International Journal of Advanced Research in Global Politics, Governance and Management | IJARGPGM
p-ISSN: 2636-686X | e-ISSN: 2636-6878
Volume 5, Number 1 October, 2025

Stakeholders' Involvement in University Governance and Quality Assurance Practices

[1]Samuel B. Kalagbor & [2]Victoria Osaruchi Sam-Kalagbor
[1]Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social Sciences, Rivers State University, Nkpolu-Oroworukwo, Port Harcourt, Rivers State
[2]Department of Educational Management, Faculty of Education, Rivers State University, Nkpolu-Oroworukwo, Port Harcourt, Rivers State

Article DOI: 10.48028/iiprds/ijargpgm.v5.i1.07

Abstract

This paper explores stakeholders' involvement in university governance and quality assurance (QA) practices, underscoring its significance in achieving academic excellence, institutional stability, and global competitiveness. Guided by the Stakeholder Engagement Theory (SET) and Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Theory, the study conceptualises governance as the system of policies, processes, and structures that guide decision-making, resource allocation, and institutional management. It identifies key QA practices essential for maintaining standards in teaching, research, and service delivery. Stakeholders play crucial roles in university governance and quality assurance practices. Their involvement yields numerous benefits and strengthens trust and collaboration between universities and stakeholders. However, certain challenges continue to impede effective implementation of QA policies in the university system. The paper concludes that fostering a culture of collaboration, transparency, and accountability through clear stakeholder engagement policies and effective communication strategies is vital for sustaining quality assurance practices in the governance of universities in Nigeria.

Keywords: *University Governance, Quality Assurance, Continuous Quality Improvement, Institutional Performance, Stakeholder Involvement*

Corresponding Author: **Samuel B. Kalagbor**

Background to the Study

Stakeholders' involvement in university governance and quality assurance practices is critical and indispensable. It is also relevant to the realisation of the overall objectives of the university, the pursuit of academic excellence, transparency, visibility, accountability, and service provision, enabling the university to strive to maintain its competitive and comparative edge and to remain responsive to the ever-increasing needs and expectations of the stakeholders and the global community.

Quality assurance encapsulates diverse policies, procedural compliance prescriptions, initiatives, and activities that ensure the delivery of high-quality academic programmes, especially teaching and learning, research, and services. Almost all Nigerian institutions, both public and private, have set up operational Directorates of Quality Assurance and work to put quality assurance policies into place with the goal of improving overall university administration. Regretfully, there are several obstacles and difficulties that prevent stakeholders from participating in university governance and quality assurance procedures. Many institutions are either unwilling, find it difficult, or purposefully choose not to, disregard, or fail to adequately include stakeholders in quality assurance procedures and activities. Therefore, this paper's objectives are to investigate the role and involvement of stakeholders in quality assurance practices within the university governance system, pinpoint potential ways to increase stakeholder involvement, and determine the related advantages and difficulties that stakeholders in Nigerian university governance and quality assurance practices face. To achieve these objectives, the structure of the paper comprises an introduction, theoretical frameworks, conceptual clarifications, and an analysis of the roles of stakeholders in university governance and quality assurance practices. Others are the associated benefits, challenges, conclusions and recommendations.

Theoretical Frameworks

Many theoretical frameworks are relevant to the examination of stakeholders' involvement in university governance and quality assurance practices. However, for the purpose of this paper, the Stakeholder Engagement Theory and the Continuous Quality Improvement Theory will be adopted.

Stakeholder Engagement Theory (SET)

The stakeholder engagement theory is issue-specific, in contrast to the stakeholder theory (ST), also called the Fredman Theory, which was created by Edward Freeman in 1984 and emphasises that organisations have an inherent duty to consider the needs and interests of multiple stakeholders, not just stakeholders, when making decisions (Sam-kalagbor, 2021)**.** The stakeholder engagement theory (SET) builds upon the stakeholder theory (ST). Notable stakeholder engagement theorists include Jonathan Gosling and Henry Mintzberg (2003), Greenwood (2007), and Wheeler et al. (2003). The SET is concerned with building relationships, communicating, fostering dialogue, collaborating with stakeholders, or creating mutual understanding to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes. It focusses on how stakeholders are involved in organisational decision-making and day-to-day operations. Stakeholder engagement, according to Greenwood (2007), is the process of including

stakeholders in organisational decision-making and operations in order to foster support, legitimacy, and trust. (p. 316).

Key Principles of Stakeholder Engagement

The following fundamentals of stakeholder engagement have been established by Wheeler et al. (2003) and may be mnemonically referred to as TARI.:

1. Transparency
2. Accountability
3. Responsiveness
4. Inclusivity

Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Theory

Total quality management (TQM) is the foundation and source of the continuous quality improvement (CQI) idea. Among the early proponents of CQI theory are W.E. Deming, Kaoru Ishikawa, and Joseph Juran (1989), etc. The theory is a management strategy that highlights the development of an organization's culture of continuous learning and improvement as well as the ongoing process of improving the quality of goods, services, or processes (Deming, 1986).

The CQI theory is linked to the "Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle. In other words:

i. DO—execute or implement the plan and obtain or collect data on the results.
ii. Check—analyse the data obtained and evaluate the effectiveness of improvement strategies and efforts.
iii. Act—review, redefine, and standardise improvement strategies and efforts.

The PDCA cycle is largely associated with Deming (1986), who described it as a "never-ending cycle of improvement" (p. 88). Deming had modified Shewhart's earlier cycle of "specification, production, inspection, and remedial action" to PDCA.

Relevance of SET and CQI Theories

The relevance of the SET and CQI theories, respectively, to this paper lies in the fact that:

(1) The implementation of the SET places a strong focus on stakeholders' active participation in organisational decision-making, practical activities, and, in this case, university governance and quality assurance procedures.

(2) For the benefit of the university, different stakeholders, and the general public or international community, the CQI theory emphasises the necessity of involving stakeholders in the ongoing improvement of the quality of academic programmes, including teaching, learning, research, processes, and services in the university's entire governance system

Conceptual Clarifications

The following concepts are subjected to clarifications within the context of this paper: stakeholders, stakeholders' involvement or engagement, university governance, and quality assurance practices.

Stakeholders

The concept of stakeholders is multifaceted. Operationally, stakeholders in business organizations differ significantly when compared with stakeholders in the university system. For instance, Freeman (1984), with respect to the stakeholder's theory, identified six major stakeholders in a company, namely, shareholders, employees, customers, investors, suppliers/vendors, and communities and government. They are all important for the survival, growth, or failure of a business organisation or firm. Any group or person that may influence or be impacted by the accomplishment of the organization's goals is considered a stakeholder, according to Freeman (1984). According to Clarkson (1995), stakeholders are individuals or organisations that own or assert ownership, rights, or interests in a company and its operations, whether they are ongoing or planned**.** Thus, a stakeholder must have an interest or concern in an organization with respect to education, and in particular, the university. All the stakeholders have and should have interest, directly or indirectly, in the success, or failure of the university, including the welfare and performance of management, staff, students, and service providers.

Stakeholder Engagement or Involvement

Having noted that stakeholders are not only interested in the success or failure of an organisation and should be involved in its decision-making processes and activities, there is the need to foreground calls for stakeholders' active engagement. Accordingly, Greenwood (2007) asserts that the process of including stakeholders in organisational decision-making and activities in order to foster legitimacy, support, and trust is known as stakeholder engagement or participation (p. 316). Accordingly, in order to realize the mutual benefits of the stakeholders and the organisation, including the university, stakeholder engagement or involvement must entail interactions with the stakeholders to determine and understand their needs, expectations, concerns, and fears, and to turn them into inputs in the decision-making process (Freeman, 1984; Bryson, 2004). The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) has confirmed this. The IAP2 (2014) defines stakeholders' engagement to mean "the process of involving stakeholders in decisions that affect them, through a process of communication, collaboration, and participation" (IAP2, 2024, p. 2). It follows, therefore, that stakeholder engagement can take various forms, such as:

1. Communication—information and knowledge sharing about the organisation's policies, decisions, and activities through various mechanisms, including formal meetings (e.g., university management-stakeholder interactive forum, report, and the media), traditional and digital, etc.;
2. Consultation—seeking the views, suggestions, opinions, and contributions of stakeholders on specific issue areas or agenda items;
3. Involvement, engagement, or participation. This involves the practical engagement or participation of stakeholders in decision-making processes. Advisory committees, networking, and working groups can be used to engage the stakeholders;
4. Collaboration—collaboration is the process of working together with others to achieve a common goal or vision, share knowledge, or solve a problem. It is concerned with sharing resources, expertise, and responsibilities to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes. Organisations can work together with stakeholders to achieve common

aims, goals, and objectives or solve specific problems; and
5. Empowerment—transforming decision-making power to stakeholders (IAP2, 2014).

Key Stakeholders in University Governance and Quality Assurance Practices

Many stakeholders can be identified in the university governance and quality assurance practices. They can be classified into external and internal stakeholders.

External Stakeholders

The external stakeholders include:

1. 1. The government, which includes the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB), the National Universities Commission (NUC), the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund), and the Ministry of Education and other pertinent authorities at different levels;
2. Professional regulatory organisations include the Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria (MDCN), the Nigerian Council of Legal Education (NCLE), and the Council for Regulation of Engineering in Nigeria (COREN);
3. Parents and Guardians;
4. Civil Society Organisations;
5. Education development and industry partners, local and international; and
6. Other categories of the public, including host communities

Internal Stakeholders

The internal stakeholders are:

1. The Governing Council
2. The Vice Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellors, Registrar, Bursar, Librarian, and other principal officers
3. Deans, Directors, senior generalists, and professional administrators
4. University Senate
5. Faculty and Departmental Boards/Committees
6. All teaching and non-teaching staff
7. Broader university community stakeholders, including service providers
8. Staff unions—ASUU, SSANIP, NASU, etc.
9. Students, Students' Union Government (SUG), etc.
10. Alumni Associations, etc.

The Concept of University

With the exception of some differences in names and titles, the philosophical underpinnings, tenets, procedures, and processes that guide the management and administration of tertiary institutions—that is, universities, colleges of education, polytechnics, and monotechnics, are essentially and substantially similar and coterminous. Accordingly, postsecondary education in universities, colleges of education, polytechnics, and monotechnics, including those that provide correspondence courses—is referred to as tertiary education in the National Policy on Education (2004)**.** Beyond presenting a global historical overview of the university system, various organs and stakeholders in the university governance system play diverse roles

towards optimal functionality of the organisation. Accordingly, a brief overview of Nigerian university education is necessary to comprehend the model of a university's administrative structure, considering the roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders that serve as the foundation for the university's operations in the areas of teaching, learning, scholarship promotion, research, innovation, and community service.

Origin of Universities

Prior to the eleventh century, universities as we know them now were first established as apprenticeships and tutelage. Prominent academics, rather than establishments, in various places drew students who bargained with and studied directly under them, usually in the fields of medicine, law, and divinity, all of which are regarded as the first professions. The academics were gathered into centres that assumed responsibility for knowledge transmission as corporate entities as these teaching and learning institutions became more structured over time.

The Latin term "universitas", which at the time was not limited to schools of higher learning, is likely where the name university, which started to be used to refer to these centres, came from around the middle of the eleventh century. It was essentially a derivative of the Latin word "universitas Magistroum et scholarum", which denotes a community or society of scholars and instructors. In terms of academic customs, ceremonies, and rituals, it also suggests universalism of some kind. But throughout the ages, the word changed to its current meaning, which now includes the scholars, the professors, the variety of courses taught, and the organization's physical location.

Accordingly, the university has been described as a community of academics and instructors who dedicate themselves to learning via research, scientific inquiry, and teaching in order to spread knowledge (Briggs, 2012). According to The New Encyclopaedia Britannica (2016), a university is a unique kind of educational establishment that primarily consists of graduate and professional schools, a liberal arts and sciences college, and the ability to award degrees in a variety of subject areas. The fact that a university is often bigger than a college, provides undergraduate, graduate, and professional degrees in a variety of subject areas, and has a more extensive curriculum is still one of its distinguishing characteristics. Universities may be government-owned (public), in which case it may be established by the federal or state government, since education falls into the Concurrent List in Nigeria, or it can be established by individuals, organisations, or corporations (private). A university can equally be intergovernmental in the sense that it can be created by bilateral or multilateral agreements between states, for example, the Ladoke Akintola University of Technology (LAUTECH), Ogbomosho, which was jointly owned and funded by the Oyo and Osun State Governments. However, in 2020, following an agreement between the two states, the Osun State government ceded the sole ownership of the university to Oyo State on payment of ₦8billion takeover amount to Osun State, which is expected to be completed by 2027. The main goals of universities' establishment include knowledge acquisition, transfer, and dissemination as well as teaching, learning, research, scholarship, and community service (Nwafor, 1998).

As ivory towers, all universities have the ultimate responsibility to pursue the truth in an honest and unrelenting manner in order to improve our knowledge of the world. They do this by taking part in academic pursuits that push the boundaries of knowledge and result in breakthroughs, discoveries, and inventions. Additionally, they engage in local and global initiatives that promote the welfare and common good of all people, as well as inclusively teaching and transmitting knowledge as citadels of learning to worthy students and scholars. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that universities—of which there are currently over 29,000 worldwide—play an increasingly significant role in modern society. They are now viewed as vital national assets in the development, formulation, and implementation of public policy; in the creation of wealth and prosperity through applied research and development efforts; in the promotion of positive cultural values and character development; in the engineering of society and social change; and in the creation of wealth and prosperity.

Based on historical records, universities first appeared in Bologna, Paris, and Oxford, according to the International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences (2nd edition, 2008). Oxford University, which was established in the late eleventh century, is not only the oldest university in the United Kingdom but also the oldest English-speaking institution worldwide. In contrast, the first real university was established at Bologna, Italy, in 1088 with a focus on law. The earliest university in Northern Europe was the University of Paris, which was established between 1150 and 1170. Theology was its main concern**.** In 1209, the University of Cambridge was established following the movement of some dissatisfied students from Oxford to Cambridge. The early universities did not have permanent buildings and were self-governing, provided they did not teach atheism or heresy, especially since they received their charters from ecclesiastical and natural rulers such as Popes, Kings and Emperors. Thereafter, especially beginning from the thirteenth century, many universities were established in Europe, with religion dictating and dominating teaching and learning in most universities. It was not until late 18th and 19th centuries that European Universities began to focus on modern diverse teachings and scientific-centred researches (e.g. laboratory investigations as against conjecture) and rigorous academic works. Harvard (1636), William and Mary (1693), Yale (1701), Princeton (1746), and Kings College (1754) are among the first American colleges to be recognized as universities. In other places of the globe, similar institutions were founded at different points in time. Having profited much from the division of Africa, Britain and France founded colleges in several areas of their former colonies as a result of colonialism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Among these universities were Makerere University in East Africa, the University of Ghana, the University of Khartoum in Sudan, and University College Ibadan**.** However, Rodney (1972) argues that universities had existed in certain parts of Africa even before the advent of European colonialism and imperialism. For example, the Azhar University in Egypt, which he described as "one of the oldest in the world." The University of Fez in Morocco, Ez-Zitounna University in Tunisia and the University of Timbuctu in Mali.

Alemu (2018) corroborated Rodney's view and holds that there were famous ancient centres of higher learning in Africa before the advent of colonialism. He submits that the centres of higher learning/universities passed through "triple heritage": the era of pre-colonial higher

learning or education, the establishment of campuses of universities in colonial enclaves, and the struggle to establish indigenous African universities based on the African environment. With respect to the provision of education generally (including university education) in Africa by the colonialists, Rodney contended that colonial education was discriminatory, dysfunctional, and served the interests of the European capitalist class, which was the economic exploitation of Africa. It is hardly surprising that he reached to the conclusion that Africa entered colonialism with a hoe and emerged with one, and that colonial education was education for exploitation, subjugation, mental disorientation, and underdevelopment (Rodney, 1972).

The Nigerian Experience

In response to the 1945 Elliot Commission Report, the present-day University of Ibadan was founded in January 1948 as a college of the University of London. Prior to this time, the Yaba Higher College was created in 1932 and is now known as the Yaba College of Technology, which was founded in 1947 and is considered to be the birthplace of higher education in Nigeria. Historical and educational trends demonstrate that the government established an eight-member Commission on Higher Education (CHE) in 1959, led by Sir Eric Ashby, in anticipation of the personnel requirements of an independent Nigeria. Over the next 20 years, the CHE was tasked with examining Nigeria's requirements in the areas of higher education and post-school certificates. The next year, in a report, the CHE acknowledged the need to increase university enrolment and suggested that three universities be established: one in each of the three regions and one in Lagos, the capital at the time (Ashby Report, 1960). In 1962, University College, Ibadan, gained independence from London University and established a university in its own right. Thus, four universities were founded between 1960 and 1962: Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria (the first university in Northern Nigeria); University of Ife, Ile Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University); University of Nigeria, Nsukka (the country's first autonomous and full-fledged university); and the University of Lagos, Lagos. Although all of these universities were eventually turned over to the federal government, only the one in Lagos was founded by the federal government; the others were created by Acts of Parliament passed by their respective regional governments. According to the Third National Development Plan (1975–1980), seven universities considered second-generation universities were founded in 1975: University College, Port Harcourt; University College, Ilorin; University College, Kano; University College, Calabar; University College, Jos; University of Maiduguri; and University of Sokoto as well. Over time, the college campuses evolved into full-fledged universities. In 1979, state governments began to create universities, and in 1999, the federal government removed the statute that prohibited state and non-federal governments from doing so, so liberalising university creation. This made it possible to give licenses for the founding of privately held institutions; the first group of private universities in Nigeria were Igbinedion, Babcock, and Madonna universities.

Nigeria now has 275 universities, including 63 federal, 63 state, and 149 private institutions, as of January 2025, after the deregulation of higher education (National Universities Commission, 2025). In accordance with some of the Ashby Commission's recommendations for the creation of such a body, the National Universities Commission (NUC) coordinates

and regulates the academic programmes and activities of these universities, which together comprise the Nigerian University System (NUS). The University of Oxford is ranked first by the 2025 Times Higher Education World University Rankings, followed by the University of Cambridge, Harvard University, Princeton University, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Africa's top university is the University of Cape Town in South Africa. The University of Ibadan is ranked first in Nigeria according to the 2025 Nigerian University Rankings.

University Governance

Governance is a key, critical, and multilevel concept in political science. It aids in understanding the complex relationships and interactions among governments, institutions, organizations, and citizens, as well as how power is exercised in various ways. The World Bank (1992) defined governance as the process by which authority is used to manage a nation's social and economic resources for development. In a similar vein, UNESCO (2005) describes it as a process through which the aspirations and interests of the populace are expressed for the benefit of the social and economic advancement of the whole community. In a broad sense, governance refers to the procedures, laws, systems, and frameworks that direct and control the use of power and authority in the administration of public affairs. It is sometimes used interchangeably with administration.

There are various forms of governance, including good governance, democratic governance, economic governance, administrative governance, and legal governance. Others include collaborative governance, corporate governance, network governance, global governance, project governance, private governance, modern governance, public governance, and university governance (Azinge and Adediran, 2013; Nwabueze, 2009; Omoleke, 2018; Arowolo et al., 2023; Orluwene, 2024). At a broader level, governance—whether in higher education or society at large rests on six key principles: participation, inclusion, non-discrimination, equality, rule of law, and accountability.

University governance is a complex, multifaceted, and dynamic system that is essential for:

a) Effective administration and efficient allocation and utilization of resources,
b) Promotion of quality research, innovation, and teaching-learning,
c) Maintenance of academic excellence and community service, and
d) Institutional stability, sustainability, and realization of a university's vision.

Conceptually, university governance refers to the system of policies, rules, processes, and practices by which a university is directed and controlled (administered and managed), as well as the structures, processes, and relationships that ensure responsiveness to stakeholders (Astanow et al., 2025; Hadiwidjaja and Riana, 2024; Algazo and Ibrahim, 2024). The key principles of university governance include accountability, autonomy (or institutional independence), academic freedom, transparency, responsibility, fairness, and quality assurance.

University governance can be practiced under different models, such as the bureaucratic model, shared governance model, collegial model, political model, or corporate model. Its core functions include strategic planning, financial management, academic planning, policy formulation and implementation, risk management, and compliance with legal and ethical standards. Ultimately, the aim of university governance is to achieve improved institutional performance, competitiveness, global visibility, and stakeholder satisfaction.

Quality Assurance

The intentional process of making sure that goods, services, or procedures meet or exceed predetermined standards and criteria is known as quality assurance, or QA. The American Society for Quality (ASQ) maintains that quality assurance is the planned and systematic activities carried out in a quality system so that quality requirements for a product or service will be fulfilled, in contrast to the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO), which defines quality assurance as a component of quality management focused on providing confidence that quality requirements will be fulfilled (IOS, 2015, p. 3; ASQ, 2020). In Nigeria, the National Policy on Education (NPE) (2014) recognises the need for quality assurance and makes provisions for the establishment of quality assurance agencies at federal, state/federal capital territory, and local government levels, for the purpose of monitoring all levels of education below the tertiary level.

Steps in Quality Assurance

Quality assurance activities involve certain steps and a range of activities, namely:

1. Quality Planning—Clear definition of quality objectives, policies, and procedures;
2. Quality Control—Involves monitoring and controlling established processes aimed at ensuring compliance with requirements or quality standards;
3. Quality Improvement—continuous evaluation and improvement of processes to achieve higher quality levels; and
4. Quality Audit—conducting periodic and systematic evaluation of processes to ensure compliance with set standards (Juran, 1989; Demung, 1986).

Having defined quality assurance, it is contended that quality assurance practices are the practical activities involving stakeholders to ensure that due process is followed or implemented without compromising the quality of products or services. Four major levels of quality assurance practices are:

1. Quality planning
2. Quality control
3. Quality improvement
4. Quality Assurance—audits and assessments, quality reporting, training, and awareness to ensure that stakeholders and employees appreciate and understand quality assurance policies, procedures, and standards.
5. Quality Management System (QMS)

This involves establishing a functional and effective quality management system, ensuring leadership commitment to quality, and encouraging employee active involvement in quality processes and initiatives.

Types of Quality Assurance Approaches

There are four common quality assurance approaches, to wit:

1. Preventive Quality Assurance
   It prevents the occurrence of errors or defects in the implementation of quality processes and procedures.
2. Defective Quality Assurance
   It identifies or detects errors in processes and procedures that may lead to reduction in the quality of a product or service. The purpose is to rectify or correct the identified errors or defects.
3. Corrective Quality Assurance
   Corrective quality assurance seeks to correct or rectify the defects or errors of omission or commission, including areas of non-compliance with quality processes or procedures.
4. Assessment Quality Assurance
   It involves the deliberate evaluation and verification of the functionality, efficiency, and effectiveness of the overall quality assurance policy, process, procedures, and system. This is with the intention of carrying out a selective or holistic review for continuous product or service quality improvements.

The Roles of Stakeholders in University Governance and Quality Assurance Practices

Stakeholders play critical and diverse roles in university governance and quality assurance practices in order to ensure the delivery of high-quality education. They also contribute to quality assurance through the provision of feedback on academic programmes, impact and quality of productivity and delivery of graduates of the university, participation in decision-making processes, and identification of areas of improvement to enhance and sustain quality.

External Stakeholder Roles

Regulation

Government regulatory agencies and professional bodies engage in quality assurance practices and help to promote high quality of education and ensure standards in the university. Some of such bodies include, but are not limited to, the Federal Ministry of Education, the National Universities Commission (NUC), the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB), the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund), as well as professional bodies such as COREN, NCLE, and MDCN. These bodies, among others, conduct regular programmes and institutional accreditation visitation exercises, reviews and audits to ensure that universities meet or maintain quality standards. They also provide regulatory, advisory, support, and assistance where necessary; feedback and evaluation; and support continuous improvement of quality assurance policies, processes, and procedures.

Funding and Provision of Infrastructure

Government provides funding for federal- or state-owned universities to enable them to meet certain quality standards, including the provision of infrastructure. Similarly, the TETFund, as a federal government public tertiary institution intervention agency, also provides annual, regular, zonal, and special interventions to support the universities. The various intervention

lines include physical infrastructure development, research and development, academic staff development, conferences and trainings for all staff, and library development. Others include information and communication technology support, academic manuscripts, entrepreneurship development, etc. The government equally recruits qualified, competent, and experienced staff to maintain the required staff mix, especially with respect to teaching staff for accreditation purposes, and pays the salaries and allowances of employees.

Feedback from Employees and Industry Partners

Employers and industry partners, through both formal and informal channels, provide feedback on academic programme relevance, job performance of university graduates, and other areas of possible partnership with industry partners to strengthen the quality assurance capacity and processes of the university. This, to a large extent, reinforces the importance of the triple helix model in university governance and quality assurance practices—collaboration, knowledge sharing, and interaction among the three key stakeholders, namely, the academia (universities and research institutes), industry and government (public sector, policy makers). This is not only intended to drive innovation, research and development, entrepreneurship and economic growth, it equally aims at facilitating and sustaining quality assurance of products and services.

Advocacy, Collaboration, and Community-Based Support

While civil society organisations can embark on advocacy, public education, and the need for the government to increase funding and other support to the universities, development and industry partners can collaborate with the universities to rejig the university's quality assurance policies and processes. Host community-driven support and high-quality compliance levels by service providers in the university will go a long way to further reinforce high-quality standards in the university.

Internal Stakeholders Roles

The possible areas of stakeholders' involvement in the university governance and quality assurance practices include the following:

Policy Initiatives and Academic Governance

The university's top policy and decision-making body is the Governing Council. The council must start and create policies that will improve the quality assurance policies, procedures, and practices of university governance as a whole. For its part, the senate is the highest authority on all university academic issues. Its powers and functions are profound: the senate, through the regulations of academic programmes, determines and regulates academic standards and develops and enforces quality assurance policies and regulations.

Academic, Administrative and Ethical Leadership

The vice chancellor, as the principal academic officer and chief executive of the university, has an inherent responsibility to provide sound, strong, and robust academic and administrative and ethical leadership that is favourable to functional and effective quality assurance practices and standards in the university. The deans, directors, and heads of academic and non-

academic departments should also provide reliable and effective academic, administrative and ethical leadership at the faculty, directorate, and departmental levels, respectively. The same goes for all teaching and non-teaching staff of the university.

Strong Quality Assurance Support

Aside from participation in decision-making processes, staff unions, students and student bodies, host communities, parents/guardians, alumni, and other broad university publics, including service providers, should provide regular feedback on academic and other policies, programmes, and activities of the university to enable it to review its quality assurance policy and processes for improvement. These categories of shareholders should also provide strong support for the university policies and activities aimed, among others, at complying with approved academic and administrative procedures and standards. They should also comply with the disciplinary rules, procedures, and regulations, as well as academic policies and regulations of the university.

Benefits

The following benefits are associated with stakeholders' involvement in the university governance and quality assurance practices:

1. Inclusivity of stakeholders in decision making processes, better decision and quality assurance practices;
2. Enhancement of quality teaching, learning, research and service delivery (quality of education);
3. Fosters a culture of excellence, transparency, accountability, due process and reduces academic fraud and corruption to the barest minimum;
4. Ensures the production of quality manpower necessary for national development;
5. Creates a positive image or credibility and enhances the reputation, ranking and global competitiveness and visibility of the university;
6. Builds stronger stakeholders-university trust, confidence and relationship;
7. Increases stakeholder satisfaction, acceptability and loyalty;
8. Improved employability and marketability of graduates of the university;
9. Enhanced staff and students' discipline and commitment to the university; and
10. Promotes transparency and accountability in university decision-making process and mechanism.

Challenges

Stakeholders' involvement in the university governance and quality assurance practices is fraught with the following challenges:

1. Weak Institutional, academic, managerial and administrative leadership.
2. Poor communication barriers
3. Conflict of interests
4. Unstable academic calendars
5. Poor funding/underfunding
6. Poor infrastructure and learning facilities
7. Politicization of appointments

8. Indiscipline on the part of stakeholders
9. Corruption
10. Ineffective implementation of quality assurance policies and processes and poor supervision.

Conclusion

The study laid the groundwork for comprehending the intricate connections between stakeholders and university quality assurance while examining the importance of stakeholder participation in governance and quality assurance procedures. Both internal and external stakeholders are essential to raising the standard of university education, according to an examination of their responsibilities in governance and quality assurance procedures. Involving stakeholders in university quality assurance procedures has many advantages, such as promoting inclusion, cultivating an excellence culture, raising stakeholder satisfaction, and enhancing educational quality**.**

Despite the benefits, stakeholders' involvement in university governance and quality assurance practices also poses challenges, especially weak institutional leadership and ineffective implementation of quality assurance policies, processes and poor supervision. To address these challenges, universities should develop effective stakeholder engagement strategies that foster collaboration, communication, and mutual understanding. Ultimately, stakeholders' involvement in university governance and quality assurance practices is essential for ensuring sustainable quality and relevance of university education to the individual, corporate and national development need and aspirations of Nigerians and Nigeria. By engaging stakeholders in meaningful ways, universities can foster a culture of quality, enhance student outcomes, and contribute to the progress, prosperity, sustainable development and future of Nigeria.

Recommendations

To enhance active stakeholders' involvement in university governance and quality assurance practices, this paper recommends that universities should:

1. **Develop clear stakeholder engagement policies and procedures**
   This will include clear identification of stakeholders, for example, student bodies, alumni, parents/guardians, staff unions, university governance structures, host community, diaspora actors and industry players. Define the purpose of engagement and engagement methods (meetings, committees, fund raising/award nights, alumni day, founders' day, etc.). Others are engagement policies and procedures covering university-student involvement in curriculum review and development, discipline, feedback loops and mechanisms, industry advisories and internship opportunities, alumni mentorship and support and staff involvement in university governance and quality assurance practices, including decision-making processes.
2. **Establish effective communication channels with stakeholders**
   There is need to use multiple channels of communication including digital communication platforms to meet diverse stakeholders' preferences, prioritise stakeholder engagement and implement regular feedback loops to gather insights and

adjust communication strategies to enhance stakeholders' involvement in university governance and quality assurance practices.

3. **Foster a culture of strong ethical leadership, collaboration and mutual respect**
   This can be achieved by organising continuous leadership trainings and programmes for various categories of stakeholders and interface with the management team of the universities and inclusive decision-making.
4. **Provide more opportunities for stakeholder feedback, interactions and participation**
   Actualising this recommendation requires the establishment of centralised platforms for agenda and action management; inclusive participation, transparent decision-making, evaluation of effectiveness of stakeholder engagement initiatives and feedback mechanisms.
5. **Recognise and reward outstanding stakeholders' contributions to governance and quality assurance practices**
   This is capable of sustaining their interest and engagement in university governance and quality assurance practices, build a culture of accountability, motivation and shared ownership; this can be achieved and sustained through formal recognitions and public acknowledgements of contributions in university platforms and other media outlets; hosting appreciation dinners/award ceremonies and presentation of annual awards and certificates to enhance their reputation and credibility (reputational benefits) and foster a sense of personal satisfaction. Others are provision of stipends, honoraria or travel reimbursements for external stakeholders who make outstanding contributions; appointing exemplary stakeholders as advisors or ambassadors; embarking on legacy initiatives such as establishing scholarships or research grants in their names or naming lecture halls or buildings after them.

References

Alemu, S.K. (2018). The meaning, idea and history of university/higher education in Africa: A brief literature review. *FIRE: Forum for International Research in Education*, *4*(3), 210-227.

Algazo, F.A & Ibrahim, S. (2024). University governance and accountability. *Asian Journal of Research in Education and Social Sciences*, *6*(2), 47.

Arowolo, S.O., Yusuf, K., Yahya, J., Lambo, O. & Oduoluwu, D. (2023). World bank concept of good governance, contemporary Nigerian democracy, and the place of the media. *East African Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, *6*(1), 54-69.

Ashby Commission Report on Higher Education in Nigeria (1960). *Government Printer*.

Atanaw, B., Estifanos, A. B., & Negash, H. G. (2025). How university governance affects education service quality: Insights from Ethiopian public universities. *Frontiers in Education*, 9, 1447357.

Azinge, E. & Adejoke, A. (2013). Legislating for good governance, *Nigerian Institute of Advanced Legal Studies*.

Clarkson, M. B. E. (1995). A stakeholder framework for analysing and evaluating corporate social performance, *Academy of Management Review, 20*(1), 92-117.

Darity, W. A. (Ed.) (2008). *International encyclopaedia of the social sciences*, Gale Cengage Learning.

Deming, W. W. (1986). *Out of the crisis*, MIT Press.

Freeman, R. E. (1984). *Strategic management: A stakeholder approach*. Pitman.

Greenwood, M. (2007). Stakeholder engagement: Beyond the myth of corporate social responsibility, *Journal of Business Ethics, 74*(4), 315-327.

Hadiwidjaja, R. D. & Riana, K. E. (2024). Good university governance to university performance: Systematic literature review, *Eduvest – Journal of University Studies*.

Juran, J. M. (1989). *Juran on leadership for quality: An executive handbook*, Free Press.

National Policy on Education (2004). NERDC.

National Universities Commission Report (2025).

Nwabueze, B. (2009). Judicialism and global governance in Africa, *Nigerian Institute of Advanced Legal Studies*.

Nwafor, S. O. (Ed.) (1998). *Higher education administration: Issues and prospects*. Etibeng Communications.

Omoleke, I. I. (2018). Administration, law and politics: The tripartite holy alliance of good governance. *Inaugural Lecture Series 312*, Obafemi Awolowo University.

Orluwene, O. B. (2024). *Nigeria and paradoxes of governance: Undressing and Addressing the fight against corruption*, An Inaugural Lecture Number 53. Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rumuorlumeni, Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

Rodney, W. (1972). *How Europe underdeveloped Africa*. Bogle-Louverture Publications.

Sam-Kalagbor, V. O. (2021). *Heads of tertiary institutions administrative techniques and effective school-community relations in Rivers State* [Doctoral Dissertation, Rivers State University].

The New Encyclopaedia Britannica (2016). *Volume 12. Encyclopaedi*a Britannica Inc.

UNESCO. (2005). *Good governance*.

World Bank. (1992). *Governance and development*.