

Implementation of Sociology Programme in Nigerian Public Universities: Problems and Solutions

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Abstract

In Nigeria, sociology programme is one among the programmes that are offer in the public universities with the aim of producing adequate manpower to man jobs in public institutions. The sociology programme is faced with some problems in the implementation process in some public universities. This article discusses the problems facing the implementation of sociology programme in the public universities in Nigeria. Secondary data were used to support the points raised in the article. The secondary data were generated from print materials and online publication. The article identified inadequate funding, inadequate academic staff, inadequate infrastructural facilities, shortage of instructional materials, brain-drain, strike actions, corruption and poor supervision as the problems facing the implementation of sociology programme in public universities in Nigeria. To solve this problems, the article recommended that the government should increase the funding of the sociology programme, employ more qualified lecturers, provide adequate infrastructural facilities, adequate instructional materials, fight all forms of corruptions, ensure effective supervision and implement all agreement with the different union groups in the public universities.

Keywords

Sociology, Implementation, Problems, Programme, Lecturers

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In Nigeria, universities are either classified public universities or private universities. Public universities are universities owned by the government. Public universities are universities established by law of parliament to provide a post-secondary school education for the citizens. Public universities are universities established to provide educational services to the general public and issue certificate after graduation. Public universities are universities established to carry out teaching programme, research programme and community services. Public universities in Nigeria take two forms. Federal government owned universities and state owned universities.

The objectives of higher education which include the universities include: 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; and the acquisition of an overview of the local and external environments (FGN, 2004). For effective supervision of the Universities in Nigeria, the federal government of Nigeria established the National Universities Commission to among other things coordinate programme development of the Universities. The National Universities Commission developed a BMAS documents that contains academic programmes for all the universities in Nigeria. The programmes include: i) Administration; Management and Management Technology; ii) Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries and Home Economics; iii) Arts; iv) Basic Medical and Health Science v) Education; vi) Engineering and Technology; vii) Environmental Sciences; viii) Law; ix) Pharmaceutical Sciences x) Medicine and Dentistry; xi) Science; xii) Social Sciences; xiii) Veterinary Medicine. Sociology is among the social science programmes designed to be offered in the Nigerian universities. Sociology as a discipline is not exempted from the courses they are studying as a discipline in the Nigerian universities. Sociology as a field of discipline is also one among the most loved and preferred courses Nigerian youths love to study at the various universities within the country. Sociology is offer in the Nigerian higher institutions especially the universities. Despite the love of the course by Nigerian youths, there are still challenges facing the implementation of the sociology programme in the Nigerian universities. That is why this paper is bent to discuss the problems facing the implementation of sociology programme in the Nigerian universities and the way forward.

2.0 Concept of Sociology

Sociology as a discipline is the study of human behaviour, their relation with other people, patterns of reactions. It is a study which manages to study social changes and investigates every aspect of human behaviour. It is the basic fundamental study of ancient, medieval and [modern civilization](#). Hence sociology contains many branches which a sociologist needs to understand. The study of sociology deals with the study of human society. Human society is so vast and diverse that to study its features and characteristics through one classification is impossible. To study [sociology](#), the sociologist has made many classifications based on various grounds. The branches of Sociology include: Theoretical Sociology, Historical Sociology, Sociology of Knowledge, Criminology, Sociology of Religion, Economy Sociology, Rural Sociology, Political Sociology, Urban Sociology, Medical Sociology, Sociology of Education, Demography Sociology, Industrial Sociology, and Sociology of the Family among others.

The philosophy behind Sociology degree programme is to produce a crop of graduates equipped with appropriate knowledge to make their contributions to the development of

Nigeria, Africa and the global community. Having been exposed to a broad foundation of knowledge in the field of Social Sciences in general and in the various sub-fields of Sociology in particular. The major aims and objectives of Sociology programme are to:

- (i) Instill in students a sound knowledge of Sociology, an appreciation of its applications in different socio-cultural contexts and to involve the students in an intellectually stimulating and satisfying experience of learning and studying the workings of society.
- (ii) Provide students with broad and well balanced knowledge of sociological theories and methods.
- (iii) Cultivate in students the ability to apply their sociological knowledge and skills to the understanding and solutions of societal problems in Nigeria and elsewhere.
- (iv) Provide students with relevant knowledge and skill base from which they can proceed to further studies in special areas of Sociology or multi-disciplinary areas involving Sociology.
- (v) Instill in students an appreciation of the importance of Sociology in socio-cultural, legal, economic, political, industrial and environmental contexts.
- (vi) Develop in students a range of useful competencies for public, private or self-employment.

Competencies and Skills

A graduate of Sociology at the Bachelors Honours level should have the following competencies and skills:

- (i) Ability to demonstrate adequate knowledge and understanding of the essentials in all the subject knowledge / areas identified.
- (ii) Ability to apply such knowledge and understanding to the solution of social problems.
- (iii) Ability to recognize and analyze new problems and plan strategies for their solution.
- (iv) Communication skills in presenting sociological scientific research materials and arguments clearly and correctly, both orally and in writing to a range of audiences .
- (v) Competence in statistical and qualitative data, processing skills relating to sociological data using the computer.
- (vi) Competence in the use of information technology such as word processing, Internet communication, information retrieval through on-line computer searches etc.
- (vii) Subject-specific and transferable skills which allow for the pursuit of a wide range of careers after graduation.

Behavioural Attributes. A graduate in Sociology should be able to demonstrate adequate:

- (i) Knowledge of sociological concepts, theories and models.
- (ii) Knowledge of a wide-range of sociological research methods.
- (iii) General knowledge in the various branches of Sociology.
- (iv) Computing skills.
- (v) Ability to function entrepreneurially in a wide range of choices
- (vi) Study skills needed for further studies and

(vii) Ability to apply critical sociological reasoning to problem solving.

(a) Academic and Non Academic Staff require for the implementation of sociology programme. The established staff students ratio of 1:30 for sociology programme, training and retraining of academic staff and students should be pursued vigorously, all academic staff should have computing skills. 75% of the academic staff should possess PhDs and at least 20% of the academic staff should be Professors /Readers and 35 % Senior Lecturers. A new department should be headed by a Professor to have a good and solid foundation, such a Professor could be on sabbatical. Promotion should be strictly on merit, and no promotion beyond Lecturer I for those without PhDs. The department should aim at an equitable gender balance. The Academic Non-Academic staff ratio in the University should be 1:2 maximum. All administrative secretarial and clerical staff should have computing skills.

(b) Academic and Non Academic Physical Spaces include adequate classrooms, and adequate class room sizes should be provided to avoid overcrowding. Adequate sitting arrangements should be provided. More effective chalk board and other facilities such as public address systems, flipcharts, dusters and lighting should be provided. A computer room should also be provided.

(c) Academic and Administrative Equipments for the implementation of Sociology programmes include at least 4 PCs for the departmental office, at least 10 Pcs for teaching students in a computer room with Internet facilities and laptops, each academic staff should have a PC in his/her office with internet facilities, Overhead and multimedia projectors, Audio-tape recorders (at least 4), Video recorder, a video player, A Television. Senior Lecturers and above should have telephone/GSM as part of working tools.

(d) Library and Information Resources - There is need for a departmental library for each Sociology Department. Current and up-to-date Sociology and Sociology related textbooks, professional journals and representative materials from the popular press should be provided and maintained. Published government and non-governmental documents and related materials should be provided on regular basis (NUC,2007).

2.1 Implementation

Implementation is the systematic way of carrying out planned document or projects. It is the act of executing policies, programme and projects. Implementation is a process of coordinating activities of carrying out drafted planned, policies and projects. Franklin (1982) defined implementation as activities include amassing resources needed to mobilize and carry out responsibilities, planning specific programme designs, using legislation and translating them into specific regulations, organizing staff and creating or amending appropriate routines and providing the benefits and services to intended recipients. Hyder (1984) consider implementation as the act of putting policies into practice. It is the often complex process of planning, organization, coordination and promotion which is necessary in order to achieve policy objectives. Implementation implies the process of activating an approved policy.

3.0 Problems facing Implementation of Sociology Programme in Nigerian Public Universities

This article discusses the problems facing the implementation of sociology programme in the public universities in Nigeria. The problems include the following: inadequate funding, inadequate academic staff, inadequate infrastructural facilities, shortage of instructional materials, brain-drain, strike actions, corruption and poor supervision are identifies as the problem facing the implementation of sociology programme in Nigerian public universities.

3.1 Inadequate funding

Inadequate funding is a major problem facing the implementation of sociology programme in the majorities of public universities in Nigeria. The annual allocation for the administration and implementation of the sociology programme is not adequate to implement the programme successfully at the department level. The funding of public universities across the country is not enough. The inability of the federal government to implement the recommendation of 26% of UNESCO for annual funding of education by the developing countries of public universities is a major factor contributing to poor development of many programme in the public universities include the sociology programme. Udida et al (2009) submitted that the major issue in educational development is shortage of funds. One of the most serious problems threatening the survival of the educational systems is that of dwindling level of public funding in the face of rising demands and hence rising cost of higher education. This shortage of funds affects job performance and the growth of the institution. Higher educational institutions cannot perform optimally without funding. The inadequate funding of the sociology programme in the public universities is responsible for the shortage of lecturers in the field of discipline, inadequate instructional materials, poor research, poor staff development and poor quality of education. The implementation of sociology programme require a lot of human and materials resources which include; funds, lecturers, instructional materials, infrastructural facilities and ICT facilities.

3.2 Inadequate Academic Staff

Inadequate academic staff is another problem facing the implementation of sociology programme in the universities in Nigeria. Many Department of Sociology do not have adequate lecturers to handle the various courses in the programme. National Universities Commission Benchmark Minimum Academic Standards (BMAS) of 2007 stipulated the following teacher/students ratio: 1:20 in science; 1:15 in Engineering and technology; 1:10 in medicine, veterinary medicine and pharmacy, 1:15 in agricultural and environmental sciences, and 1:30 in education, management science, social sciences, law and arts. For the implementation of sociology programme, the teacher/students ratio: 1:30 but due to increase in the students admitted, lecturers in the departments of sociology programme are lecturing more than hundred students per class. NEEDS (2014) pointed out that 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. While in developed countries 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 shortage of professional teachers in the schools is responsible for the failure of the policy in the country (NEEDS,2014).

3.3 Inadequate Infrastructural Facilities

Another problem facing the implementation of sociology programme in the Nigerian universities is inadequate infrastructural facilities. National Universities Commission Benchmark Minimum Academic Standards (BMAS) of 2007 stipulated the following infrastructural facilities for the implementation of sociology programme to include: for Academic, Classrooms, Lecture Theatres, Laboratories, Studios, Staff Offices, Adequate classrooms, lecture theatres, auditoria, laboratories, studios, staff offices, workshops for technical etc, should be provided to ensure proper execution / implementation of programmes. Every sociology department should have a Computer Laboratory, Internet Access and Resource Room. Sociology library. It is unfortunate that many departments of sociology in Nigerian public universities do not have these infrastructural facilities in right quality and

quantities. Many lecturers in the Department of Sociology do not have offices. This submission is confirmed by Ogunode, Jegede&Abubakar (2021), they observed that many academic and non-academic staff in the Nigerian universities do not have offices to discharge their academic services effectively due to inadequate infrastructural facilities in many universities in the country. Many academic staff share offices and some do not even have while many non-teaching staff seat under the trees and roam about from one office to the other because they don't have office to sit. Many academic staff do not have constant light in their offices and internet services to support their online teaching programme. Obemeata (1991) submitted in his study that office spaces for academic staff and lecture rooms or halls are inadequate in our universities. Also, many sociology students do not have adequate lecture hall to receive their lectures. This submission agrees with Ebehikhalu&Dawam (2016) observed that there is no programme that has a lecture theater assigned to it. The numbers of lecture rooms, laboratories and lectures offices are still grossly inadequate to meet the needs of the school. The library is still not adequate to meet the needs of the growing population of the university community. There is a significant deficit of basic learning resources which including multimedia systems, magnetic boards, computers, printers, plotter etc. In terms of aesthetics, the institution's main access is not indicative of a university despite the sign post. The effects of inadequate infrastructural facilities on the lecturers and students performance are that the lecturers' productivity will be low while students' performance will drop. Salisu (2001) in her study of influence of school physical resources on students' academic performance concludes that, there is significant difference in the academic performance of students in institutions with adequate facilities and those with inadequate facilities. The lack of good buildings or funds to rehabilitate collapsed structures poses threat to the system performance and its sustainability hence education to some extent is falling due to low standard.

3.4 Shortage of Instructional Materials

Shortage of instructional materials is a challenge facing the implementation of sociology programme in the Nigerian universities. Many sociology department do not have the required instructional materials and aids for the implementation of the programme. National Universities Commission Benchmark Minimum Academic Standards (BMAS) of 2007 stipulated the following instructional materials: 4 PCs for the Departmental office. At least 10 Pcs for teaching students in a computer room with Internet facilities and laptops. Each academic staff should have a PC in his/her office with internet facilities. Overhead and multimedia projectors. Audio-tape recorders (at least 4). Video recorder. A video player. A Television. Senior Lecturers and above should have telephone and GSM as part of working tools. It is surprising that majorities of public universities do not have the above mentioned facilities to support the delivery of instruction in the Departments of Sociology across the country.

3.5 Brain-Drain

Brain-drain is another problem facing the implementation of sociology programme in the Nigerian universities. Many sociology professors and senior lecturers are moving from Nigerian public universities to other part of the world where their services are more appreciated. Ahaotu&Ogunode (2021)observed administrators of higher institutions in Nigeria are also struggling with the issue of brain-drain in their respective institutions. Many academic staff in Nigeria higher institutions are moving out of the institutions frustrating the efforts of the administrators and managers to provide quality education. Institutional deterioration and salary erosion during the past decade have prompted substantial brain drain

of academic staff and impeded new recruitment. The causes of these brain-drains can be attributed to: low level of academic salaries during the past decade; the declining financial attractions of higher education employment in workloads Odetunde (2004) stated, "There was mass exodus of many brilliant lecturers that could not compete on political campus arenas from the university campus. Some left to join the rat race in the business world and others left Nigeria for better services". Due to brain-drain factor, a lot of sociology department do not have adequate lectures for the implementation of the programme.

3.6 Strike Actions

Strike action is one of the major problem facing the implementation of sociology programme in the public universities. Sociology programme is designed for eight semester programme but the continuous strike action by different union groups in the universities is affecting the time schedule of the programme. Strike actions affect both the students and lecturers. For the lecturers, Ogunode, Jegede&Abubakar (2021) observed that strike actions by different union groups in the Nigerian universities are also frustrating the activities of academic staff of Nigerian universities. Many academic staff cannot function or discharge their responsibilities whenever there is strike actions either by the NASU or ASUU. Strike actions affects the teaching and research programme of academic staff. Strike actions caused unstable academic programme. For the students Okoli, Ogbondah, &Ewor, (2016) opined that it has become a known fact that students across various universities in Nigeria are constantly faced with industrial actions embarked upon by the Academic and Non-Academic Staff Unions of various institutions. The disagreement or lack of understanding between government and unions arising from non-implementation of agreement reached, often results in deadlock that usually disrupts academic calendar. As academic activities are suspended for a long period, the students reading abilities fall. Even the previous knowledge acquired is even forgotten by some students. This mostly turns some students into certificates seekers than knowledge seekers. Ogunode, Jegede&Abubakar (2021) also submitted that during the strike action, both the students, academic staff and non-academics staff are displaced from carrying out their functions. Students will not be learning and lecturers will not teach and all academic services are put to hold. The implication of strike actions on the academic staff is that they waste their academic time while on the students is prolong their academic programme.

3.7 Corruption

Corruption is a very big problem facing the implementation of sociology programme in the higher institutions. Funds released for the implementation of the programme are mismanaged and misappropriated by school administrators at the affairs of the department or institutions. Godwin (2018) submitted that today, our tertiary institutions which include Universities, Polytechnics, Monotechnics, Schools of Nursing and Health Technologies, Nigerian Defence Academy, and Colleges of Education appear not to be functioning effectively. There are cases of students being exploited by staff; recruitment and promotion of staff being based on political patronage instead of merit. There are cases of abuse of office by those in authority. Other vices include: admission racketeering, hostel profiteering, sorting, examination malpractice, sexual harassment, etc. All these social vices are signs of a big rot in our tertiary institutions and they portend danger for the entire Nigerian nation. It shows absolute lack of credibility in our tertiary institutions" service delivery (Ahaotu& Ogunode, 2021; Godwin, 2018; Okobi, 1997). According to Ahaotu&Ogunode(2021), administrators of higher institutions in Nigeria are also facing the problem of how to tackle all forms of academic corruptions in their individual institutions. There are different forms of academic corruption in the Nigerian higher institutions. According to Okobi, (1997) the following forms of

corruption are common in most tertiary institutions in Nigeria: examination malpractice, admission racketeering, hostel profiteering, extortion of the students, abuse of office, sorting, forgery of certificates and statements of results, sexual harassment and immorality, embezzlement of funds, godfatherism, corruption in recruitment and promotion of staff, placing government's or management's machinery at the disposal of a particular student to win election during students' politics in the campus. Oghondah (2010) submitted that in spite of the inadequacy of allocations to the public university system, any fund made available often go down the drain through the corrupt practices of those entrusted with the implementation of university programmes due to inadequate monitoring of university income and expenditure, such is the grim state of affairs, thus the future will need a paradigm shift.

3.8 Poor Supervision

Poor supervision of sociology programme in the universities is not effective and this is affecting the implementation of the programme. The various policies designed for the implementation of sociology programme in the Nigerian universities is not been implemented due to poor supervision. Ojugwu(2001) maintains that supervision creates the awareness of sound education philosophies in teachers and makes them to be aware of educational policies and reforms. Thus supervisors are to play leadership roles that would stimulate and encourage both staff and students in the system to perform their duties as to achieve the institutional task or objectives. Udida, Basse, & Udofia (2009) also observed that the effective supervision of instruction will help administrators to identify the quality of lecturers in the institution. It will also check and balance academic staff, non-academic staff and students. Through constant monitoring and evaluation of the system activities in terms of effective control by the different heads of units or departments, and constant feedback to management including the good utilization of reports will aid in improving and sustaining the standard of the programme.

4.0 Conclusion

Based on the above analysis, the paper concludes that sociology programme in the Nigerian public universities are facing problem of implementation and the problems of implementation facing the sociology programme include: inadequate funding, inadequate academic staff, inadequate infrastructural facilities, shortage of instructional materials, brain-drain, strike actions, corruption and poor supervision

5.0 Way Forward

To solve this problems, the article recommended that the government should increase the funding of the sociology programme, employ more qualified lecturers, provide adequate infrastructural facilities, adequate instructional materials, fight all forms of corruptions, ensure effective supervision and implement all agreement with the different union groups in the public universities.

- a) The federal and state government should increase the funding of public universities in Nigeria. This will aid in the provision of human and materials resources for the implementation of sociology programme.
- b) The government should direct the school administrators to employ more lecturers in the sociology department. This will help to realize the teacher-students' ratio of 1:30 for the programme and quality instruction as stipulated by NUC.
- c) The federal government and state governments should provide adequate infrastructural facilities to all the higher institutions in the country especially the universities. There is need

for adequate funding of the universities to provide and maintain infrastructural facilities in their respective institutions.

d) To address the problem of brain-drain in the higher institutions in Nigeria, there is need for the governments to improve the staff welfare and better working conditions of all personnel working in higher institutions in the country.

e) Government at all levels should intensify effort to fighting all forms of academic corruption in higher institutions in the country by ensuring that the school administrators and anti-corruption agencies are working in collaboration.

f) The government and the school administrators should provide adequate instructional materials to the department of sociology departments across the country.

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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.