectiveness. The findings indicated that, the level of students' participation in university management and organizational effectiveness in the two Universities sampled were low. So, the poor engagement and participation of stakeholders in the universities administration in term of decision taking and making have contributed to poor accountability in the various systems.

### **Poor Implementation of Accountability Policies**

The poor implementation of accountability policies in the public universities in Nigeria is another factor to reckon with as having contributed to the poor accountability in the universities. There are many policies formulated for the government through the federal ministry of finance to curtail corruption and ensure accountability in all the public institutions. Majority of these policies have not been implemented and adhered to by many public universities administrators and managers. Institutions that are supposed to ensure implementation through monitoring and evaluation have not been effective to ensure full adherence to the various policies. **For instance**, The Nigerian Universities Commission, NUC, has directed all Universities to put in place an anti-corruption unit to help curb corruption. NUC, through Akinbode Agbaoye, submitted that the commission will ensure that all Vice Chancellors of Universities put in place a well-established and functional Anti-Corruption unit to complement the efforts of the Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related

Offenses Commission, ICPC, to stop corruption (Premium times 2014). The poor implementation of these policies in the universities have accounted to poor accountability in the system. Also, (Punch 22<sup>nd</sup>, date July, 2021) reports that stakeholders identified that Nigeria has made several signs of progress in the development of the higher education system, however, policies, innovations, and practices seem disconnected or disjointed. Nigeria has one of the most robust education policies, but a major challenge is the implementation of the policies. (Musa 2020) also submitted that the key challenges of tertiary institutions in Nigeria are funding problems and non-implementation of policies. Stakeholders fear that the non-implementation of policies has an impact on the standard of education and has impeded institutional response to advancing knowledge, employability skills and meeting the international educational standards. **(Eze, 2018) identified weak institutions as one of the factors that have affected development in the public institution in Nigeria.**

### **Poor Monitoring of Universities and other Regulatory Institutions**

Another factor that has contributed to the poor accountability in the Nigerian university system is the poor monitoring of the universities by the anti-corruption and other regulatory institutions. The federal government have established different institutions to fight financial corruption in the public institutions in Nigeria. Some of these institutions include; Tertiary Education Fund; National Universities Commission; National Commission for Colleges of Education; Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria; Committee of Vice-Chancellors; COHEADS of Polytechnics; Committee of Provosts of Colleges of Education; Nigeria French Language Village; some current Vice-Chancellors; some former Vice-Chancellors; Ministry of Education; some State commissioners for Education; ECOWAS Commission; current/former Registrars and Deans of faculties in the Nigerian universities; and Commit Technology & Consult Limited (Consultant on Digital Skills and Information Technology) that are supposed to be vanguard for accountability in the system. It is unfortunate that most of these institutions are weak (Ogunode & Adanna 2022). The anticorruption agencies which include Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) and Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) are saddled with the responsibilities of fighting financial corruption and prevent resources misappropriation in public institutions are less active due to many challenges.

### **Political Instability**

The nature and types of government adopted in Nigeria have affected system in public universities. The political instability associated with the democratic nature of Nigerian government have led to stoppage of many government policies and programme. (Ogunode 2021) opined that political instability have prevented implementation of policies in public institutions across the country. The Nigerian political structure and system are designed for changes in every four years which have affected stability of policies and programme. The changes in government affects almost everything in the country because different political party has their different political agenda and programmes. Accountability programme and policies started by one administration is brutally interrupted by the new government that come on board after the expiration of their tenure. (Ogunode, Ajape & Jegede, 2020) posited that often, the 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 and one laptop for all Nigerian students. That policy was stopped when the new administration came on board due to differences in political agenda. Also, (Odukoya 2011) concluded 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 crises the national education system has witnessed over the years and the inconsistency and often contradictory nature of the educational policies and practices.

### **Political Influence**

The presence of political influence in the Nigeria university system have also resulted to poor accountability. Political influence have destroyed the universities giving room for all sort of thing that are not supposed to be heard off in the management of the universities. According to (Olayinka 2018)

political influence is the power sought for by politically active persons like legislators, ministers, leaders, etc. Political influence is an instrument by the political officers to control resources. (Gbenu 2012) argued that political influence is the use of power, influence, and authority by the government of the day, especially in the allocation of resources. (Ogunode& Musa 2022 ;Ogunode, Atobauka, & Ayoko (2023) stated that political influence is manifested in the administration of public tertiary institutions in Nigeria through; employment/recruitment, the appointment of school administrators (VCs, Bursar, Registrar) planning and establishment of public universities, location of universities, the appointment of council members, expansion of National Universities Commission power and admission of students. They also concluded that effects of political influence on the administration of Nigerian public universities include; corruption, overconcentration, poor leadership, uneven development and poor ranking of public universities. (Abubakar 2019) pointed to poor accountability as the product of political influence in the universities. (Ogunode 2020) submitted that people appointed by politicians to manage different higher institutions will behave anywhere and violate laid down rules because they have godfather and various regulatory institutions cannot question their actions.

### **Lack of Autonomy**

Another challenge facing the Nigerian university system that have contributed to poor accountability in the system is lack of autonomy. The university system globally is designed to operate in full autonomy. When autonomy is lacking in the universities it may resulted to poor accountability because the key pillars that supposed to ensure accountability and transparency are absent. The (Confederation of Indian Universities 2004) defined autonomy as the necessary degree of independence from external control that the university requires in respect of its internal organization and governance; the internal distribution of financial resources; staff recruitment; the setting of the condition of study; the freedom to conduct teaching and research. Reasons for university autonomy in Nigeria according to (Azenabor 2022) are: it is a traditional right, which has worked over the years. The responsibilities of creating new knowledge through scholarship and research, transmitting and preserving culture, developing the capacity in students for critical and independent judgment, and cultivating aesthetic sensitivities are best carried out in environments free from direct external control and domination. The complexity of academic work requires a fair measure of independence. Autonomy provides for both staff and students checks and balances and better morale in a democratic society. The lack of autonomy in the Nigerian universities have led to poor accountability and mismanagement of human and materials resources. Autonomy gives the system transparency, accountability, academic freedom, quality leadership, quality institutions and when autonomy is absent the result is poor accountability, maladministration and corruption. The lack of autonomy in the tertiary institutions have led to corruption, poor funding, shortage of staff, poor ranking, (Ogunode& Emmanuel 2023; Ogunode, Onaolapo, Onaolapo, Adeosun, & Ayoko, 2023; Ogunode & Abubakar 2023).

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

This paper examined the challenges of accountability in the University system in Nigeria. The paper concluded that lack of political will, weak accountability culture, weak labour unions, weak participation of stakeholder, poor implementation of accountability policies, poor monitoring of universities by anti-corruption agencies and other regulatory institutions, political influence and lack of autonomy are the factors responsible for poor accountability in the university system in Nigeria. To address these challenges, the paper suggested that;

1. The federal and state government should develop the political will to ensure visitation panels are constituted every five years and the white paper released as at when due to promote accountability in the universities
2. University administrators and managers should be trained and retrained on the importance of ensuring and promoting the culture of accountability in the universities

3. The various labour unions in the universities should be proactive in ensuring accountability in the universities;
4. University stakeholders should be participated in decision making of the universities. The universities administrators should always engaged the stakeholders in the issue affecting the administration of the universities. The university management should always adopt an open-door policy, where students are represented in some management committees. The management should set aside a day in each semester, tagged vice-chancellor student forum, when students can discuss freely, ask questions from the management on issues that concern them.
5. Universities administrators should ensure accountability policies in the universities are adhere to in all issues in the university management.
6. Personnel in the universities should be trained and retrained in all issues regarding accountability in the universities;
7. Anti-corruption agencies and other regulatory institutions should be strengthen to be more effective in the monitoring and evaluation of the activities of the universities in Nigeria
8. To restore accountability in the universities, the government should grant full autonomy to all the universities. This will help to eliminate the activities of political influence in the system.

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