

Implementing government policies in university education: Challenges faced by Nigerian Universities' principal officers

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses challenges faced by Nigerian universities' principal officers when implementing government policies on university education. The paper adopts a qualitative approach towards unveiling the causal mechanisms that affect the implementation of government policies in Nigeria, using principal officers' knowledge of the phenomenon. Twenty-one principal officers were involved in the study. A purposive sampling method was adopted for the selection of these principal officers. The finding revealed five major mechanisms that challenge the implementation of government policies in the context of Nigerian universities. The findings reveal that many competing voices operate in different parts of the sector. This affects the structure, causing the mechanism to function wrongly, with a lack of common platforms from which to understand government policies.

Keywords: Government policy, implementation, university, principal officers, Nigeria.

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INTRODUCTION

This paper's definition of the term 'policy', refers to a plan or course of action linked with government, politics or business with the intention to influence and determine decisions, actions and other matters (Hauwa, 2012), while a university is an institution of higher learning that provides training, teaching and research opportunities and development of the community (Fabunmi, 2005). Akinyemi and Abiddin (2013) argue that the development of government policies on university education is historically linked to the demand for highly skilled workers and national economic growth in Nigeria. In order to meet these demands for highly skilled workers, the Nigerian government has introduced many policies, among which a major one is to create access through privatization or deregulation policies. As a result, Nigerian universities are experiencing a sudden growth. Likewise, the universities face many problems, including funding issues, uncontrolled strikes by University Worker's Unions such as Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities (SSANU), National Association of Academic Technologist

(NAAT) and Non-Academic Staff Union (NASU), examination malpractice, academic indiscipline and the lack of a common platform to access policies or implement government policies on university education. These problems have brought the issues of decline in university quality to the top of both researchers' and the government's agendas (Fabunmi, 2005; Andrew, 2011; Dauda, 2010; Akinyemi and Abiddin, 2013). Likewise Adetunji (2014) established that as a result of these problems universities made it difficult for students to access which universities best meet their expectation and requirement.

To address these problems, university management borrowed strategies from the business world such as profit and quality policies to meet with their local and international counterparts. These strategies are designed with different aims, objectives and purposes, and are rooted in quantification and measurement with the hope of measuring intake and using the measure as a yardstick to judge if policies are followed. A good example of this policy is the admission quota system or

catchment and non-catchment area, in which universities are compelled to follow policies through the supervision and monitoring by National University Commissions (NUC). The NUC is charged with power to withdraw the licenses of universities that fail to comply. It was assumed that the NUC approach to policies may give room for accurate measurements, provided the policies and principles of their practice cover all and are unbiased. However, in universities where it is difficult to determine the terms input or intake, such policies became very difficult to fully implement. Therefore, this paper employs an approach that rests between the positivist and constructionist, with the hope that studying the reality of how policies are implemented will help to identify actual challenging mechanisms that face principal officers in Nigerian universities when deciding to implement government policies.

Policy as a concept

Policy provides an official backing for every organisation action and activities without bias and a basis to be followed by all groups, departments or individuals for whom the policies were made. In a review by Okoromo (2006) he claimed that, "policy is an overall guide that gives the general limits and direction in which administration actions will be taken."

The point made by Okoromo is that policy defines areas in which the organisation's decisions are to be made, however it does not supply the decisions. Therefore it can be said that policy brings about a meaningful relationship between organisation objectives, business functions and organisation personnel, as it discourages deviations from unplanned courses of action. However, it can be difficult to accept that policies don't have to be rigid, as room should be allowed for any necessary adjustment after its formulation and during its implementation. This is because policy is a guiding course of action that ensures consistency when an organisation is governed by its approval as a principle and practice.

Koontz and O'Donnel (2005) are of the opinion that policies should not only be formulated, but that also need to be communicated, programmed, evaluated and monitored, if the policy is to achieve the purpose for which it was established. Lindblom (1995 cited in Okoroma, 2006) confirmed that good policies should not be rigid in nature, and describes policy making as a process of successive approximation to some desired objectives, in which what is desired itself continues to change under consideration (p.86). Lindblom stated that a good policy should be one that can easily be reviewed to suit human needs as they arise within the organisation after the policy have been made, or the policy may affect some other useful function of the system. In his conclusive statement, he pointed out that a good policy maker should not expect that all policies made must be

adhered to completely, nor should a policy maker expect any policy to be totally successful. Regardless how good a policy may be, its implementation into an organisation might be surprised by the introduction of a previously overlooked element that the policy maker failed to take into consideration when formulating the policy.

The university education policy

Okoroma (2003) is of the view that for a policy to qualify as an educational policy, it must be different from other policies. Okoroma recognised the multilayers of university education; though Kerr did not study educational policy from a critical realist perception, he acknowledged that government determines the direction of an educational system through its educational policies initiative.

Likewise, Okoromo (2006) also argued that educational policies are different to other policies in that society inducts children into a full education system based on governmental intentions to develop the nation through its educational system as a gear to steer development. Every modern society needs educational policies to guide the process of transforming children into good, sound-minded citizens. Kerr also joined in the debate that it is important for policies to be purposeful and rational to enable them to stand the test of time. He claimed that educational policies are distinguishable from other policies because educational policies are part and parcel of the educational institution and system.

Likewise, the work of Hauwa (2012) have roots in Awokoya (1981 cited in Okoromo, 2006)'s explanation that policy should be formulated and adopted politically to make it reliable, legitimate and free from conflicting interests among its participants, and that policy should be enforceable by the society for which it is formulated. Hauwa (2012) asserts that government policies should provide proper directions that can be used to coordinate different actions towards attainment of desired goals. He also explained that information brochures about the broad objective of why the policies are formulated should be available to guide everyone involved.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopts a critical realist approach because it occupies the intellectual 'space' between positivism, with its ontology of observable events, and postmodernism or poststructuralism, often with strong social constructionist ontology (Archer, 2007). The main reason why the study rejects positivism's preoccupations with prediction and the (often inappropriate) quantification and measurement used in earlier research, as discussed by Modebelu and Joseph (2012), is that it is extremely difficult to measure real university intakes/output in meaningful terms. Modebelu and Joseph's view is that the world is real, and the researcher's presence has little effect on it, as clarified by Wikgren (2005) and Wynn and Williams (2008). In other words, this world is complex and multi-causal, which means that there could be hundreds of causes for each effect.

Therefore, Wikgren et al. reasons, social phenomena such as government policies can, often with great difficulty, be understood, but not often (meaningfully) measured: hence the preference for qualitative methods is clear. The paradigm was adopted because the researcher believes that the world is real and reality exists but not independently of what is being observed (Reed, 2005), and that there exists a reality apart from human knowledge or activity (Njihia, 2011). These suggestions require proponents of critical realist analysis to pay more than lip service to understanding the reasons for not implementing government policies, because elements of discourse used to reference reasons behind the cause of not implementing government policies in the study are not neutral (Al-Amoudi and Willmott, 2011). It means, for example, that it is necessary for the interviewer to be attentive to human values on challenges which face principal officers in Nigerian universities in the process of implementing government policies.

The paper's theoretical sample covers 124 universities. The paper used a purposive sampling method with three major criteria (age, location, and size) to select four universities; agriculture, circular, technology and science universities. Sixteen participants were selected from each university, based on their position, involvement and experience. Though only 21 principal officers participated in the study (including vice-chancellor, registrar, bursar, dean of faculties, director of academic planning and university librarian), their contributions provide a rich and meaningful result. The results were discussed under five major sub-headings as they arose in the study. Thematic analysis was adopted to analyse the themes that emerged from the empirical findings because it helps to analyse causal mismatch between reality and methodology, the blame for which is attributed to lack of implementing government policies, rather than philosophical inappropriateness.

FINDINGS

In the study, participants are represented and coded with alphabetic ratings from A to F where: A = Vice-chancellor, B = Registrar, C = Bursar, D = University Librarian, E = Director of academic planning and F = dean of faculty. The university types are first re-arranged into alphabetical order and number serially 1 to 4, where 1 = Agriculture, 2 = Circular, 3 = Sciences, 4 = Technology.

A1 to A4 are vice-chancellors. A1 is the vice-chancellor from Agriculture University, while A4 is from a Technology University. E1 is the Dean of faculty from Agriculture University, while E4 is the dean of faculty from Technology University. The participants' grid is shown in Table 1.

The common themes from the contribution of the 21 participants in the four universities were discussed in challenges in implementing government policies heading and four sub-headings as discussed below:

Challenges in implementing government policies

According to the dean of faculty, he postulated that Nigerian universities do implement government policies based on the documents (structure) sent to them by the government (D2). A vice-chancellor of a private university stated that government policies are developed from the grassroots, from parents to academics, from academics

to NUC and so on. He is of the opinion that problem in implementing government policies are non-existent, because government policies are reasonable (A4). Another agent (D4) in the same university agrees that government policies are not difficult to implement. He explained that once you get into the system, after a while, "it becomes almost a routine and what you have to do is update your information, update your techniques etc. and also adapt."

However, the six participants who stated that, while policies are made in theory, discoveries of limitations are made at the point of implementation disputed this. A vice-chancellor of a public university stated that the government sets many unrealistic policies, such as free education, because universities are not funded enough to provide free education, which conflicts with the resources available to implementing government policies (A2). Four agents postulated that government policies are problematic in many cases, and that government policies need re-visiting, if the policies are to achieve their purposes. A bursar (C4) confirmed that government policies are good and they are meant to advance education in Nigeria. On the same note, another vice-chancellor (A2) explicated that the government funds universities, therefore agents in each university are supposed to fulfil the policies of the government. Four agents disagree with this explication, but two were questioned further; since the government funds, regulates, maintains and monitors universities, why is it so difficult for the university fulfil government intentions?

"I think when you talk about the government owned universities you are right. The government have never injected any money into our own institution (Private), even though we are also working towards national development and creating more access for people to study. The government did not take any financial responsibility of our existence, making it difficult to implement all government policies." (B3 and B4) The vice-chancellor from a private university supported the statement by clarifying that "we follow government policies as it relates to our own operation". Again, we have our own mission and vision statement that will follow (A4). Another agent from a private university argued that their interest is in the university mandate more than the government policies, because of the need to stand out with the kind of services being offered to the public (C4.)

A further question asked in this section was, "what arrangement should be put in place for implementing government policies." Three agents elucidated that government policies on university education should not be mere documents kept in the library. They explained that stakeholders in the education system and their processes should have access to policy documents in

Table 1. Participants' grid.

University type	Participants					
	Vice-chancellor	Registrar	Bursar	University librarian	Director of academic planning	Dean of faculty
Agriculture	*	*	*	*	-	*
Circular	*	*	-	*	*	*
Science	*	*	*	*	*	*
Technology	*	*	*	-	*	*

order to be aware of expectations. Agents also pointed out the following major problems as hindrances to implementing policies.

Bureaucracy

Several respondents identified bureaucracy as a major problem in implementing government policies in the Nigerian university system. One agent complained that, "for example, if you want to procure smaller materials, government policies state that the job needs to be given to a contractor." He explained that this is subject to considerable abuse, as it slows down the work and delays many things other aspects, too (F1). However, two bursars from public universities claimed that bureaucracy is a good aspect of administration (C1 and C3). A bursar from a private university stressed that bureaucracy should not cause delay. He pointed out that when there is a delay in the process, it is usually results from abuse of bureaucracy (C1).

"I think it is not because bureaucracy is stressful, but because somebody wants you to grease his or her palm." He concluded by saying bureaucracy is good only if you allow it to function and you don't aggravate it with your personal interest (C3).

A vice-chancellor from a private university declared that; "in my own administration for the last ten years, anyone could walk in my office and ask questions." He lamented:

"I hate bureaucracy, I have been through it all my life, I can't stand it. Now I can walk into any of my staff offices at any time, they know I can, and it keep them alert at all times." (A3)

Similarly, two registrars also exposed that there is a lot of bureaucracy in the admission process and recruitment of staff, which slows down the activities of the university as a whole (B1 and B4). A registrar from a public university explained that, on many occasions, some students were admitted after other students had already started class work. He pointed this out as being one of the major problems that affect the implementation of policies:

"I know we do take in competent hands to help the

students but they are recruited through the back door."(B1)

Furthermore, a registrar from a private university made similar complaints, as to how bureaucracy affects the university system's operation (B4). He explained that, when staff is recruited through the back door, it may take a year for him or her to go onto the payroll and, during this period, they cannot be inducted until they appear on the payroll - that is part of the government policy. In such situations, it can be difficult for such staff to understand how the system works. Instead they bring the culture and norms of their previous workplace into their new position. Once they are officially within the system, it is difficult to provide proper induction – instead, they will be sent a form stating that they have been inducted. Another registrar from a private university mentioned that, on many occasions, students have become demoralised when they have waited for a long time to have their course form signed, again as a result of bureaucracy (B3).

Poor funding

Many of the agents identified poor funding as a major problem in implementing government policies. A director of academic planning indicated that poor funding in Nigerian Universities is the government's responsibility (E2). He explained that the government created and funded most of the universities in Nigeria until 1991, when the government could no longer continue to meet with university demand. Instead they allow private investors to create more universities in the country. One vice-chancellor complained that the government contributions to the government owned universities are not enough to maintain the university system (A2). He also pointed out that, although government pays the staff salaries, other activities are not catered for, such as teaching aids, exam maintained fees, water, power, telephone supply and much more. The university needs to generate funds to meet all these demands. Likewise, a vice-chancellor of a private university and a dean of faculty from a public university explained that, due to lack of funding, universities now admit large numbers of students to cater for the university administrative needs,

which has led to overcrowding in all Nigerian universities (A3 and D2).

On another note, a director of academic planning agreed that the Nigerian government shows good intentions in developing university education policies. However, the implementation of good policies requires adequate funding to achieve the purpose for which the policies are designed (E3). A bursar from a public university explained that:

“I think the mistake the government is making is using the education system as a political campaign tool, to canvas for election by promising the electorate a free education. I think government has gotten their priorities wrong and this needs to be redefined. Take, for instance, that universities are government agency bodies, power-holding, water and many more are government agencies, then tell me why should one government agency be paying back to another government agency if we are all working towards national development?” (C1)

Similarly, a dean of faculty and a director of academic planning for a public university lamented that, even within the education system, the government is not providing enough capital to maintain staff and other administrative purposes - as the vice-chancellor (A3) mentioned earlier. A director of academic planning claimed that a lack of basic work resources and the results of less funding may result in the university not following government policies to the letter (E2). He pointed out, for instance, that a university may admit more students than their carrying capacity in order to generate more income to meet the university's operation costs. This is a major problem created by government policies, which fails to encourage proper implementation of the policies.

Staff capacity

As noted by the dean of faculty (D2) and vice-chancellor (A2) from a public university, staff ability and capacity is another factor that affects government policy implementation. A registrar from a public university also supported the opinion that staff capacity has considerable influence on government policy implementation. He state that:

“If I will be truthful to you, we have had some problems in the past where people we recruited did not go through the normal procedure, and as a result their contributions were minimal in influencing decisions that should have been implemented.” (B1)

A university librarian added that implementation of government policies depends on agent ability and

integrity - to do what is right and carry other staff along with them in the process (F3). Three agents from public universities are of the view that, to implement government policies in Nigerian universities, it will require somebody emotionally strong and determined to do so properly. The person in question needs to be able to refuse to bend rules, because when implementing government policies, they may have to step on some toes - especially people on the ladder of authority - and they might find it difficult to do so (B1, F1, and A2). In addition, a dean of faculty and a vice-chancellor expressed that there have been several attempts to make government policies relevant; the extent to which they succeeded was another thing entirely. They pointed out that it very often depends on the experience of who is delivering the service (D4 and A2).

A university librarian indicated that the qualification of staff, inadequate working tools, attitudinal factors and time management are factors which affect government policy implementation (F1). Meanwhile, a dean of faculty pointed out that a major problem in some cases is that government delegates, who know nothing or have no experience of managing a university, are recruited as consultants (D1). He explained that these consultants give advice and recommendations to a university, as they do in other sectors, making it difficult to operate further down the line in the university. He later cited an instance in terms of the revenue generated in the university. A vice-chancellor of a private university (A4) also mentioned that the consultant expects income generated from the university to be turned into government revenue whereas most of this income they discuss is third party income, or funds services to the student. A director of academic planning mentioned that advice in how to effectively implement these policies is not stated in terms of provided funds, staffing and other logistics (E3).

Government policies

One of the major problems identified by the agents in implementing government policies is the policy itself. A university librarian mentioned that government policies are not formulated to benefit the end users. He then stated that, in most cases, government policies are not relevant to the development of education (F3). However, a bursar from a private university (C4) indicated that government policies are very good, because they provide the entirety of universities a minimum standard, which keeps all institutions on their toes. Notwithstanding, a dean of the faculty of a public university added that the administrative calendars of the university guideline are not in accordance with the way the general government wants the university to operate (D2). He explained that government policies run from January to December and they want the university to report on their activities from January to December; the university academic session

runs from July to June. The two agents, D2 and D3, mentioned that the confusion in a calendar year and administrative year results from the information that government consultants report to the government.

A vice-chancellor of a public university suggested that there would have been no conflict if the right body handles the government policies and guidelines for the university (A2). One agent argued that government policies state how universities should operate and that funding will be provided later, to achieve the universities' objectives. In reality, the government has failed to provide basic amenities to facilitate learning in the universities. Two vice-chancellors stated that, nevertheless, if the government wants university education in Nigeria to return to its original glory, they should allow universities to run independently and allow them to charge reasonable student fees (A1 and A2). Subsequently, governments can also subsidise the payment for as many students as they can afford each year:

"I think that if the government adopts this strategy, universities will stop crying to the government for inadequate funding. Honestly, I don't think that there is any country in the whole world that does not pay for what they enjoy in terms of education." (A2)

On the contrary, one director of academic planning is of the view that, even if the NUC communicates what is to be done to all universities, at the end of the day nothing will be achieved, as people may not follow the instructions given (E2). She is of the opinion that the agents can easily misinterpret policies set to the university by the NUC. She suggested that close monitoring should be put in place, and that the NUC office should be divided into regional offices. A dean of faculty (D1) lamented that Nigerian universities are faced with major problems with what is called policy somersaulting. He alluded to the fact that changing education policies because of a particular government interest is another problem that destabilises and confuses agents' activities:

"I am sure it can be different to buy into such ideas; to a large extent it's a major problem because of discontinuity in government policies." (B3)

Three agents (B1, C4 and C1) claimed that government policies are difficult to implement, in that the policies are sometimes made in theory. The bursar (C4) and registrar (B1) believe that it is at the point of implementation that universities discover limitations of the policies. The bursar and dean of faculty advocated that, if universities insist on maintaining the standard set by NUC or Ministry of Education, then it would be difficult to deliver quality service to the students (C1 and D4). The dean of faculty (D4) pointed out, for example, that government policies

stated that a PhD should be the minimum qualification for teaching in the university, thus excluding graduate assistants from teaching. Most of the universities use graduate assistance for teaching as a reason for admitting more students:

"I remember some lecturers who are teaching here, who are willing to further their study up to PhD level. They are faced with a lot of problems, which makes it difficult for them to further their studies. I can tell you that if you ask any of the graduate assistants, what they will tell you is that they have got huge workloads that they cannot combine it with doing further research work or talk of a postgraduate degree." (D3)

One vice-chancellor from a public university stated a university needs to accommodate graduate assistants, either by tolerating them without a PhD for a longer time, or "you make a sacrifice within the system for a lower level of workload to allow them to develop academically to a PhD level" (A2). He also mentioned that government policies should not be designed just for the sake of policies, if the policies are to be relevant in developing the nation.

Institution carrying capacity

A director of academic planning from a public university is of the opinion that a major problem affecting the implementation of government policies in Nigerian universities is whether or not their institution carrying capacity can cater for the demand of the students they admit (E2), although universities can recruit more staff and try to reduce the intake of students every year. Another director of academic planning continued by saying that it is stated that universities are reducing student intake and recruiting more staff yearly, but the truth is that:

"I think service delivering has changed over time, which has put government policies and how quality is managed in question. I can give you an example of what I am saying. How can I compare Nigerian education 30 years ago with what is done now? It was not like this before, the problem is that the facilities that were in existence in 1980 are still the ones that are in existence in these universities today" (E3).

A director of academic planning (E2) and a dean of faculty (D2) also agreed with the dean of faculty (E3) that the carrying capacity developed in the 80s for 100 students in a department is still the same as in existence, even now that the student number has multiplied tenfold.

Furthermore, a registrar (B2) and a university librarian (F2) from a public university stressed that in the 80s, whilst they were studying, the student population was different to the present day and the university environment was extremely conducive to learning. They pointed out that you could lay your hands on many learning tools, and that support systems were available to students at all times. Today, we do not even know our students; you cannot tell who is in your class, never mind having a one to one discussion with a student. A director of academic planning from a private university also clarified that it is not that Nigerian university academia does not have the brainpower to train students; the truth is that there is no technical equipment available to do the job, nor talk about updating staff as lecturers (E4). A university librarian (F1) was concerned that the buildings need to be upgraded to meet the contemporary standards; he identified that university agents are trying their best to arrange the building of better structures. This alone is not enough, more is still required, and lecture rooms are overcrowded compared to that which can be obtained abroad. Likewise, two deans of faculty (D3 and D4) both share a common opinion - that building more structures is relevant to them as lecturers, but making the system more conducive to work is more important.

“I believe in the majority of our universities today you will find this problem, a lecture hall of 2500 capacity built for lecturing without a projector, without a microphone, without teaching assistance to support a lecturer teaching (D4). I think what you will get in most cases is students at the back of the classroom not hearing what you are saying in the front. What is our gain as lecturers? I am frustrated as I talk to you because I have too many students in my department.” (D3)”

On the contrary, a bursar from a public university and a dean of faculty from a public university complained that many departments need more facilities to enhance safety and the fast delivery of their services (C4 and D1). He mentioned in his conversation that if a major problem of government policies exists, it is that it does not create working space for the effective management of the whole education process. The next section identifies how government policies can be improved.

CONCLUSION

Challenges about how to implement government policies in Nigeria universities debates assume to continue until principal officers recognises their roles in the implementation the policies. Although most of the challenges discussed in this paper have been investigated in a more general context most especially externally. While these challenges have very little

influence from external bodies or organisations (such as National University Commission, Joint Matriculation Admission, National Examination Council and many more) this is not to ignore challenges cause by the external bodies. The major focus of this study was centred on the university management who are involved on the daily actives of the university. These activities include intake and appointment of student and staff, teaching, learning and research process and enterprising, while many of these activities requires proper implementation of government policies. No wonder Adetunji (2014) expressed that principal officers are expected to offer quality services to the primary and secondary users. It is evident that university management have also contribute their part to non-implementation of government policy through undue bureaucracy and paper work, mismanagement of funds allocated to the university by the government, an approach which is discouraging and should not be condole within academic environment. It is appropriate to highlight here that principal officers are the first role models for developing highly skill worker that the government intend to develop. No wonder Fabunmi (2005) elucidate that university is an institution of higher learning that provides training teaching and research opportunities and development for the community therefore they must be of high integrity.

Principal officers have taken action such as not following government policies because they claim to have autonomy to decide on their own initiative on what to do. They have unnecessary increased enrolment on many occasions to meet up with the university spending which means it is the principal officers who have compromised standard and any challenges the institution is facing today they should be ready to take responsibility for it. Therefore they have no excuses not to be successful on their own. Without a doubt, all the challenges discussed in this paper can be controlled internally, hence principal officers needs to agreed that they have work to do in other to restore good practices in the university.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATION AND LIMITATIONS

The practical implication of the study was the identification of key mechanisms that affect the implementation of government polices in Nigerian universities, which ordinarily will not be considered as factors that can cause non-implementation of government policies in other countries. The challenging question in this study is why government has to make policies if they are not ready to provide available resources to implement their own policies. Likewise, why are government policies antagonistic policies and why is it difficult to have a common platform to access policies since the government rules over all? Prior to this study, it might have been easy to put the blame on principal officers; Juran (2001) stated that any failure in an organization is

the fault of those who manage the system. This paper criticizes Juran's assertion based on environmental factors. This might work perfectly in another country, but the nature of activities in Nigerian universities, coupled with different impending factors that affect the activities of the university, mean that Juran's statement is not applicable in the Nigerian context. Juran provides no room for exceptional cases in his conclusion. Moreover, difficulties arise in the application of concepts, models and theories developing because of this assertion. Therefore, before borrowing or replicating any study from a Western context to any African country, especially Nigeria, it is worth checking thoroughly to see if the policies' approach or practice will be suitable.

This study can be criticized for being too narrow and not covering areas of related interest such as government policies relating to pedagogy, teaching methods and techniques, learning styles, etc. This is undoubtedly true when addressing the gaps in knowledge identified by this paper, and focusing on identifying the challenges faced by Nigerian universities, therefore the scope cannot be too broad. In order to produce meaningful results, within the time available, research questions were tightly focused. This renders the scope of the study narrow, but allows for more detail and related content areas ignored by this paper can be investigated by further and future research. Such as identifying formulation process, other policies like deregulation, privatization and commercialization and many others that affect the operation of universities in Nigeria.

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