Quality of Nigerian University Education System: Implications for Functional Educational Development

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Abstract

This paper investigated quality of Nigerian university education system with the implications for functional educational development. The paper viewed education as the act of bringing up or training of a child, through instruction and in the process bring about the strengthening of his/her powers of body and mind to be able to understand his/her culture. The quality of the products of the Nigerian University education system, the level of learner's achievement, the desperation of students to succeed as evidenced by unabated incidences and sophistication of examination malpractices, and falsification of credentials, frequency of teachers' strike, and their poor quality, all point to inefficient performance of the system quality of education to any society must take reference from what that society perceives as the purpose of education. Quality is somewhat interconnected with standards and since standards constitute the essential yardsticks for the assessment of values and for comparability, interpretability and harmonization, they serve as criteria for quality control in education. Nigerian university education system has not been functional because too much emphasis has been placed on theoretical and academic knowledge. There is also undue emphasis on the possession of certificates instead of on what one can do. Successful university education system requires a combination of structural quality elements. In order to improve the quality of university education system, Nigeria must enable a benchmarking system to determine current learning levels and future learning objectives, provide schools and communities with ownership of their systems, and set up mechanisms to ensure and monitor various responsibilities, all while supporting teacher quality, promoting the importance of education and being mindful of context and culture. Therefore, this paper highlight concept of quality, quality assurance, functionality of university education system with the challenges. In conclusion, the educational processes are geared primarily to preparing individuals for future bitterness and development of the society and country at large. In view of that, the paper suggested that policymakers must consider all aspects of the Nigeria university education system in defining an appropriate reform that will provide an inclusive and holistic approach to improving education outcomes.

Background to the Study

A good quality university education system is one that provides all students with capabilities they require to become economically productive, develop sustainable livelihoods, contribute to peaceful and democratic societies and enhance individual well-being. The learning outcomes that are required vary according to context but at the end of the university education cycle must include threshold levels of literacy and numeracy, scientific knowledge and life skills including awareness and prevention of disease. Guyford (1992) Capacity development to improve the quality of teachers and other education stakeholders is crucial throughout this process."But let consider a factory that makes a product. The factory worker uses work instructions, methods, and tools to create the product. The system the worker uses consists of these very same work instructions, methods, and tools. Problems or defects with the product produced, as a result of these work instructions, methods, and tools, require changes to the system. The product is not the work instructions, methods, or instruments. Seems obvious but, how would this work in Nigerian universities education system? What exactly is quality university education system? Let's take a look at the teacher in a university education. The teacher uses work instructions, methods, and instruments to create the product call learning, just like a factory worker. If the product produced (learning) has problems or defects (i.e. learning is not occurring as expected) then the teacher must change his work instructions, methods, or instruments in order to decrease the defect rate and increase the quality of the product.

A phenomenal expansion of the Nigerian university system began with the oil boom of the 1970s. Following a downturn in the nation's economy and the introduction of structural adjustment programmes, government subventions to Nigerian universities have dropped appreciably, and in real terms the universities have suffered considerable decline in purchasing power. Institutional structures for monitoring efficiency have played an important role in efforts to maintain academic standards; but in the face of continued uncontrolled expansion and in the absence of basic facilities for teaching and research, the university system cannot sustain a healthy growth. Greater attention is being given to improved fiscal management, income generation by the universities and rationalization of academic programmes.

As scholarships and bursary awards for able but indigent students are resuscitated, cost recovery measures in the universities need to be intensified. Proposals for the establishment of private universities operating within guidelines prescribed by the National Universities Commission (NUC) (Akin, 1991). The aims of university education system in Nigeria as outlined by the Federal Ministry of Education (2013) section 8 (59) are:
   i.   Contribution to national development through high level manpower training.
   ii. Development and inculcation of proper values for the survival of the individual and the society.
   iii. Development of the intellectual capabilities of the individual to understand and appreciate their local and external environment. Section 8 (60) of the federal ministry of education also state that higher education in Nigeria should vigorously pursue these goals through:

a. Teaching
b. Research and development.
c. Knowledge generation and dissemination and international cooperation.
d. Dedicated services to the communities through extra-mural and consultancy services.

Education is an instrument for conserving, transmitting and renewing culture. It is therefore, the sum total of person's experience (Mallinson, & Moore in Asiyai, 2014). Education is also a holistic process of transferring norms and values to individuals across the community, town and nation. It is one of the basic social responsibilities provided by a responsible government to its citizens. In Nigeria, this act has been the responsibility of the Federal, State and the Local Government. Over the years, Nigeria has witnessed active participation by Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and individuals in providing education to the citizens. In view of this, it can be deduced that education is a collective responsibility of the Government, NGO, community and individuals. Traditional or indigenous education existed before formal school was introduced in Nigeria. The objective of traditional education was clear and definite. The traditional education was geared towards inculcating knowledge, attitude and skills which will fit the individual into the immediate society, first and foremost and where possible the wider society.

Conceptual Explanations
Quality and Quality of Nigeria University Education System
Quality represents an acceptable norm or an essential property or characteristic that gives identity to something. Sometimes, particularly in the field of education, quality refers to the highest or finest standard to be pursued, a sort of degree of excellence to be aspired to (Anikweze,2013). To Bell in Anikweze (2013), quality with reference to education means "fitness for purpose". Thus, the quality of education to any society must take reference from what that society perceives as the purpose of education. Quality is somewhat interconnected with standards and since standards constitute the essential yardsticks for the assessment of values and for comparability, interpretability and harmonization, they serve as criteria for quality control in education.

According to Dubrin in Asiyai (2014) quality is a desirable attribute of a product or service that distinguishes it for the person seeking the attribute. DuBrin maintained that good quality should possess the characteristics of conformance to expectation, conformance to requirement, excellence and value and loss of avoidance. Asiyai (2104)defined quality as a measure of how good or bad the products of higher education institutions in Nigeria are in terms Quality has the connotation of differentiation according to standards or grades of something. It represents an acceptable norm or an essential property or characteristic that gives identity to something. Sometimes, particularly in the field of education, quality refers to the highest or finest standard to be pursued, a sort of degree of excellence to be aspired to. To Bell in Anikweze (2013), quality with reference to education means "fitness for purpose". Thus, the quality of education to any society must take reference from what

that society perceives as the purpose of education. Quality is somewhat interconnected with standards and since standards constitute the essential yardsticks for the assessment of values and for comparability, interpretability and harmonization, they serve as criteria for quality control in education.

The meaning of a Quality University Education System is one that is pedagogically and developmentally sound and educates the student in becoming active and productive members of society. A Quality University Education is not one that is measured purely by a test score. To hark back to these simplified measurements is to do a disservice to both the student and the phrase Quality Education itself. A quality university education system is one that focuses on the whole student the social, emotional, mental, physical, and cognitive development of each student regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or geographic location. It prepares the child for life, not just for testing. A quality university education provides resources and directs policy to ensure that each child enters school healthy and learns about and practices a healthy lifestyle; learns in an environment that is physically and emotionally safe for students and adults; is actively engaged in learning and is connected to the school and broader community; has access to personalized learning and is supported by qualified, caring adults; and is challenged academically and prepared for success in college or further study and for employment and participation in a global environment. A quality university education provides the outcomes needed for individuals, communities, and societies to prosper. It allows schools to align and integrate fully with their communities and access a range of services across sectors designed to support the educational development of their students. A quality university education is supported by three key pillars: ensuring access to quality teachers; providing use of quality learning tools and professional development and the establishment of safe and supportive quality learning environments. United Nations (UN) ratified 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2016

Quality university education system based on the holistic development, equips students with the knowledge and skills for the future, inculcates students with the right values and imbues students with a positive learning attitude Barretta, 2011). Quality university education is delivered by good teachers, enabled by good teaching and learning processes and facilitated by a conducive learning environment. The challenge of achieving quality education is to find the balance between lofty ideals and ground realities. Quality university education system is that education that is relevant and adapted to the needs of the society (Ndiomu in Asiyai,2014). Quality university education refers to the worth of the inputs into the university education systems, teachers, instructional facilities and evaluation procedures which translates to the outputs. Majasan in Asiyai(2014) maintained that quality of university education is value-loaded arguing that quality education should produce disciplined behaviour, hard work, improved cultural heritage and mutual respect within and outside the school community. If a society expects quality manpower for rapid development and transformation, quality education is a must do affair (Majasan in Asiyai, 2014). Quality

university education entails that the products of institutions of higher education should be able to perform according to expected standard and compete favourably with their peers in other countries of the world. Akinpelu in Asiyai (2014) argued that education without quality can even be more dangerous than no education, stressing that without quality, education has no value. Furthermore, quality education in Nigeria university education system is the functional and accurate of teachers (teaching method), instructional materials, infrastructure for good teaching and learning environment.

Quality Assurance

Assurance literally means certainty or freedom from uncertainty. Therefore, quality assurance in education would imply the planned strategies intended to inspire confidence in the consumers of the products of the university education system (Anikweze, 2013). When quality assurance is inbuilt in a university education system, it suggests steps that must be taken to ensure valid and dependable quality of the products. Applied to measurement and evaluation, the concept of quality assurance would challenge not only the validity of the assessment instruments and the reliability of the procedures taken to obtain measurements but also the organization of instruction and the structure of curriculum. Burrello in Anikweze (2013) suggest that certain conditions are necessary for university to be successful in providing quality and equity for all students:

1. The disciplinary structure of curriculum must be replaced by an interdisciplinary approach that recognizes the interrelationships in knowledge.
2. Instruction must consist of a wide variety of approaches that use enrichment, acceleration, and adaptive technologies to challenge the capacities of all students and connect their learning to their lives.
3. Assessment must be an ongoing effort to evaluate student learning authentically and in relationship to the curriculum and instructional strategies that are in place for students.
4. School time must be organized to allow for flexibility necessary to give all students the opportunity to express their individuality and their unique approaches to learning (Anikweze, 2013).

The quality of the products of the university educational system, the level of learner's achievement, the desperation of students to succeed as evidenced by unabated incidences and sophistication of examination malpractices, and falsification of credentials, frequency of teachers' strike, and their poor quality, all point to inefficient performance of the system (Aina in Abubakar 2009). The gross underfunding of the educational sector, coupled with other related problems of infrastructural decay, dearth of infrastructural facilities at all levels of the educational institutions, inadequate teaching and learning materials, inadequate teaching staff, inconsistence and lack of clear cut education policy. Therefore, a functional educational system in Nigeria will bring about high quality manpower that will turn around the available resources into wealth for the nation. The country will also experience a turn-around in science and technology, which will in-turn affect all other sectors of the economy. Thus, the wealth of the nation will be redistributed to favour the poor populace. There would be many employment opportunities which will

lead to income generation and invariably the decline in the high rate of poverty and inequality. This will further bring about an improvement in the wellbeing of the populace.

Quality assurance is the process of maintaining standards in products and services through inspection or testing of samples (Ramson, 2005). In line with this Ayodele, (2007) contend that quality assurance entails the quality of available instructional materials for teaching, equipment, facilities, school environment, pupils, curriculum, quality of instructional delivery and quality of teachers. Quality assurance is designed to prove and improve the quality of an institutions teaching methods, educational products and outcomes (Oyebode, Oladipo &Adetome; 2008). One of the key building blocks of quality assurance in university education system is the development of minimum standards as in qualification of teachers, the quality of teaching in universities, expected educational achievement of students and the development of a more rigorous management process for education so that the entire sector develops stronger operating policies, procedures which are well documented and adhered to. Quality assurance in university education in Nigeria include internal and external mechanisms put in place by institutions and accreditation agencies respectively, to ensure standard in all the functions of the institutions. Universities in Nigeria have employed various variables to determine the quality assurance of their programmes and institutions. Adedipe (2007) considered the various variables to determine the quality assurance of universities as follows:

1. Minimum academic standards form the base line for entrenching quality university education, since it prescribes a profile of curriculum, human resources, structures, infrastructures, equipment and associated facilities required for establishing, governing and managing the university.
2. Accreditation is the process by which programmes are evaluated against set minimum academic standards and institutions comprehensive academic research and development activities are evaluated against prescribed criteria (including a self-visioned and Publications and Research Assessment Quality Assurance in the Nigeria. University. System.
3. Visitation Structures, infrastructures utilities Impact Assessment Minimum Academic standards.
4. Accreditation Carrying Capacity Admission Quota Students Enrolment Research and development self-produced strategic plan).
5. Carrying capacity of a university is the maximum number of students that the institution can sustain for quality education based on available human and material resources.
6. Admission into the universities is based on merit, catchment and educationally disadvantaged States.
7. Visitation to universities is a statutory requirement that empowers the proprietor to ascertain the well-being of the university.
8. Impact assessment is a specialized form of evaluation aimed at finding out if the core expectations of the establishment of a particular university, are being met.

9. Research is the driving force for human development as globally determined, such research should be evidenced by publications.
10. Structures, infrastructures and utilities are an essential driving force for qualitative productivity in any organization, particularly in the university system.

Makoju, Nwangwu, Abolade and Newton (2004) observed that the Whole-School Evaluation (WSE) concept/practice is considered as one of the cornerstones of quality assurance and one way of improving the quality of education. Quality assurance in this concept refers to the monitoring and evaluation of performance of the various levels of the education system in achieving the specific goals at each level and overall objectives of the system. To them, quality assurance consists of three programmes, namely: Whole – School Evaluation (WSE), Systematic Evaluation (SE), and Quality Management System (QMS). It is generally believed that the purposes of evaluation in the university education system are to:
a. Assess the quality of school using nationally agreed criteria;
b. Increase the level of accountability in the education system
c. Strengthen the support given to schools by government and other agencies
d. Provide feedback to stakeholders through a publication of reports resulting from whole school evaluation; and

Identify aspects of excellence in schools as well as areas of major under-achievement, thus, improving the understanding of what makes an effective institution.

Qualities of Nigerian University Education System
A "good" Nigerian university education typically depends on what you value most as a student and desire to get out of your post-secondary experience. For example, some students might want to have lots of research opportunities, library resources and courses in a particular discipline, while another might prefer networking, socializing, and exploring a wide variety of courses. Conventionally, a good university should prioritize the following qualities:
1. Hiring and supporting quality professors/faculty - these are the people who will be teaching, it's the core value of the university experience.
2. A wide range of course offerings (including courses that are consistently offered and up-to-date with current research and events).
3. Reasonable rates of tuition in relation to quality of courses/faculty.
4. Opportunities to receive financial aid.
5. Extensive library and computing facilities.
7. Quality academic support services and ample staff (academic advisors, tutors, etc.)
8. Excellent support services and staff (administration, career services, student advocacy, equity services etc.)
9. Well maintained on/off campus residences and positive residence life program,
10. Healthy, diverse food options and affordable food plans
11. Research opportunities and funding for all departments and faculties
12. Good Curriculum responsible for personality development of the learners.

13. Health and wellness supports (counselling, medical services, gym).
14. Safety and security services (little to no campus crime, sexual assault supports etc.)
15. Opportunities for networking, socializing and student leadership

Dimensions of Quality of University Education System
The following are some of the dimensions of quality university education system

Equity: This refers to "all learners". This term refers to non-discrimination and equity. Equity in education means that personal and social circumstances such as gender, ethnic origin or family background are not obstacles to achieving educational potential and that all individuals reach at least a basic minimum level of skills in particular focuses on gender equity.

Contextualization and Relevance: Quality education cannot be based on a blueprint that is applicable in all situations. Solutions and adaptations of university education systems must be based on the real needs of a country and/or community.

Students Friendly Teaching and Learning: Quality university education puts the students in the centre and helps it to reach his or her full potential. Quality University Education requires student's active participation.

Sustainability: Educational change processes often need time to be realized. By enhancing the capacities of Nigeria education authorities, the university need to achieved the objective of National Policy on Education (2013).

Balanced Approach: Quality education aims at developing a balanced set of capabilities of students they require to become economically productive, develop sustainable livelihoods, contribute to peaceful and democratic societies and enhance individual well-being.

Learning Outcomes: After completing a university education, students must have developed a minimum standard of skills. Quality education requires a results-oriented approach.

Challenges of Quality of Nigerian University Education System
According Asiyai (2017) classified the following as the challenges of quality in Nigeria Universities:

Under funding: Underfunding is the most critical challenge that has threatened the attainment of good quality of Nigerian university education system. Under funding of university education has been a bane to educational development in the country. Many universities in Nigeria were unable to build lecture halls, students' hostels, equip laboratories and workshops and payment of staff salaries, research grants, allowances and medical bills (Asiyai, 2014). Finance is so crucial to any university education that it continues to dominate discussions on the state of university education in Nigeria. The establishment and the running of tertiary institutions are capital intensive. Running the

institution, therefore, requires significant investment in providing and maintaining a basic level of infrastructure – such as facilities, staff salaries, and residential housing. Universities in Nigeria have been supported largely by government in the past, but with the economic down-turn, these universities have been grossly under-funded and this has invariably led to the quality being adversely affected. Some of these institutions are characterized by poor infrastructures, overcrowded classrooms, incessant strikes and student unrest.

Poor Quality of Teaching Staff: A big challenge to the attainment of quality universities education in Nigeria is the lack of unqualified academic staff. According to Coombs in Asiyai (2014), teachers are the hub of any educational system. Teachers determine the quality of education because they transmit educational policies into practice and action. As rightly pointed out by Ukeje in Asiyai (2014) without adequate number of inspiring, well-informed teachers, fully prepared to meet their responsibilities in our schools, we cannot have good education and without good education, we cannot hope for long to meet successfully, the challenges of a changing world. Despite the importance of teachers in the attainment of good education, institutions of higher learning in Nigeria are short of lecturers to adequately handle teaching and learning activities. Bamiro, (2012) attributed the problem of de-intellectualization of the academia to low quality of staff of some institutions of higher learning in Nigeria. Where there is poor quality of lecturers, the attainment of good quality in university education will be difficult.

Lack of Good Policy Implementation: Lack of good policy implementation is challenge to quality delivery in university education system. The poor quality delivery is responsible for the abysmal low performance of graduates of institutions of higher learning in Nigeria in their world of work and the alarming incidence of examination malpractice. However, several factors could be adduced as inhibitors to smooth implementation of educational policies and thereby resulting to poor quality delivery. Such factors as government underfunding of education and injudicious utilization of available funds by implementation agencies-vice chancellors, rectors, provosts' deans of faculties, heads of department etc.

Inadequate Materials: Quality of Nigeria university education system is dependent on the quality and quantity of availability of material resources put in place in universities. The lack of infrastructures such as science laboratories, workshops, students' hostels, libraries and electricity will affect the quality of education. Besides, the libraries in most institutions of higher learning in the country are stocked with obsolete text books, with current journals and text books lacking. In the opinion of Kamm in Asiyai (2014), the library is at the heart of the academic effort in a college or university. For an institution to be strong academically, it must have a formidable library put in place. This explains why the top universities of the world (Harvard, Cambridge, Tokyo and University of California) are academically of high strength and quality. The acute shortage of educational facilities in institutions of higher learning in Nigeria has led to decline in the quality of higher education in the country. According Saleh and Kalu (2018)opened that without adequate and qualified number of inspiring well-informed teachers, the university education system will not function positively and the standard will demoralized.

Enrolment Explosion: This over enrolment has become a common feature in Nigerian universities. Many of the facilities on the ground are being overstretched. Okebukola in Asiyai (2014) released the list of some overcrowded universities recently where Olabisi Onabanjo University Ago-Iwoye topped the list with an excess enrolment of 24,628 students. This development will surely affect the quality of university education in Nigeria, since excess enrolment usually leads to overcrowded classrooms, ineffective teaching and examination malpractices.

Inadequate of Information Communication Technology Facilities: Another challenge to quality attainment in universities education system in Nigeria is inadequate of information communication technology facilities in the universities. As part of her education reform effort Nigerian government adopted information communication technologies in all levels of education since information communication technology integration in educational practices is meant to improve teaching and learning, enhance higher education research, enhance collaboration among peers and improve quality of education. Curriculum content could be enriched through search from the internet by teachers. Through such internet search, information and relevant school practices which are unknown to teachers and students and which cannot be found in textbooks, can easily be downloaded for use. Information and communication technology in education has been continuously linked to higher efficiency, higher productivity and higher educational outcomes, including quality of cognitive, creative and innovative thinking (Olatoye, 2011).

Frequent labour (ASSU) Disputes and Closures of Universities: A big cause to quality of university education in Nigeria is the incessant staff union disputes and subsequent closures of the institutions. Asiyai in Asiyai (2014) provided a catalogue of strikes by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) and the Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities (SSANU) within fourteen years. Asiyai revealed that they were too many strikes, some of which lasted up to six months. Similar case happened on the4[th]November, 2018that disputes as poor conditions of service of staff, non-implementation of ASUU/FGN agreements, lack of autonomy and academic freedom, poor funding and other related issues. The disruption of academic programmes of the university affects students learning outcomes, since lecturers find it difficult to complete the course work. In most cases led lectures to rushed to accommodate the time lost to strike. So far the strike lasted for about four (4) months now and none known's when the dispute will come an end. This type of academic rush is a big threat to attainment of quality in higher education in Nigeria.

Lack of Vibrant Staff Development Programmes: Most universities in Nigeria lack staff development programme for training and re-training of staff. Vibrant staff development programme on a continuous basis will help academics and non-academics to clarify and modify their behaviour, attitude, value, skills and competencies. In this way, they grow and develop in their knowledge and thus become more effective and efficient in the performance of tasks. In addition, Asiyai (2014) reported that lack of staff development programmes accounted for the decline in quality of university education in Nigeria. Similarly, Adeogun in Asiyai (2014) noted that an employee who is not trained and exposed to continuous retraining in the modern methods and new discoveries in his or her field will soon become irrelevant to the organization.

Brain Drain: Another challenge of the quality of universities education in Nigeria is the problem of brain drain. Over the past decades, there has been mass exodus of brilliant and most talented lecturers to other sectors of the economy. Some of the lecturers left Nigerian universities to join the business world, some joined politics while others left Nigeria for better services. Brain drain has led to decline in research outputs from universities in Nigeria vis-à-vis the disappearance of research centers in Nigerian universities.

Poor Leadership: Poor leadership both at the government level and at the university level have been a big challenge to quality in university education in Nigeria. Since the nineties, the government of the country has not shown enough commitment to higher education development in Nigeria. One of the several indices for properly evaluating government commitment to educational development in any country is budgetary allocation and disbursement to education. UNESCO had recommended 26% budgetary allocation to education based on GNP but the amount allocated to education by Nigerian government has continued to be smaller when compared to other African countries. For example, budgetary allocation to education as percentage of GNP was 0.7%, South Africa was 7.9%, Ghana was 4.2%, Kenya was 6.5% and Sub-Sahara 4.2% in 2005. A World Bank Report cited by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU, 2013) noted that in 2012 Nigeria's GDP was 262.2 billion USD while allocation to education was 1.96 billion USD.

Also, poor leadership of some Nigerian university administrators has been a bane to the attainment of quality in higher education in Nigeria. This is the place of leadership in the institutions of higher learning. The duty of leadership is to reduce problems within the system in order to enhance efficiency. Accordingly, Osiebe in Asiyai (2014) argued that poor leadership of some university administrators by not involving staff union members in decision making while Iyayi, (2002) argued that dismissal of some academics without following due process were indication of poor governance which made many academic staff de-motivated to serious academic pursuit.

Outdated Curriculum: Most educators agree that the learning curricula in many of Nigerian Universities Education are severely outdated. Some contents simply do not reflect the times that the system live in. Quality curriculum is one that meets the present needs of a society and equips the student for further life and work in that society. With the way the world is going, we definitely need a revised curriculum that scraps some less important areas and emphasizes skills like steam thinking, project based learning and other innovative areas

Grading and Evaluation Standards: Teachers adopt different grading and reporting systems in assessing and reporting on students' work. These include the absolute, relative, criterion-referenced, norm-referenced and individual standard systems. Some of these grading systems have become so conventionalized that they are regarded almost as standard (Anikweze,2013). The evaluation standards also need improvement and a shift of focus. Students would not feel compelled to cram for exams if they were rewarded instead for proving to have more practical knowledge of what they have been taught. A greater provision should be made in the overall evaluation to prove application of knowledge through hands-on individual or group projects.

Administrative Systems: There needs to be a strong management procedure in place. The admin is meant to monitor and evaluate processes, enforce standards and relay appropriately to higher authorities for policy making. Qualities should be treated not as a mere suggestion to be flaunted but a necessity to be adhered to as closely as possible. This would require frequent, thorough inspection, record keeping and reporting measures be put in place to track and measure progress and ensure adherence to standards.

Mal-Practice: Another factor affecting University Education System in Nigeria is "mal-practice" students no longer read for exams instead they wait for an official to bribe for question paper before the actual exam time; this has been a major fact hampering sound education in Nigeria. You can imagine a school director encouraging student to pay a certain fee before they can be guaranteed success after writing exam and if the student fails he/she should be ready to fail the paper.

Functionality of Nigerian University Education System
Functional of Nigerian University education system takes as its starting point the activity of the student and it is based on a practical work-plan that is intended to have the students master the subject-matter. The subject-matter to be taught is considered according to the importance in the life of the student in his/her learning process. The education is based on phases in the life of the student: the country, the environment, the daily life. Functional education refers to education that comes spontaneously from the influence of the environment. It is a kind of undirected, "natural" education, which is different from the deliberate, goal-oriented education that is directed by man. This term refers to education that comes from the child's needs, and that uses the child's interest as a mechanism for activating him and towards his desirable activities; Its purpose is to develop the life of the mind, that acts from the wholeness of organic life, with relation to practical life in the present and in the future (Kayode & Sunday, 2014).

Nigerian universities education system has not been functional because too much emphasis has been placed on theoretical and academic knowledge. There is also undue emphasis on the possession of certificates instead of on what one can do. The educational processes are geared primarily to preparing candidates for the external examinations. Through this process of education, the products acquire knowledge and facts with little real understanding and without saleable skills. The result of this dysfunctional education is that schools turn out graduates without useful knowledge and skills and who also become alienated from the rural environment. Functional education stands for practicality and utility. It makes people to fit into the society and to function effectively. Moloi in Kayode and Sunday (2014) opened that functional education connotes that level of education a citizen needs to function effectively in the society. The level of literacy necessary for people to function normally and effectively in society might meet the aims and objectives of a functional university education system.

The term 'functional' has been defined (Geddes, Grosset, & Quirks in Kayode and Sunday2014) as practical and having useful purposes. Ali in Kayode and Sunday (2014) averred that functional education will ensure the availability of food for people, creation of jobs, provision of services, etcetera. In the same vein, Nwokolo in Kayode and Sunday (2014) posited that: Functional university education should be capable of producing

Nigerians who can manufacture raw materials, machines and tools needed for local and international markets, invent new designs, discover drugs capable of curing diseases hitherto incurable and transform the nation from a consumption to a manufacturing status. Idowu in Kayode and Sunday (2014), functional education is the total process of bringing up individuals to develop their potentials (cognitive, affective and psychomotor) to the fullest and consequently be able to contribute maximally to the development of the society. Development is growth or progression from a lower and often undesirable state to a high and preferred one (Adajanju, in Kayode and Sunday 2014). It refers to the process of building-up. It means some kind of change in terms of the increase in the capacity to perform some difficult tasks and functions.

Functional of university education system is a leveler of opportunities. The case in Nigeria where majority of the graduates of the universities educational search for white-collar jobs that are very scarce and difficult to secure will be a thing of the past. Functional university education will bring about graduate who are entrepreneurs and self – dependent and ready to practice what they had learnt in school. These entrepreneurs will also become employers of labour. With this chain, more jobs will be created and income generated. The end result is that many will be uplifted from the dudgeon of unemployment and poverty. Thus, it can be adduced that there is a symbiotic relationship between functional education and poverty alleviation. Aina in Abubakar (2008) has attributed the poor quality of education in the country on the increasing level of poverty and unemployment in the country. He opined that if the problem of unemployment and poverty can be addressed in the country, the standard of education will definitely improve. Therefore, both poverty and functional education affect each other either ways. Solving the problem of poverty will also reduce or lead to the elimination of other developmental challenges and social ills presently experienced in the country. Thus, vices like corruption, insecurity, bad governance, ethno-religious crisis and even illiteracy among others could be attributed to high rate of poverty in the country. For instance, the Boko Haram insurgence has majorly been attributed to the high level of poverty and unemployment in the country, especially in the north eastern zone of the country.

The Role of the National University Commission (NUC) in Nigerian University Education System
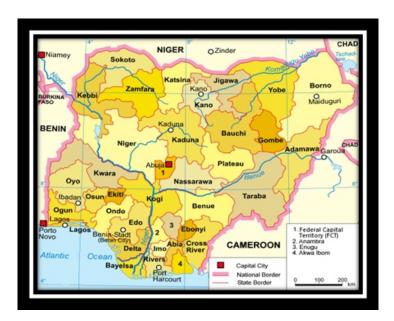The following are roles of NUC in Nigeria University education system:
1. Advising the Federal Government on the establishment and location of universities, creating new facilities and post graduate units in the universities.
2. Advising Government on the fundamental needs of the universities.
3. Carrying out periodic plans on the general programme to be pursued by universities staff.
4. Preparing periodic plans on the general programme to be pursued by the universities.
5 Receiving and distributing Federal grants to Federal Universities.
6. Establishing and maintaining the minimum academic standards.
7. Accrediting the degrees and other academic programme awarded by the universities.

8. The audit role and the supervisory functions of NUC have indeed contributed to the quality and sustainability of higher education in Nigeria.

Implications for Functional Educational Development

Nigeria's government is working toward a future in which Nigerian universities develop the best global scholars and leaders of the 21st century, building a prosperous and thriving Nigeria and a better world. Nigerian university education system aims to further develop, sustain, and advance the skills and leadership of Nigeria's next generations through a strong, world-class, higher education sector in Nigeria. Functional educational development involves the process of modern technology to produce goods more than before. Its pertains to industrial ways of living of the citizens. Functional education can, therefore, be conceptualized as the transmission, acquisition, creation and adaptation of information, knowledge, skills and values, for the purpose of self-reliance and sustainable development of a nation. Science has been seen in functional curricula as subject who promotes inductive-deductive reasoning approach. In the delivery of functional education, while knowledge and skills are taught, the realm of affective domain is also considered as being important. Scientific attitudes (just like interest and values) fall within affective domain of teaching. Open mindedness, scepticism, and suspending judgment until adequate evidence is available are special scientific attitudes which stress the importance of changing individual values in traditional societies from the parochial, ego-centric and the concrete to those which involve seeing other peoples point of view, which are universalistic and abstract and not being bound by the experience of the present (NTI, 2000).

Beyond the afore-stated issue, today, the notion of what constitute a minimum or threshold functional literacy (knowledge, skills and competences) is changing as a result of progress in science and technology, as well as development of "knowledge" society. Indeed, so many young people and adults are currently unable to develop the knowledge, skills and competences needed for today's rapidly changing technologies in the world of work. Two most phenomenal developments in the knowledge society – automation and globalization and the consequential changes in the world of work at the global level are raising skill and qualification requirements for job entry, into a more knowledgeable and skilled work force. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) believes that, there is need for functional education for the promotion of a progressive, united Nigeria. To this end, school programmes need to be relevant, practical and comprehensive while interest and ability should determine the individuals' direction in education ... for the acquisition of appropriate skills and development of mental, physical and social abilities and competences as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of the society.

Figure 1: Map of Nigeria showing 36 States with their Universities
Source: Retrieved on line 2018

According to the National Universities Commission (NUC), Nigeria presently has 43 Federal Universities, 47 State Universities, and 75 Private Universities. Remember that the NUC is the Agency tasked by the Nigerian Federal Government to regulate and act as a catalyst for positive change and innovation for the delivery of quality university education in Nigeria. The NUC has always warned the general public from time to time to first verify if a university is approved before patronizing them. Some of our friends and loved ones have fallen prey to some elements parading themselves as approved universities especially foreign ones, only for people to later find out that they are not approved by the NUC.

Theoretical Framework of the Study (Stakeholder's theory by Freeman 1984)
Freeman (1984) sees stakeholders as any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the university education system's objectives. As noted by Freeman (2006), the university itself should be thought of as grouping of stakeholders and the purpose of the university should be to manage stakeholder's interests, needs and viewpoints. As a result, university managers have the responsibilities of meeting the needs, interests and viewpoints of stakeholders. This implies that university managers should on one hand manage the University for the Benefits of the stakeholders in order to ensure their rights and participation in decision. On the other hand, university managers must act as stakeholder's agent to ensure the survival of the university to safeguard the long term stakes of each group. Freeman sees stakeholders are those groups who are vital to the survival and success of the corporation. Stakeholders are any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the university purpose. Camphell and Rozsny in Asiyai (2014) see stakeholders as students, society, and government participating in or benefiting from the provision of education. From Camphell's definition, stakeholders can be grouped as internal and external.

Internal stakeholders are groups within the university system who have an interest in the quality of education provided learners as well as in the standard of the outcomes. Freeman maintained that the principle of stakeholder's recourse is brought into the management of university. The main tenet of the principle of stakeholder's recourse is that stakeholders may bring an action against the directors for failure to perform the required duty of care. He further identified three types of stakeholder's theory as normative, descriptive and instrumental. The normative theory is the core of the stakeholder theory (Donaldson & Preston, in Asiyai 2014). The normative theory deals with how managers or stakeholders should act and should view the purpose of the university based on ethical principle (Friedman &Miles in Asiyai2014). The normative theory is linked to moral, values and philosophic purpose. The descriptive stakeholder's theory is focused on how managers and stakeholders actually behave and how they view their actions and roles while the instrumental stakeholder's theory is concerned with how managers should act if they want to flavor and work for the interest of the organization to maximize profits and maximize shareholders value (Fontaine, Haarman & Schmid in Asiyai2014).

Friedman and Miles in Asiyai (2014) highlighted stakeholders of a firm as customers, employees, local communities, supplier and distributors, shareholders, the media, the public in general, future generations, past generations, academics, competitors, non-governmental organizations, activists, trade unions or trade associations, financiers, government, regulators and policy makers. Freeman's stakeholders approach to strategic management (1984) suggests that managers must formulate and implement processes which satisfy all and only those groups who have a stake in the university education system. The main tasks in this relationship is to manage and integrate the relationships and interests of shareholders, staff, students, suppliers, communities and other groups in a way that guarantees the long-term success of the firm.

Attainment of quality university education in Nigeria requires continuous and holistic improvement which necessitates cost sharing among stakeholders both internal and external. Stakeholders' collaboration is about exploring partnership with another organization or group owing to lack of resources or competencies (Jackson, 2009). Collaboration will help to trigger improvement in university education system. Such collaboration could be achieved through universities establishing a close link or relationship with employers of labour/industries and other external stakeholders, or by utilization of technologies and expertise from the environment to perform activities that staffs are not competent in performing.

Conclusion
The quality of the products of the Nigerian university education system, the level of learner's achievement, the desperation of students to succeed as evidenced by unabated incidences and sophistication of examination malpractices, and falsification of credentials, frequency of teachers' strike, and their poor quality, all point to inefficient performance of the system. Nigerian u university education has not been functional because too much emphasis has been placed on theoretical and academic knowledge. There is also undue emphasis on the possession of certificates instead of on what one can do. The educational processes are geared primarily to preparing candidates for the

external examinations. Through this process of education, the products acquire knowledge and facts with little real understanding and without saleable skills. The result of this dysfunctional education is that schools turn out graduates without useful knowledge and skills and who also become alienated from the rural environment.

Functional university education stands for practicality and utility. It makes people to fit into the society and to function effectively. Although, the educational system in Nigeria is still inefficient due to many factors, its functionality will bring about accelerated growth in the economy. When graduates of the country's educational institutions can independently practice what they learnt in school without waiting for office or government jobs, more jobs will be created and income enhanced. The technological revivals that will follow will also positively lead to industrial revolution which will lead to more job opportunities. The Nigerian university education system is facing monumental challenges poor quality of schooling arising from the issue of poor quality of teachers, characteristic weak school infrastructures, meager supplies and equipment, etcetera etc. Therefore, there is need for functional Nigerian Universities education system for the promotion of a progressive, united Nigeria. To this end, school programmes need to be relevant, practical and comprehensive while interest and ability should determine the individuals' direction in education for the acquisition of appropriate skills and development of mental, physical and social abilities and competences as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of the society.

Suggestions
Based on the above discussions, the following recommendations were made for the development of the Nigerian Universities education system:

1. The government at local, state and federal levels should show its commitment and political-will to ensuring functional universities education system through its funding, policy making, supervision and monitoring of educational projects and programmes

2. Enabling environment should be created for staff through improved conditions of service, provision of basic infrastructures, virtual libraries and information communication technologies and internet connectivity.

3. Government should always consider remunerations of the universities staff.

4. Quality assurance of all resources should be provided for the bitterness' of the university education system.

5. Government should appeal to the ideals of practitioners to drive change in to the university education system.

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