

## **Administration of Political Science Programme in Nigerian Public Universities: Problems and Solutions**

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### **Abstract**

Political science programme is one of the social science programme that public universities in Nigeria are offering. The programme is aimed to develop manpower that will fill the political super structure of the society and contribute to the social economic and political development of the country. It is unfortunate that political science as a programme offering in public universities in Nigeria is faced with many problems. This article discusses the problems facing the administration of political science programme in the Nigerian public universities. The article employed secondary data to review the points raised in the discussion. The secondary data were sourced from online and print materials. The following were identified: inadequate funding, inadequate infrastructural facilities, shortage of academic staff, ineffective staff development programme, brain-drain and poor research as the problems facing the administration of political science in the Nigerian public universities. To address these problems, the following were suggested that more funds should be allocated for the administration of political sciences, adequate infrastructural facilities should be provided, and employment of more academic staff, political science lecturers should be motivated to reduce brain-drain and effective staff development for lecturers in the department of political science.

### **Keywords**

Administration, Political science, Universities.

## INTRODUCTION

The first higher educational institution, the Yaba Higher College, was established in 1932. The agitation of Nigerians for a more comprehensive higher education provision led to the constitution of Asquith and Elliot Commissions on Higher Education. Their reports in 1943 favoured the establishment of universities in Nigeria. Consequently, in 1948, the University College Ibadan was founded as an affiliate of the University of London. University College continued as the only University Institution in Nigeria until 1960 (NOUN, 2009, Jubril, 2003).

From 1948 till now, many universities have been established and the universities are pursuing their various programmes. The universities are saddled with the responsibilities of providing teaching programmes, research programmes and community services. The aims and objectives of the universities include: the acquisition, development and inculcation of the proper valueorientation for the survival of the individuals 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, 2004). The National Policy on Education again stated that higher educational institutions should pursue these goals through: Teaching, Research, the dissemination of existing and new information, the pursuit of service to the community; and by being a store-house knowledge (FGN, 2004).

To realize the objectives of the universities, different programmes were designed and developed to be offerwith the aims of developing the social, economic, political and technology of the Country. Since the duties of the universities is to promote research, educate and advance the socio-economic development of the country.

Political Science programme is one of the social science programme that Nigerian public universities are offering. Just like every other programme, the political science programme is facing many administrative problems. The realization of the political science goals and objectives depends on effective administration and planning. Administration is key to the development of political science education. The Nigerian public universities in recent times have come under attacks for poor performancein different programmes such as political science programme. The quality of the political science education in Nigerian public universities is declining due to poor administration (Ogunode, 2021). This article is bent to discuss the problems facing the administration of political science programme in the Nigerian public universities and come up with measures to address the problems.

### 2.0 Administration of Public Universities

University administration according to Ogunode (2021) refers to the application of the universities' resources to implement the programmes of the universities with the aims of realizing the objectives of the universities. He went further that University administration is the mobilization and arrangement of both human and materials resources for the achievement of the university's goals. He also averred that University administration is the effective use of the resources of the university to implement the teaching programmes, research programmes and the community service programmes of the universities. University administration is the deployment of the universities' resources to accomplish the universities' programmes.

The objectives of university administration include: to implement the programmes of the universities as defined; to allocate resources for the implementation of the universities programmes; to ensure implementation of teaching programmes, to ensure implementation of

research programmes; to ensure delivery of quality community services programmes, to ensure effective staff development, to ensure effective student administration, to ensure smooth implementation of academic calendar and to ensure quality education (Ogunode, 2021).

The administration of public universities in Nigeria takes two dimensions: the external administration and internal administration. The external administration is done through the federal ministries and other regulatory agencies (National Universities Commission) in the country. The external administration organ handles planning, policy formulation, programmes accreditation, supervision, funding and quality control of the universities. The internal administration is headed by the school administrators and other principal managers within the universities. The function of internal administration is to ensure implementation of policies, coordinates, supervises and organizes the human and materials resources of the universities to accomplish the objectives of the universities (Ogunode 2021).

To achieve the objectives of the universities education in Nigeria, the government established the National Universities Commission (NUC) in 1962 with the mandate of external administration of all universities, granting approval for all academic programmes in Nigerian universities; granting approval for the establishment of all higher educational institutions offering degree programmes; and ensuring quality assurance through regular accreditation of all academic programmes in universities. The Commission currently regulates the academic programmes of 45 Federal, 50 state and 99 private universities respectively in Nigeria. In 2007, the National Universities Commission (NUC) developed a document called Benchmark Minimum Academic Standards (BMAS) for all the Nigerian universities to guide them in development of programmes and accreditation exercise. Benchmark Minimum Academic Standards (BMAS) is an amalgamation that crisply enunciates the learning outcomes and competences expected of graduates of each academic programmes without being overly prescriptive while at the same time, providing the requisite flexibility and innovativeness consistent with a milieu of increased institutional autonomy.

Benchmark Minimum Academic Standards (BMAS) documents were produced for the thirteen disciplines and the General Studies programmes taught in Nigerian Universities. The programmes includes (i) Administration; Management and Management Technology; (ii) Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries and Home Economics; (iii) Arts; (iv) Basic Medical and Health Sciences (v) Education; (vi) Engineering and Technology; (vii) Environmental Sciences; (viii) Law; (ix) Pharmaceutical Sciences (x) Medicine and Dentistry; (xi) Science; (xii) Social Sciences; (xii) Veterinary Medicine. Political science is classified under the social science programmes.

## **2.1 Concept of Political Science**

The philosophy and mission of political science discipline is to produce graduates with a critical mind, requisite ability and skill to analyze, comprehend, predict and influence the factors that shape and mold power relationships in an ever-changing socio-political environment in a globalizing world (NUC, 2007).

The concept political science just like any other social science concept does not have a unilateral definition but numerous definitions just as scholars abound in the field, it is the study of study of state, government and politics (McLean & McMillan, 1996). Another scholar considers it to be the organization and operation of institutions which make law, enforce law and settle controversies arising from different interests and various interpretations of the law (Mazi, 2007).

The main objectives of a degree in political Science are:

- i. To provide training in the principles of political science and their application to the type of degree programmes concerned—political economy, public administration or International Relations.
- ii. Stimulate the students intellectually through the programmes, in such a way that they appreciate social problems.
- iii. To provide a solid foundation of knowledge about the workings of the society and its institutions and develop the skills for the constructive use of such knowledge.
- iv. To develop in students, the ability to apply the knowledge to the resolution of societal problems and conflicts.
- v. To develop in students, such skills and competency that would allow them to be self-reliant and entrepreneurial.
- vi. Provide the students with necessary skills for studying and analyzing society.
- vii. Provide the students with the skill-base from which they can proceed to higher studies in political science.
- viii. To imbue in the students a deep appreciation of the political dynamics of society and the impact of this on wider socio-economic development and societal well-being (NUC,2007).

### **3.0 Problems facing Administration of Political Science in Nigerian Universities**

The following have been identified: inadequate funding, inadequate infrastructural facilities, shortage of academic staff, and ineffective staff development programmes, brain-drain and poor research as the problems facing the administration of political science in the Nigerian public universities.

#### **3.1 Inadequate Funding**

Inadequate funding is a very big problem facing the administration of the universities education in Nigeria especially the administration of political science programme. The budgetary allocation for the administration of education and especially the universities is not adequate. Ahaotu and Ogunode (2021) submits that inadequate funding is one of the greatest problems facing the administrators of higher institutions in Nigeria. Higher institutions administrators do not have access to adequate funding for effective running and administration of the institutions under their care. Government funding of higher education in the country have been inadequate for decades. The funding of education is shared among different levels of government and supplemented by funds from other sources such as businesses, community organizations and levies charged. The revenue collected through fees constitutes an insignificant proportion of the revenue of the institutions. Fund allocation has not been much during the last decade. The poor funding of higher educational system in the country has rendered the higher education system incapacitated. Ogunode, Abubakar, and Ajape (2021) their study reveals that poor government allocations, low internally generated revenue, low school fees, institutional corruptions, poor planning/projection, poor research income and poor contribution from private sector, NGO and alumnus are responsible for inadequate funds in public universities. They also confirmed that the effect of inadequate funding of Nigerian public universities is responsible for poor teaching and learning, inadequate infrastructural facilities, shortage of academic staff, poor research programmes, poor staff development programmes and poor quality of education. Inadequate funding is a challenge facing the

management of universities in Nigeria (Akinola 1990, Okeke, 2005, Udida, Bassey, Udofia, & Egbona, 2009).

### 3.2 Inadequate Infrastructural Facilities

Inadequate infrastructural facilities is a major problem facing the administration of political science programme in majorities of Nigerian public universities. Majorities of political science departments in the Nigerian public universities are facing the problem of inadequate facilities. The academic staff, not only academic staff but also political science students are faced with the problems of shortage of infrastructural facilities. The infrastructural facilities require for the administration of political science programme include adequate lecturers' offices, classrooms, functional and well equipped library, sound-proof rooms and studios, audio-visual rooms. The instructional materials include well stocked political science books, journals, reference books, up-to-date textbooks and current topical literatures, professional journals and representative materials from the popular press. The library should also acquire on a regular basis, published government documents and related materials in the main and departmental libraries and internet connectivity facilities. The equipment for administration of political science are: television, power point projectors, video, audiotape radios, computers, Internet facilities, tape recorders/players, public address system, computer units/ and other ICT facilities. The inadequate facilities in the Nigerian universities worried Ebehikhalu and Dawam (2017) and propelled them to carry out a study on inadequacy of teaching and learning infrastructures in Nigerian universities and they discovered that University of Uyo, established in 1991 from the then Cross River State University was not given a commencement grant to date. This accounts for the poor physical facilities in the university and their inability to build up and effectively occupy the main campus. The result is serious encroachment on the university land by neighboring communities. The existing accommodations initially designed for few students have become overstretched because of age and use. There are no accommodations also for Faculties of Sciences, Arts, Social Sciences, Engineering, Environmental Studies, Education, Agriculture, Law, and Business Administration, School of Continuing Education, Post Graduate School at the Main Campus. Overall, the state of the facilities in University of Uyo is far from adequate both in number and quality. Ogunode and Jegede (2021) did a study that evaluated the factors responsible for inadequate infrastructural facilities in some selected public universities in North Central Nigeria. Their study revealed that inadequate funding, poor planning and poor projection, institutional corruption, increase in students' population and poor administration and management are factors responsible for inadequate infrastructural facilities in public universities in North Central Nigeria. They also confirmed that the effects of inadequate infrastructural facilities on students' academic performance include overcrowdings of lecture halls, prevention of students from reading properly, poor academic performance, postponement of lectures, slow down learning activities of students and increase students cost of learning. Also, the study disclosed that the effects of inadequate infrastructural facilities on lecturers include poor teaching and research work, delay in teaching and research work, postponement of lectures, kills academic staff' moral, increase the cost of lecturing and researching for lecturers, leads to poor quality of education and brain-drain in the universities. Likoko, Mutsotso and Nasongo (2013) and Ebehikhalu and Dawam (2017) observed that the lack of adequate physical facilities for teaching and learning have negative effect on the quality of graduates produced. They are of the opinions that these facilities are educational inputs that have strong relationship with high academic performance of students. No any meaningful political science administration can take place without adequate infrastructural facilities.

### 3.3 Shortage of Academic Staff



Another problem facing the administration of political science in the Nigerian universities is the problem of shortage of academic staff especially in the department of political science. The requirement for the administration and implementation of political science as stipulated in the National Universities Commission Bench Mark (2007) for academic and non-academic staff, for academic staff is the ratio of 1 lecturer to 30 students. Well trained political Science Scholars with M.A; and Ph.D. qualifications are require for the administration of political science. For the Non-teaching Staff, it requires the departmental Secretary who would be Computer literate, Staff Assistant, (Messenger) and Cleaner; and the Departmental driver and the Clerical Officer. It has been observed that there is shortage of political science lecturers in many Nigerian public universities. Ahaotu andOgunode (2021) observed that another major challenge facing the administrators of higher institutions in Nigeria is the problem of shortage of academic and non-academic staff. Many administrators of higher institutions in Nigeria don't have enough manpower to deploy for teaching in their respective schools. The NEEDS Assessment summary report by the Federal Government in November (2012) indicated that as at November 2012, there were 37,504 academic staff in 74 public universities in Nigeria. Considering the number of staff vis-à-vis the student population, the report revealed an unmanageable lecturer-to-student ratio. For example, at the National Open University the academic staff-to-student ratio was 1:363, at Lagos State University the ratio was 1:144, and at the University of Abuja the ratio was 1:122. Kano State University, which was 11 years old at the time of the NEEDS Assessment period, had one professor and 25 lecturers with PhD degrees, while Kebbi State University had two professors and five lecturers with doctorate degrees. The shortage of academic staff in the public universities have led to high-students-teachers ratio. NEEDS, (2014) report revealed wide disparities between Nigerian universities and their counterparts in other parts of the world. For instance, the staff-to-student ratio in Harvard University is 1:4, Massachusetts Institute of Technology has 1:9 ratio and the University of Cambridge has 1:3. The proportion of unqualified teachers is higher in the tertiary level. More than 50 per cent of teachers in colleges of education and universities did not possess the minimum qualifications for teaching at these levels.Ogunode andAdamu (2021) submits that inadequate funding, lack of strategic manpower planning, brain-drain, poor motivation, unconducive working environment and corruption as the reasons for shortage of academic staff in the Nigerian higher institutions. They also outlined low productivities, poor quality of teaching, overcrowdings, and poor quality of education as the effects of shortage of academic staff in the Nigerian public higher institutions.NEEDS, (2014) submitted that manpower shortage as one of the reasons why Nigerian universities have been unable to compete favourably with universities in many other parts of the world. According to the report, a combination of infrastructural and manpower challenges is responsible for the sharp decline in scholarship in Nigerian universities. Research findings have also shown that Nigerian teachers are almost always in short supply in schools, and their turnover is high because they tend to leave the teaching profession if and when more attractive jobs become available in government, politics or private enterprises (Aghenta, 2001; Adeyemi, 2008).

### **3.4 Ineffective Staff Development Programmes**

Ineffective staff development is another problem facing the academic staff of political science department.According to the National Universities Commission (2007), the established staff-student ratio should be met, while guidelines for training and retraining of academic staff should be rigorously pursued. A programme of academic staff exchange between universities should be introduced to enhance and enrich the faculty. All academic staff should have computing skills. Adejare, Olaore, Udofia, Emola (2020) opined that tertiary institutions are saddled with the responsibility of training and empowering people with the required skills

necessary for successful integration into the workforce of an economy. Basil, Felix and Eno (2013) did a study that examined university lecturers' participation in capacity building programmes in south-south Nigeria and its implication for sustainable development. Findings revealed that university lecturers participate mostly in conferences than any other capacity building programmes. Lecturers' participation in capacity building programmes is significantly low with respect to workshops, seminars, conferences, ICT training and mentoring. There is no significant difference between male and female lecturers' participation in capacity building programmes. There are many factors responsible for poor staff development programmes in Nigerian universities. These factors include inadequate funding, lack of strategic plan on staff development programmes and corruptions. This low participation of lecturers in capacity building programmes in universities can be attributed to poor funding which universities have been grappling with over the years; a situation Udeaja (2005) and Basil, Felix and Eno (2013) observed as a reoccurring decimal especially since 1998. Basil & Felix, Eno (2013) submitted as a result of inadequate funding, many universities find it cumbersome to sponsor their lecturers to these programmes or even organize some themselves, with a consequence of low capacity building to universities. It has been concluded that poor funding affects lecturers' participation in workshops, seminars, conferences and ICT training, and not mentoring (Basil & Felix, Eno 2013).

### **3.5 Brain-Drain**

Brain drain refers to mass movement of professional from less developed countries to more developed countries to seek for better job offers and opportunities. Brain-drain is one of the problems facing the administration of political science in many departments of political science in the Nigerian universities. Many political science lecturers are leaving the departments abroad and to other African countries universities because of poor working conditions and poor welfare packages. Ehichoya and Ogunode (2020) observed that for effective teaching to take place, there is need for adequate professional and experienced lecturers in every higher institution. There are many factors responsible for brain drain in Nigeria and they include: poor motivation, un conducive working environment, poor working condition and unattractive salaries. Ehichoya and Ogunode (2020) and Smah (2007) reports Professor Joseph Stiglitz, 2001 Nobel Prize winner in Economics, who, while delivering a lecture at the first Dr. Pius Okadigbo memorial lecture series in Enugu, Nigeria, said that there is a particular university in the U.S. that has over 25 Nigerian professors. He submitted that the above pointer is instructive for any serious-minded government that wants to address the issue of brain-drain. Bangura (1994) found out that between 1988 and 1990, over 1,000 lecturers left the federal university system in Nigeria. It must be emphasized that while the best brains are leaving the university system, the broad aim of producing high level manpower from the system for national development cannot be achieved.

### **3.6 Poor Research Programme**

Poor research programme development is another problem facing the administration of political science programme in many Nigerian universities especially the department of political science. One of the cardinal programmes of the universities is to conduct research programme and this is normally carried out by the various departments through their academic staff, students and researchers. The research programme in many political science departments is not effective due to problems of inadequate funding, inadequate infrastructural facilities and un conducive working environment. Charles, Ijeoma and John (2010) did a study that investigated the sources of research funding available to lecturers in Nigerian Universities, the challenges faced by lecturers in accessing them and possible strategies for improvement.

Five research questions were posed to guide the study. Result of the study revealed self-funding as major source of research funding in Nigerian Universities, followed by government sector and foreign agencies. Self-funding was also identified as the most potent source of research funding accessed by University lecturers. The study showed that a greater percentage of lecturers, 246(76.35%), had not benefited from research grants for many years. Inadequate funding of research and stringent conditions attached to research grants were identified as two major constraints to accessing research funds by lecturers. Okujagu (1998) submitted that research in Nigerian Universities is not well funded so as to have the impact it should and this constitute a serious constraints to accessing research grants by academic staff. Fatunde (2007) argued that without proper funding of University education and research, University based researchers and scientists cannot undertake meaningful research.

#### **4.0 Ways Forward**

To address these problems, the researchers suggested that more funds should be allocated for the administration of political sciences, adequate infrastructural facilities should be provided, and employment of more academic staff, political science lecturers should be motivated to reduce brain-drain and effective staff development for lecturers in the department of political science.

- a) The universities administrators should increase the funding of political science programme in the Nigerian universities to enable the Dean's and Head of Department of the programme to administer the programme effectively;
- b) The government should expand the infrastructural facilities in the department of political sciences to enable academic, non-academic staff and students have access to facilities that will aid the realization of the objectives of political science programme;
- c) The government should employ more lecturers in the department of political science to reduce the high lecturers-students ratio;
- d) The government should increase the funding of universities in the country and more funds should be directed to be released to the department of political science department for staff development programme;
- e) The universities administrators should improve the welfare packages and allowances of lecturers in the political science departments across the country.

#### **CONCLUSION**

The realization of the universities programme like the political science depends on effective administration. The administration of political science programme in the Nigerian public universities is faced with many problems. This article identified: inadequate funding, inadequate infrastructural facilities, shortage of academic staff, and ineffective staff development programmes, brain-drain and poor research as the problems facing the administration of political science in the Nigerian universities. To address these problems, the researchers suggested that more funds should be allocated for the administration of political sciences, adequate infrastructural facilities should be provided, and employment of more academic staff, political science lecturers should be motivated to reduce brain-drain and effective staff development for lecturers in the department of political science.

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### **CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT:**

The author declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.