



| Research Article



Plant Management in Tertiary Education in Nigeria

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Abstract: This paper discussed plant management in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. The paper looked at the factors militating against effective plant management. The study depends on secondary data that were sorted from print and online publications. The paper concluded that poor funding, poor maintenance culture, ineffective supervision of plants, poor sensitization on the need to handle plants with care, poor implementation of plant policy, negative attitude of tertiary institutions managers towards plant management and corruption are some of the factors that have militated against effective plant management in the Nigerian tertiary institutions. Based on these findings, the paper hereby recommends that tertiary institutions managers should allocate more funds to the department responsible for plant management, A sensitization programme should be done every semester for students, staff and host community on the need to handle plants with care and to keep them in proper condition after used, full implementation of plant damage policy should be done in all tertiary institutions, regulatory institutions of tertiary institutions in Nigeria should annually organize training for managers of tertiary institutions on need to plant management and funds allocated for plant management in the various tertiary institutions should be monitored by the various anticorruption units in the tertiary institutions across the country.

Keywords: Plant management, Tertiary education



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INTRODUCTION

Tertiary education is an education given after Post Basic Education in institutions such as Universities and Inter-University Centres such as the Nigeria French Language Village, Nigeria Arabic Language Village, National Institute of Nigerian Languages, institutions such as Innovation Enterprise Institutions (IEIs), and Colleges of Education, Monotechnics, Polytechnics, and other specialized institutions such as Colleges of Agriculture, Schools of Health and Technology and the National Teachers' Institutes (NTI) (National Policy on Education FRN (2013). Tertiary education can be conceptualized by Ogunode, Edinoh and Okolie (2023) as a planned and organized educational system designed for the total development of man/woman and for the total transformation of society through the utilization of teaching, research and provision of community service. Ogunode and Odo (2023) defined tertiary education as the third tier of education that is designed for the production of skilled professionals for socio-economic and technological advancement.

The goals of tertiary education according to the FGN National Policy on Education (2013), shall be to: contribute to national development through high-level manpower training; provide accessible and affordable quality learning opportunities in formal and informal education in response to the needs and interests of all Nigerians; provide high-quality career counselling and lifelong learning programmes that prepare students with the knowledge and skills for self-reliance and the world of work; reduce skill shortages through the production of skilled manpower relevant to the needs of the labour market; promote and encourage scholarship, entrepreneurship and community service; forge and cement national unity; and promote national and international understanding and interaction. The other goals or objectives of tertiary education include; aiding the production of manpower;

ensuring national unity; ensuring technological development; fostering national unity and international peace; increasing production through research; providing post-secondary school education; to preparing students with quality knowledge and reliable skills for independent living and the world of work (Ogunode, et al 2023).

The realization of tertiary education depends on effective plant management and adequate funding. Plant management in tertiary institutions is vital to the development of tertiary. Asiabaka (2008) opined that school plant management plays a pivotal role in the actualization of educational goals and objectives by satisfying the physical and emotional needs of staff and students. Asiabaka stated that the physical needs of the learners are met through the provision of safe structures, adequate sanitary facilities a balanced visual and thermal environment, and sufficient shelter space for work and play; while the emotional needs are met by creating pleasant surroundings, friendly atmosphere and an inspiring environment.

It appears that tertiary institutions in Nigeria are plagued with the problem of poor plant management. Bello (2018) and Musa (2029) noted that plants in some schools including tertiary institutions across the country are in levels of dilapidation and disrepair. Most schools' plants are without roofs and create an unhealthy environment for teaching, learning and research programmes. It is based on this, that this paper is aimed to analyze the problems militating against effective plant management in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study is to examine the problems militating against effective plant management in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

This paper is anchored on system theory. The systems theory of management asserts that any organization is a single, unified system of interrelated parts or subsystems. Each part of the overall system is dependent on the others and cannot function optimally without them. Therefore, if factors are present that adversely affect one subsystem within an organization, it's likely these factors may adversely affect other subsystems, too. This can result in impacts on the entire system to a certain extent. This framework presents an organization as a natural ecosystem, where each element is interdependent. The systems approach is another term for this framework (Ludwig Von Bertallanty; Olaniyi, 2001).

The theory is relevant to this paper because the tertiary education system can be likened to a system made up of different inputs or parts that depend on each other and interrelate to function. A tertiary institution is made up of different units and departments that need one another to function and attain the general goals of the institution. The malfunction of one unit affects the function of the other units. So, tertiary institution managers must realize that every unit and department of the tertiary education system is very important in the realization of the objectives of the institutions.

Conceptual Terms

Concept of Plant Management

Plant management refers to systematic ways of keeping and maintaining school facilities to realise educational goals via planning, organizing and coordination. School plant management is the process of planning, organizing, coordinating and budgeting for the building of a school plant to ensure that service delivery is facilitated and supported in the provision of education by a school (Adelabu 2012). School plant management is a series of decisions by individuals and groups in the school system in building school plants according to need, operating and using them effectively and efficiently to ensure that they are functional for use in the course of implementing school programmes (Olga, 2011). Ogunode, Olatunde-Aiyedun and Akin-Ibidiran stated that school plant management involves planning and keeping records of school facilities, supervising and evaluating their availability as well as encouraging teachers and students to participate in the maintenance of school plants. School management involves activities such as planning, organizing, programming, staffing, budgeting, coordinating, reporting and evaluation (Asemah 2010). Management is the effective organization and utilization of the human and material resources in a particular school or system for the achievement of identified objectives in an educational organization. Fencer (2004) opined that school plant management is the process that ensures buildings and other technical systems support the programmes of an organization. The importance of school plant management has been emphasized. Ogundele and Moronfoye (2013) maintained that effective management of school plants is a must to make the school a pleasant, safe and comfortable place for the activities of the community.

Methodology

The paper is a review paper. It adopted the content analysis and elimination method to select data from the print resources and online publications selected for the study. Over two hundred works of literature were collected for the study. Only 52% were used after the content analysis and elimination method were applied to narrow the works of literature to only those related to the problem of the study.

Factors Militating against effective plant management in tertiary Education in Nigeria

There are many factors responsible for poor plant management in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Some of these factors include; poor funding, poor maintenance culture, ineffective supervision of plants, poor sensitization on the need to handle plants with care, poor implementation of plant policy, negative attitude of tertiary institutions managers towards plant management and corruption

Poor funding

Funds released for plant management in most tertiary institutions across the country are not adequate to effectively manage and maintain the facilities to be in proper condition for the implementation of teaching, learning, research and provision of community services. The imperative of money or funds is on the basis that money is the lifeblood of every organisation to function effectively (Ayeni, 2017). The problem of poor funding of plant management in tertiary institutions is traced to the poor allocation coming into the various institutions from both the federal and state governments. Ogunode, Onyekachi, and Ayoko (2023) and Udida, Basse, Udofia, and Egbona (2009) noted that the major issue in educational development is the shortage of funds. One of the most serious problems threatening the survival of the educational system is that of dwindling level of public funding in the face

of rising demands and hence rising cost of higher education. This shortage of funds affects job performance and the growth of the institution. Higher educational institutions cannot perform optimally without funding. This situation calls for increased funding initiatives from both the government and educational stakeholders to sustain the tempo and growth of the education industry. The inability of the Nigerian government to objectively accept and implement the 15-20% funding formula for education recommended by UNESCO impact negatively on the performance and sustainability of higher education. Poor funding of tertiary institutions in Nigeria is a major factor that has hindered effective plant management in the various tertiary institutions across the country.

Poor maintenance culture

Poor maintenance culture on the part of stakeholders in the tertiary institutions has also militated against effective plant management in the various tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Ajayi (2007), opined that school plant maintenance is all activities embarked upon to sustain initial use of the value of the plants. This involves regular sweeping and scrubbing of the floors, and surroundings, dusting, mopping, repairs replacement and renovations. Unfortunately, tertiary institution stakeholders including students, academic staff, non-academic staff, parents, host community and other government institutions are not handling school plants well. The students, academic staff and non-academic staff are the major points that are involved in this habit of damaging school facilities. The ways and manners by which they are handling the facilities provided for them to teach and learn are not good enough. Some students are found with the habit of damaging institutional facilities and some non-academic staff in the laboratories do not professionally handle the various facilities provided in the labs. Some academic staff misused most facilities and plants under their care. All these factors are preventing effective plant management in the various tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Elujekwute (2015) maintenance of school plants is an important aspect of school management. It is the activities embarked upon by educational administrators to ensure that educational institutions remain in the same state. These activities include repairs, servicing, painting, and greasing among others. Elujekwute further maintains that maintenance can be those activities put in place to keep and restore the original condition of an item when activities such as repairs, servicing, and painting among others are put in place to keep or restore the original condition of an item being maintained. Maintenance of school plants aims to ensure that they remain in the best condition for educational instruction at all times. Poor maintenance culture of students, staff and host communities has militated against effective plant management in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Ineffective supervision of plant

Tertiary institutions in Nigeria and globally are designed to have a unit or department responsible for plant management for the smooth implementation of teaching, learning, research and community service programmes but, unfortunately, most of the units or departments are ineffective in the supervision of the plants. This created a gap in the effective management of the plant in tertiary institutions. These units and departments sometimes are underfunded and have the problem of a shortage of staff. These problems make them ineffective in discharging their function and indirectly affect the general plant management programme of the institutions (Ogunode, Cletus, & Christiana, 2024; Ogunode, 2020a). Supervision of infrastructure facilities and programmes is poor and ineffective in schools in Nigeria and has resulted in poor quality of education (Bello, 2018).

Poor sensitization on the need to handle plants with care

Another factor that has contributed to poor plant management in the various tertiary institutions across the country is the problem of poor sensitization of stakeholders on the need to handle plants with care. The departments and units that are supposed to educate students, staff and host community on the need to handle school plants with optimal care are not doing so. The poor sensitization of students and staff and host community has prevented effective plant management in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Femi (2021) and Ojo (2021) reported that students damaging school facilities and host communities were also involved in taking some school facilities away for personal use or economic use. This action has led to poor plant management in various institutions.

Poor implementation of plant policy

The poor implementation of plant damage policy in many tertiary institutions in Nigeria has continued to aid plant destruction and hinder effective plant management. Many tertiary institutions have formulated and designed policies and laws to prevent students and staff from damaging school facilities or plants but most time these policies and laws are poorly implemented and this has promoted the habit of students and staff to continue damaging school facilities since there is no implication for such actions and behaviours in the various institutions. Femi (2021) concluded the poor implementation of policies in tertiary institutions is responsible for the shortage of infrastructure facilities and continuous damage of facilities in the various institutions. The human security that infrastructural development is supposed to enhance is being denied. This is because infrastructural development enhances human security (Ayeni, Andeshi, & Uzoigwe, 2022). Not only that, poor implementation of plant or infrastructural policy has denied schools the opportunity to provide a suitable environment and support for the development of entrepreneurship skills and industrialisation (Ayeni, Abdullahi, & Andeshi, 2021). It is on the above basis that scholars have posited that the inability of the governance system to perform its roles is also hurting the educational system (Ogunode, Ayeni, & Olorundare, 2024).

The negative attitude of tertiary institution managers towards plant management

Many managers and administrators of tertiary institutions do not prioritise the need to pay attention to plant management in their various institutions. This is why scholars have argued that

The inability of any structure to perform its function will cause the system to malfunction (Ayeni & Nwaorgu, 2018; Joseph, Cinjel & Ayeni, 2017). Tertiary institution managers have a negative attitude towards any issues or programmes that deal with plant management because of a lack of training. Their negative attitude towards plant management is responsible for the poor funding, malfunctioning of the department in charge of plant supervision and poor condition of facilities in their respective institutions. Musa (2019) acknowledged that some school leaders do not care about the condition of the school plant and this affects teaching and learning leading to poor quality of education. Ojo (2021) restated that most school leaders allocate little funds for plant management that is not adequate and this resulted in poor plant management in the schools. It is on the above basis that scholars have argued that the amount of success or failure of any human organization has its root in leadership (Muhammed, & Ayeni, 2018).

Corruption

Corruption in departments and units responsible for plant management is another factor responsible for poor plant management in most tertiary institutions in Nigeria. There have been allegations of corruption on how funds released for plant management have been mismanaged and looted by officials in the units or departments. Ololube, (2016); Olowonefa, Ogunode and Ohibime (2022); Ogunode, Ohunene and Olatunde-Aiyedun (2022) ascertained that corruption practices in the tertiary institutions in Nigeria are responsible for the shortage of funds in the system while Ogunode and Josiah, Ajape (2021) concluded that corruption in the universities is the major cause of poor programme implementation in most of the universities. Okani, Ogunode and Ajape (2021); and Josiah and Ogunode (2022) noted that corruption is a very big problem hindering effective school plant management in Nigerian tertiary institutions. Some school plant managers misused and misappropriated the funds allocated to maintain and manage the school plant for the sustainable development of the institutions. Ogunode and Abubakar (2021) observed that institutional corruption is one of the major problems facing the administration of the universities in Nigeria. This is why corruption in Nigeria has been a source of worry and concern as it affects the national economy (Amaechi, Ayeni, & Madu, 2019). The entire higher educational system is engulfed in corrupt practices. The budgetary allocation for the administration of university education in Nigeria is sometimes diverted by officials within the system. There are many forms of corruption in the universities in Nigeria. The prevalence of corruption has been traced to the ruling elites who employed laws and politics to rule Nigeria to their advantage to the detriment of the citizens (Godwin, Ayeni, Peter, 2021). The high level of corruption in the country has posed a challenge to the well-being and sustainable peace of Nigerians, including the educational system (Ayeni & Sani, 2021). The high level of corruption in Nigeria has been further explained by scholars when they opined that political authorities at all levels in Nigeria are corrupt that they can no longer provide basic social amenities for the citizens to enjoy (Ayeni, Tusayi, Joseph & Obatayo, 2018, p. 100). This corruption in Nigeria society also affects the educational sector since the education sector is the product of the society. This corruption implies that it causes poverty, and this poverty causes insecurity (Muhammed and Ayeni, 2018). This corruption militates against effective plant management in tertiary education and prevents access to education that is expected to empower people to enable them to provide for their basic needs (Ayeni, Sani, Idris, & Uzoigwe, 2019).

Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper discussed plant management in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. The paper concluded that poor funding, poor maintenance culture, ineffective supervision of plants, poor sensitization on the need to handle plants with care, poor implementation of plant policy, negative attitude of tertiary institutions managers towards plant management and corruption are some of the factors that have militated against effective plant management in the Nigerian tertiary institutions.

Based on these findings, the paper hereby recommends tertiary institutions managers should allocate more funds to the department responsible for plant management, sensitization programme should be done every semester for students, staff and host community on the need to handle plants with care and to keep them in proper condition after used, full implementation of plant damage policy should be done in all tertiary institutions, regulatory institutions of tertiary institutions in Nigeria should annually organize training for managers of tertiary institutions on need to plant management and funds allocated for plant management in the various tertiary institutions should be monitored by the various anticorruption units in the tertiary institutions across the country.

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