

STATE OF GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT IN FEDERAL COLLEGES OF EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The governance and management of Federal Colleges of Education (FCEs) play a crucial role in shaping teacher education quality and educational development in Nigeria. This keynote address examines the current state of governance and management practices in Nigeria's FCEs, analyzing their institutional structures, operational challenges, and potential solutions. The research highlights significant issues including political interference in appointments, financial mismanagement, inadequate infrastructure, and inconsistent quality assurance processes. The governance structure, overseen by the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE), involves multiple stakeholders but faces challenges in maintaining institutional autonomy and effectiveness. The study identifies key obstacles such as dwindling enrolment levels, insufficient funding, poor monitoring systems, and staff welfare concerns, while proposing comprehensive recommendations including government financial interventions, strengthening institutional independence, improving financial accountability, enhancing quality assurance procedures, and developing better infrastructure. These findings suggest that addressing these governance and management challenges is essential for improving the quality of teacher education and achieving Nigeria's broader educational objectives.

Keywords: Governance, Management, Federal Colleges, Challenges, Solutions

Introduction

Governance and management style usually dictate the rate of success or failure of any institution, even those owned by government. Although a trajectory of the administration of Federal Colleges of Education (FCE) in Nigeria over the years will reveal laudable efforts of the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) in the administration of her Colleges of Education, however, in the wake of these laurels lie also antithetical testimonies of mal-administration.

Differentiating between the terms governance and management, the Marlborough Chamber of Commerce New Zealand (2023) made these distinctions: "Governance is the process of making and enforcing rules, regulations and policies. Management is the application of those rules, regulations and policies."

Moreno and Sulasula (2023) enumerated certain expectations from those who will govern or carry out administration of government-owned universities and colleges. These include "clear governance structures, transparency, accountability, stakeholder engagement, strategic resource allocation, performance management, faculty involvement, visionary leadership, and collaborative partnerships."

Over the years, the FGN has established clear educational policies, objectives, rules and regulations guiding teacher education in the nation. It has gone on to apply these via various government-owned regulatory and supervisory bodies such as NCCE and TETFund. These bodies have gone on to implement the policies and objectives of teacher education in the Federal Colleges of Education, while building human capacity and infrastructure at the behest of the FGN.

This keynote focuses on the mechanism of governance and the antecedent challenges, with the aim of proffering solutions to them. It foregrounds issues on administration and the concomitant challenges bedevilling the FCEs. Challenges such as low enrolment, funding, and monitoring, among others, are impediments to the development of the colleges. Similarly, lack of support from stakeholders also contributes to the derelict situation of some colleges.

The keynote also dwells on panaceas for the ailing quarters mentioned. It leverages on the support of the FGN, and the goodwill of willing stakeholders in remedying the problems and developing teacher education in the nation.

The State of Governance and Management in Nigeria's Federal Colleges of Education

The effectiveness of teacher education and overall national educational development in Nigeria is significantly influenced by the governance and management of Federal Colleges of Education (FCEs). These institutions are essential in preparing qualified educators for primary and secondary schools. However, their performance has been affected by issues such as political interference, financial mismanagement, inadequate infrastructure, and quality assurance concerns. This study analyzes the governance structures, management practices, challenges, and suggestions for enhancing FCE administration in Nigeria, based on existing research.

Governance Structure in Nigeria's Federal Colleges of Education

The governance of FCEs in Nigeria involves various regulatory bodies and institutional management structures. The National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) serves as the primary regulatory agency, ensuring compliance with national education policies and quality assurance standards (Education et al., 2009). Other key governance entities include governing councils, college management teams, and the Federal Ministry of Education.

National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE)

Established by Decree No. 3 of 1989, the NCCE regulates all colleges of education in Nigeria. It is responsible for curriculum development, program accreditation, and maintaining national educational standards (Ibrahim et al., 2022). The commission plays a vital role in overseeing academic quality and financial management.

Governing Councils

Each FCE has a Governing Council responsible for policymaking, financial oversight, and strategic planning. The council comprises representatives from the government, professional bodies, and academic stakeholders. However, the effectiveness of governance has been questioned due to political influence in council member appointments (Odeh & George, 2023).

College Management Teams

The Provost leads the administration of each FCE, supported by the Registrar, Bursar, Librarian, and Directors of various academic programmes. This team is responsible for daily management, academic administration, and staff welfare (YUSUF et al., 2018).

Management Practices in Federal Colleges of Education

Effective management in FCEs is crucial for ensuring quality teacher education, financial accountability, and institutional efficiency. Key management areas include financial administration, curriculum implementation, quality assurance, and human resource management.

Financial Management and Funding

FCEs receive funding primarily from the Federal Government, along with revenue from student fees, research grants, and donations. However, financial mismanagement, corruption, and non-compliance with public procurement laws have hindered efficient resource utilization (Olutide Bamidele et al., 2019). Many institutions fail to comply with the Public Procurement Act of 2007, leading to inefficiencies in infrastructure development and service delivery.

Curriculum Development and Quality Assurance

The NCCE develops and regularly reviews the curriculum for FCEs to meet national education goals. However, political interference in curriculum decisions has been reported (Ibrahim et al., 2022). Periodic accreditation processes ensure adherence to standards, but inconsistencies in policy implementation have created challenges (Odeh & George, 2023).

Human Resource Management

Staff recruitment, promotion, and professional development are critical management functions. However, issues such as poor remuneration, inadequate training, and job dissatisfaction have affected staff performance (YUSUF et al., 2018). Political interference in staff appointments undermines merit-based selection processes (Ibrahim et al., 2022).

Student Participation in Governance

Students have a limited role in institutional governance. Research suggests that increasing student involvement in quality assurance management can enhance institutional effectiveness (Okpa et al., 2020). However, student unions and representatives often have minimal influence on key administrative decisions.

Challenges in FCE Governance and Administration

Low Enrolment Level

Dwindling enrolment is a major albatross around the necks of colleges of education in Nigeria. There is an inability of the colleges to generate enough students due to apathy towards the Nigerian Certificate in Education. The situation is so adverse that, to mitigate it, the Dual Mandate Act was enacted to allow Federal Colleges of Education to run NCE and degree programmes concurrently, thereby attracting a larger pool of aspirants (Oweh, 2024).

Insufficient Funds and Financial Mishandling

Consequent upon dwindling enrolment levels, the colleges' Internally Generated Revenue (IGR) is also low. Despite governmental allocations, funding remains inadequate due to insufficient funds emanating directly from students' enrolment. It is worthy of note also that delayed disbursements, dishonesty, and poor fiscal management pose challenges to the development of the colleges. Research indicates that numerous institutions fail to comply with financial regulations, leading to resource squandering (Olutide Bamidele et al., 2019).

Governmental Meddling

A primary governance issue is the influence of politics in selecting governing bodies, principals, and high-ranking officials (Ibrahim et al., 2022). This frequently results in ineffectiveness, preferential treatment, and suboptimal choices.

Substandard Facilities and Educational Resources

Many FCEs face issues with deteriorating classrooms, outdated laboratories, and insufficient library amenities. The scarcity of contemporary educational resources negatively impacts student achievement (Tunde, 2022).

Accreditation and Quality Control Concerns

While accreditation is vital for upholding educational standards, inconsistencies in assessment and approval processes have been observed (Odeh & George, 2023). Some institutions struggle to fulfill accreditation requirements due to insufficient infrastructure and trained personnel.

Inadequate Monitoring and Assessment Systems

The Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) is tasked with providing financial support and overseeing institutional projects. However, studies suggest that ineffective evaluation mechanisms and corruption hinder the impact of TETFund initiatives (Uwguanyi et al., 2023).

Employee Well-being and Job Contentment

Poor working conditions, irregular salary payments, and limited professional growth opportunities have resulted in low staff morale. Research emphasizes the need for effective stress management strategies among academic and administrative personnel (Yusuf et al., 2018).

Suggestions for Enhancing Governance and Administration: Financial Interventions by Government and Stakeholders

At this juncture, we should talk about the Federal Government's intervention in the scholarship of students, through the Student Loan initiative called NELFund, which is an effective way of encouraging enrolment and boosting teacher production in the Nation (Ozibo, 2025). There is also talk of paying NCE students special stipends to encourage enrolment and larger production of teachers. Already, the stigma around the low-income level of the teacher contributes to the dwindling number of teachers and NCE students. Help can also come from highly placed individuals who are stakeholders in teachers' training education in the country. Such individuals could assist in paying school fees, providing upkeep, infrastructure, and learning materials to students. Hence, the management of colleges could reach out to such well-wishers in their communities for assistance.

Bolstering Institutional Independence

Decreasing political interference in appointments and decision-making will improve institutional efficiency. Governance structures should be modified to grant more autonomy to FCEs.

Improving Financial Responsibility

FCEs should implement transparent financial management practices and ensure strict adherence to public procurement laws (Olutide Bamidele et al., 2019). Government funding should also be increased and distributed promptly to avoid delays in project implementation.

Enhancing Quality Assurance Procedures

Regular accreditation and monitoring of academic programmes will ensure compliance with national standards. Increasing student involvement in quality assurance processes can also enhance institutional effectiveness (Okpa et al., 2020).

Allocating Resources to Infrastructure and Learning Materials

The government should prioritize infrastructural development in FCEs to provide modern learning facilities (Tunde, 2022). Collaborations with the private sector can also help address funding shortfalls.

Improving Staff Welfare and Professional Growth

Regular training programmes, competitive salaries, and career advancement opportunities should be provided to academic and administrative staff. Implementing effective stress management strategies will improve staff productivity (Yusuf et al., 2018).

Reinforcing Monitoring and Evaluation

TETFund and other regulatory bodies should adopt more effective monitoring frameworks to track fund utilization and ensure compliance with educational policies (Uwguanyi et al., 2023).

Conclusion

Governance and administration in Nigeria's Federal Colleges of Education are crucial for achieving quality teacher education. While governance structures such as the NCCE and Governing Councils exist to ensure accountability, challenges such as political interference, financial mismanagement, poor infrastructure, and accreditation inconsistencies impede institutional effectiveness. Strengthening institutional autonomy, financial transparency, quality assurance, and staff welfare will significantly improve the governance and administration of these institutions. Addressing these challenges is essential to developing a robust teacher education system that supports Nigeria's broader educational and economic objectives.

Recommendations

Recommendations for enhancing governance and administration in Nigeria's Federal Colleges of Education:

- Strengthening Institutional Independence
- Reduce political interference in appointments and decision-making
- Improving Financial Accountability
- Increase government funding and ensure prompt distribution to avoid project implementation delays
- Enhancing Quality Assurance Procedures
- Conduct regular accreditation and monitoring of academic programmes to ensure compliance with national standards
- Increase student involvement in quality assurance processes to enhance institutional effectiveness
- Allocate resources to Infrastructure and Learning Materials
- Develop collaborations with the private sector to address funding shortfalls
- Improve Staff Welfare and Professional Development

These recommendations focus on addressing the major challenges identified in the governance and management of Federal Colleges of Education in Nigeria, with the ultimate goal of improving the quality of teacher education in the country.

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