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Mounting of New Programme in Public Universities in Nigeria: Problems and Way Forward

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Abstract: This paper titled "Mounting of New Programme in Public Universities in Nigeria: Problems and Way Forward" examined problems of mounting new programmes in the public universities in Nigeria. Secondary data were used. The secondary data were gathered from print materials and online publications. The paper concluded that funding, personnel, infrastructure facilities problems, National Universities Commission (NUC) bottleneck, lack of instructional resources and brain drain are the major problems that have affected the mounting of new programmes in Nigerian public universities. To address these problems, the paper suggested that public universities should be adequately funded to enable them to mount new programmes in their respective institutions. Adequate budgetary provisions should be made for the employment of personnel, provision of infrastructure facilities and instructional resources. Universities should be granted autonomy to enable them to develop their programme without interference from any institutions outside the universities.

Keywords: Mounting, Programme, Public Universities.

Introduction

Public universities are universities owned by the government. Public universities are universities established to provide post-secondary schools for Nigerians. Public universities are universities established by an act of parliament to serve the interest of the general public (Ogunode, 2020). Public universities deal with the provision of teaching, research and community services. The objectives of the universities in Nigerian Higher education, including professional education have the following aims: the acquisition, development and inculcation of the proper value orientation for the survival of the individual and societies; the development of the intellectual capacities of individuals to understand and appreciate environment; the acquisition of both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to develop into useful members of the community; the acquisition of an overview of the local and external environments (FGN, 2013).

Universities globally are established to produce manpower that will work in every sector of the economy. The universities are saddled with the responsibility of advancing the development of the country through the training and production of the right personnel to fill in the economy. The universities are to help in the rapid industrialization of the economy. This is done by providing manpower with adequate professional, technical and managerial skills.

The universities are to help to boost the transformation of societies into knowledge societies. This is done by providing not just educated workers, but knowledge workers who will contribute immensely to the growth of the economy. The university system is saddled with the responsibilities of producing sound and effective citizens in society and developing higher self-awareness and self-realization of individuals at various tasks, enhancing better human relationships, national consciousness and effective citizenship (Otonko, 2012).

University education is more than the next level in the learning process; it is a critical component of human development worldwide. It is saddled with the responsibilities of producing high-level skills necessary for every labour market and also the training essential for teachers, doctors, nurses, civil servants, engineers, humanists, entrepreneurs, scientists, social scientists, and a myriad of other personnel. It is these trained individuals who develop the capacity and analytical skills that drive local economies, support civil society, teach children, lead effective governments, and make important decisions which affect entire societies. This function of education can be seen vividly in action in Nigeria (Otonko, 2012).

The universities were also established to help solve pressing problems in the labour market by introducing a new programme to fit into the dynamic workforce nationwide and globally. NUC (2020) noted that recent developments in computing, network technologies, internet, and cloud technologies have generated the need for reliability and secure exchange of digital information that is vital to most human activities such as banking, medicine, infrastructure management and elections. As the use of information technology expands, so are the potential consequences of cyber-attacks, and the need for a skilled workforce to prevent and defend against them.

However, the pool of available talent to build and certify applications designed to withstand attacks, diagnose and prevent security intrusions is inadequate to meet the growing needs all over the world. Government agencies, business organizations, industries and the military are scrambling to find qualified professionals to safeguard their systems, businesses and infrastructures. So, there is a need to mount courses that will help to fix these challenges.

Universities are known for introducing new programmes and mounting programmes to meet up with the demand of the modern economy. The traditional roles of the universities are namely; teaching; research; dissemination of existing and new information; pursuit of service to the community; and being a storehouse of knowledge. The general philosophy of Universities is to produce graduates with high academic and ethical standards and adequate practical exposure for self-employment as well as being of immediate value to industry and the community in general.

The reasons for introducing new programmes in the higher institutions include; addressing manpower shortage in the forth-industry; helping reduce unemployment in the country; meeting up with the demand for ICT skills shortage in the country; to provide manpower with the right skills and qualifications to the emerging sector.

Mounting of programmes or courses in Nigerian public universities comes in two ways. Programmes are introduced from the academic brief of the university and the university is also allowed to mount new programmes that are not in the academic brief. The process is handled by the academic planning unit of the universities.

Mounting of Programme from Academic Brief: The department and academic planning unit of the university are expected to

identify programmes in the academic brief that are supposed to be rolled out or mounted according to the academic brief planning. The various curricular contents will be assembled from the academic brief and National University Commission Core Curriculum and Minimum Academic Standards (CCMAS). After this, a well-documented document containing everything about the programme as drafted in the academic brief and Core Curriculum and Minimum Academic Standards (CCMAS) (2022) is produced and forwarded to the senate for deliberation and review of the document. The document is sent back to the academic planning to write the National Universities commission of the development in the academic brief and mounting of the programme. After due consideration of the document, if approval is given, the academic planning is communicated on a date for the resources verification exercise. The academic planning is expected to pick form A and B to fill for all the programmes proposed for mounting. Form A and B are to be filled out by the university. Form B outlines the criteria for the accreditation of academic programmes to include: the philosophy and objectives of the programme, the curriculum, teaching staff (quality and quantity), students' admission and graduation requirements, standard of degree examination, financial support, the status of physical facilities, administration of the department and employers rating of graduates. It can be deduced from these criteria that accreditation of academic programmes is all-embracing and involves assessing the appropriateness of programme philosophy and objectives, the adequacy and relevance of the curricula to the students in their specific areas of study and the world of work (NUC, 2012).

Mounting of New Programme: A department can suggest the mounting of a new programme in the department and faculty. Well-drafted documents about the new programme will be prepared and submitted to the academic planning unit for their input and the feasibility of the programme. The academic planning will forward the document on the new programe to the senate through the Director of the Academic planning senate consideration and debate. The document if found worthy is further stepped up to the committee on programme development and accreditation to review it and come up with a better structure and objectives. The document after due review by the committee on programme development and accreditation is sent back to the senate for final approval. The document is then returned to the academic planning unit to forward to the national universities commission for their input in terms of the development of curriculum and policy implementation. After the development of the necessary curriculum and policies standard, the document is adopted by the NUC and sent back to the university to commence with the planning of resources verification and programme accreditation before the programme can officially take off in the university that promoted the mounting of the new programme. John (2015) noted that if the NUC is convinced of the viability of the course, the academic development team will set about developing all the necessary segments required for a full programme, such as the curriculum and assessment strategy. "All of this is underpinned by Programme Delivery Plan to ensure development is managed to completion, and any blockers can be identified early and removed. The final stage is for the completed proposal (once approved within the NUC) to be scrutinised by the University's academic planning unit with 30% of local content.

Nigerian public universities are always been faced with problems of mounting new programmes from their academic brief or reintroducing new programmes into the system. This paper aims to discuss the problems public universities are facing when introducing new programmes or mounting new programmes.

Problems of Mounting of New Programmes in Public Universities in Nigeria

Many problems are hindering the mounting of new programmes in public universities in Nigeria. Some of the problems include; funding, personnel, infrastructure facilities problems, National universities commission bottleneck, lack of instructional resources and brain drain.
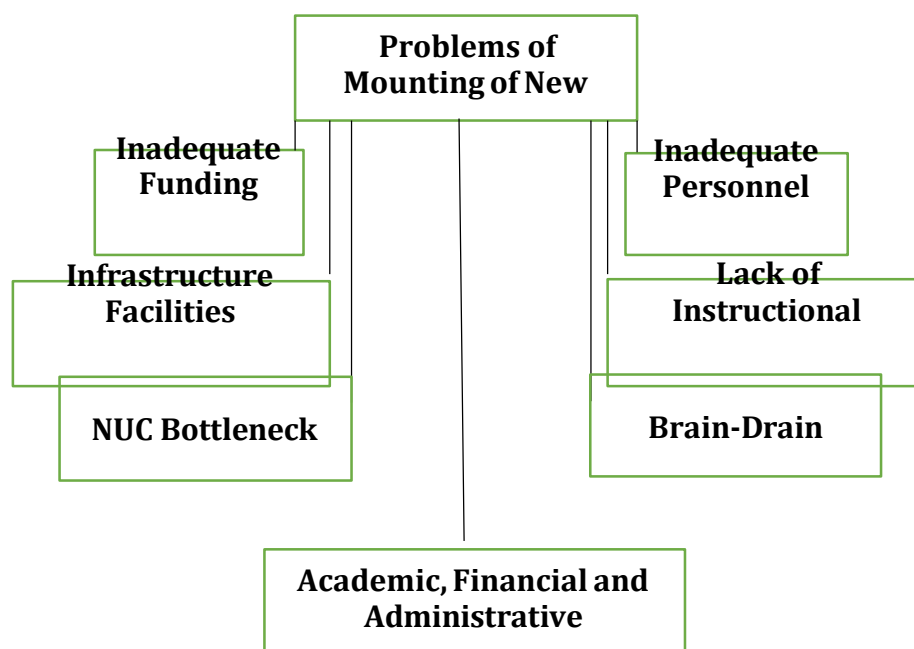

Figure 1: Problems of Mounting of New Programmes in Public Universities in Nigeria
Source: Ogunode, & Ahmad (2023)

Funding Problem

The funding problem is a major issue in the mounting of new programmes in Nigerian universities. Public universities are underfunded and this has affected the implementation of programs and policies. The mounting of new programmes in the universities is capital intensive. A lot of investment is required in both human and material resources. Financial resources are needed to acquire all these resources for the successful mounting of any programme. Adeyemi (2017) noted that adequate funding is one of the criteria for mounting new programmes. Ajayi (2014); Ahmed, & Dantata (2016) and Abdul (2018) acknowledged that without adequate funding of universities, there will be challenges in starting a new programme. Ogunjobi (2016) opined that the introduction of a programme either from the academic brief or out of the academic brief requires a lot of financial commitment and planning. Ogunode (2020) posited that the problem facing majorities of public universities is poor funding and which has undermined the development of programmes in the universities. Atelhe & Akande (2018) submitted that poor funding is a major problem facing the implementation of the academic brief in Nigerian universities. If academic brief implementation is faced with the problem of funding what will now happen to introduce an entirely new programme into the

university system? Daniel-Kalio (2019); Akpan, & Etor, (2016); Tunde & Issa (2013) and Ogunode & Adah (2022) noted that poor funding of education in Nigeria makes university administrators unable to provide adequate and quality infrastructural facilities and equipment for effective teaching and learning. They further stated that the non-commensurate of funding with other growing indices in Nigerian universities hurts the quality of education. The factors responsible for inadequate funding of public universities in Nigeria include lack of political will, corruption, increase in population, inflation, fall in national revenue and poor financial planning (Ogunode & Onyekachi 2021).

Personnel Problem

Personnel problems are also part of the fundamental challenges to the mounting of new programmes in Nigerian public universities. Personnel in the university system are divided into academic staff and non-academic staff. They are both needed in the right quantities and quantities to mount any programme in Nigerian universities. The introduction of new programmes in Nigerian universities is always faced with the problems of sourcing and getting the right professionals to handle each aspect of the programme and to meet up with the National Universities Commission Core Curriculum and Minimum Academic Standards (CCMAS) (2022). The instructional delivery effectiveness depends greatly on the quality of the teachers, their qualifications, experiences, professional exposure and morale (Akpan, 2011). The adequacy of academic personnel to handle the various courses of a given programme is equally important because this helps to determine the teacher/student ratio. The introduction of science-related programmes in Nigerian public universities has been frustrating because of the limited number of science professionals to handle various aspects of the programme. NEEDS (2014); Ogunode, Ohibime & Jedege, (2023); Ogunode, Olaoye, & Yakubu (2023) and

Ogunode (2023) observed that personnel in fileds like; Computer and Robotics Education, Agriculture and Bio-resources Education, Home Economics and Hospitality Management Education, Industrial Technical Education, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Education, Laboratory Science and Technology, Human Anatomy, Human Physiology, Molecular Genetics and Environmental Biology, Aquaculture and Marine Studies, Medical Biochemistry, Cyber-security and software engineering are not surplus in Nigeria and the Core Curriculum and Minimum Academic Standards (CCMAS) (2022) stated the staff structure for the academic staff is expected to be 20: 35: 45 for Professors/Readers: Senior Lecturers: Lecturers 1 and below for any new programme to be mounted in any universities in Nigeria. NUC 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 science, law and arts. Akomolafe & Ibijola (2014); Adetunji & Ogunleye, (2015); Ogunode, Ndubuisi, & Terfa (2021)and Ogunode (2023) argued that the problem is not that the universities cannot introduce new programmes but the challenge is how to get adequate hands to manne the programme and meet up with the NUC Core Curriculum and Minimum Academic Standards (CCMAS) (2022) standard for mounting programmes in Nigerian universities. This problem of inadequate teachers in public universities is caused by underfunding of the university's corruption, brain-drain, poor motivation, unconducive working environment and lack of manpower planning.

Infrastructure Facilities

Infrastructure facilities are a challenge to the mounting of new programmes in majorities of public universities. Starting the new programme required putting new structures in

place in the universities. Ogunode (2020) viewed Infrastructural facilities as facilities aiding the delivery of academic and non-academic services in educational institutions. Infrastructural facilities include; libraries, laboratories, halls, offices, administrative blocks, hostels, road facilities, water, electricity, internet etc. The availability of infrastructural facilities in adequate quantities will support the effective administration of educational institutions and the inadequacies will prevent effective administration of educational institutions. According to Core Curriculum and Minimum Academic Standards (CCMAS) (2022) to mount a Cyber-security programme, the particular universities should put the following facilities in adequate classrooms with enough chairs, tables and lecture delivery tools such as a projector, whiteboards and smart boards. Examination halls and theatres should be provided to minimise the rate of examination malpractice. The following equipment should be provided in the offices: Computers; Printers; Photocopying machines; and Functional internet and e-mail facilities. The NUC recommends the following physical space requirement: (a). Professor's office - 18.50, (b). Head of the department's office - 18.50, (c). Tutorial teaching staff's office - 13.50, (d). Other teaching staff' space - 7.00, (e). Technical staff space - 7.00, (f). Secretarial space - 7.00, (g). Seminar space/per student - 1.85, (h). Laboratory space per FTE - 7.50 and (i). Conference room -37.0. Core Curriculum and Minimum Academic Standards (CCMAS) (2022) further recommended that adequate space should be provided for the department. Efforts must be made to provide the department with at least: Two (2) large laboratories calculated according to specifications of 7.5 m^2 per FTE. At least two lecture rooms are capable of seating at least sixty students at the specification of 1 m^2 per FTE including a departmental conference room and a seminar room. Ogunode & Ndayebom (2022); Ohiare, Ogunode & Sarafadeen (2021)

observed that due to poor funding of the universities, most universities do not have adequate funds to construct the needed facilities for the mounting or take off of new programmes rather most of the universities used old facilities in the institutions. Alechenu (2012); Akomolafe & Ibijola (2014); Ademola, Ogundipe, & Babatunde, (2014); Otokunefor (2015); Ogunode, Akin-Ibidiran & Ibidiran (2022) submitted that poor infrastructure facilities development in most universities in Nigeria has hampered the development of the new programme. The factors responsible for inadequate infrastructural facilities in Nigerian public universities include; underfunding, increase in student population, corruption, poor infrastructural facilities planning, poor supervision and inflation (Ogunode & Jegede 2022).

National Universities Commission Bottleneck

The National Universities Commission is saddled with the responsibilities of programme development of Nigerian universities. The commission has adopted a 70% to 30% sharing roles formula for programme development in the university system. The commission has the right to 70% of the total programme development while the individual universities have 30% participation to localize the content to their immediate environment. NOUN (2009) established that at the inception of the university system in Nigeria, the thought of a centralized system was not paramount. The universities then existed as entities conducting their affairs independently. The growth of the university system over time necessitated the establishment of the National Universities Commission (NUC) in 1962 to play an advisory role and act as a buffer between the Federal Government and the Universities and not to control the latter. The commission was saddled with the responsibility of receiving and disbursing subventions to universities. NOUN also submitted that overtime, NUC has metamorphosed from a coordinating

functioning body to a full-fledged commission of its own, exercising such powers as: accrediting programmes; approving the establishment of departments and faculties; insisting on a minimum academic standard; engaging in the teaching function of academic staff through the virtual institute for higher education pedagogy (VIHEP); undertaking sabbatical placement; assessing academic journals, ranking of universities; and evolving a draft curriculum on entrepreneurial studies. The process of passing through the national universities commission before any university can mount a new programme demands a lot of procedures and protocols. All these procedures and protocols to follow limited the speed by which universities can mount a new programme in their universities (Ogunode & Emmanuel (2023); Ogunode, Onaolapo, Adeosun, & Ayoko, (2023); Ogunode, & Abubakar 2023).

Lack of Instructional Resources

Another problem confronting programme introduction in Nigerian universities is the lack of access to teaching and learning resources. The problem of accessing pieces of literature and teaching aids for new programmes mounted is a challenge to many universities in Nigeria. The introduction of the new programme comes with new teaching and learning resources that must be provided for the success of implementing the programme. Ojo (2016) noted that most universities in Nigeria are faced with the programme of getting adequate teaching and learning resources for the programme introduced newly while Ogunode & Ade (2023); Ogunode, Onyekachi, & Ayoko, (2023); Ogunode& Odanwu (2023); and Adeleke (2018) acknowledged that many universities have not introduced the programme in their academic brief as planned because of lack of necessary resources required for the takeoff of such programme. Instructional materials differ with programmes. Some programme or courses requires a lot of instructional resources before the programme can be mounted while other requires their

minimum standard. For instance, the Core Curriculum and Minimum Academic Standards (CCMAS) (2022) stated that a Computer Science programme should have at least three categories of laboratories: software, network and hardware laboratories. Best practice requires staff to student ratio of 1:20 for laboratory practicals. Small laboratories are preferable to a few large ones. Courses with large enrolments should have the students partitioned into groups to ensure each student has a computer/ practice equipment to himself or herself during practical sessions. Laboratory sessions should be conducted by staff to ensure close monitoring and effective achievement of Learning Outcomes. The computer programme should also have Software laboratory support programming and other courses requiring the use of software tools. Requirements for the software laboratory include: (1) Computer systems with the capacity to run software systems for all lab-based courses (e.g., Desktop PC with a minimum of 1.6 GHz or faster processor with at least 2 GB RAM and 500 GB hard disk space.) A maximum of 3 students to 1 computer system is recommended. (2). Programming environment and tools (e.g., Compilers/interpreters, debuggers, etc. for Java, Python, compilers, e.g., flex, yacc, SableCC, etc,), (3). Operating systems environment and tool (e.g., Windows, LINUX, TempOS, Nachos, Xinu or MiniOS), (4). Tools for systems analysis and design (e.g., Unified Modelling Language (UML)), (5). Computer maintenance tools like dust blowers and toolboxes, (6). Overhead projector and (7). Power backup. Mufuyai (2012) noted that Nigerian universities are characterized by a lack of basic technology, poor funding and an operating environment.

Brain-drain

Another problem that has militated against the mounting of new programmes in Public universities in Nigeria is the challenge of brain drain. Brain drain refers to the movement of professionals from developing countries to

developed countries for better job offers. Brain drain is a situation whereby professional individuals are migrating from their countries to another country to seek greener pastures (Ogunode, 2020). Many lecturers and researchers are leaving public universities in Nigeria for other parts of African countries and Europe for better job offers and a conducive working environment. Ogunode, & Atobauka (2021) opined that the mass movement of academicians from the Nigerian public universities has affected the administration of the universities. Professionals that are supposed to use for mounting new programmes have migrated out of the country. Factors responsible for Brain-drain in Nigerian public universities include; poor motivation, an un-conducive working environment, insecurity, underfunding and political interferences (Ogunode, 2020).

Conclusion and Suggestions

This paper examined the problems of mounting new programmes in public universities in Nigeria. The secondary data were gathered from print materials and online publications. The paper concluded that funding, personnel, infrastructure facilities problems, National universities commission (NUC) bottleneck, lack of instructional resources and brain drain are the problems that have affected the mounting of new programmes in Nigerian public universities.

To address these problems, the paper suggested

1. The public universities should be adequately funded to enable them to mount new programmes in their respective institutions.

2. Proper budgetary allocation should be planned for the mounting of new programmes in the universities. The budget should cover infrastructure facilities development, employment of personnel and provision of instructional materials

3. The public universities in Nigeria should be given full autonomy to enable them to develop their programme on their own

without any interference.

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