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Challenges Besetting the Sustainability of Higher Education in Nigeria: The Case of the University of Lagos

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Abstract

Purpose: This study examined the mandate of the Nigerian University System and investigated the challenges bedevilling the sustainability of higher education in Nigeria using the University of Lagos as a case study.

Design/methodology/approach: The author adopted the survey research design. Primary data obtained from the respondents were analysed using descriptive statistics, and relative importance index. Secondary data were obtained from the National Universities Commission Reports as well as the review of relevant literature.

Research implications: The findings of the study revealed that higher education in Nigeria is faced with a myriad of challenges and the working conditions of academics leave much to be desired.

Originality/value: This study brings to the fore the challenges confronting higher education in Nigeria which if not well addressed will adversely affect the sustainability of higher education in Nigeria and the realisation of the mandate of the Nigerian University System (NUS).

Paper type: Quantitative/ Empirical

Keywords – *Sustainability, Development, Higher Education, University of Lagos, Nigeria*

1. Introduction

Higher education in Nigeria includes universities, polytechnics and colleges of education. Education constitutes the foremost instrument for sustainable human development and the fulcrum around which every other activity gyrate; as countries which have recorded remarkable accomplishments technologically relied on the instrumentality of education (Boyi, 2014). Higher or tertiary education especially at the university level is an instrument for empowering people and as a means for positive social change. Globally, education is considered a means to good quality of life, socio-economic upliftment of society and an effective tool for technological innovations and transformations (Nnokam & Sule, 2017). The significance of education to individual and

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societal development is further accentuated by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). According to UNESCO, member countries should ensure that at least 26 per cent of their annual budgets is devoted to education. Nigeria is a member of UNESCO but regrettably; over the years, the 26 per cent has never been devoted to the educational sector. Historically, university education in Nigeria dates back to 1948 with the establishment of the University College, Ibadan (NUC, 2018). The first generation universities established between 1948 and 1974 were the outcome of the recommendations of Elliot (1943) and Ashby (1959) Commissions (Fafunwa, 1971; Fajana, 2018). The first generation universities comprise University of Ibadan (1948), University of Nigeria, Nsukka (1960), University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University (1962), the University of Lagos (1962), and Ahmadu Bello University (1962). University of Ibadan started as a campus of the University College London. Education and development are part and parcel of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The World Commission on Environment and Development also known as Brundtland Commission (1987, p.43) defined sustainable development as “development that meets the need for the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” In this study, sustainable development in higher education in Nigeria is conceived as comprising better quality teachers and pedagogy, better product quality, conducive learning environment, reduction in the incidence of strikes, global competitiveness, research and innovations, host community and societal development, corruption-free educational system as well as international exchange programmes to name a few. Sustainable Development Goal 4 borders on ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and the promotion of lifelong learning opportunities for all. Sequel to the expiration of the implementation timeline of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which came to an end in 2015, the international community through the United Nations in collaboration with the Heads of States and Governments of the 193 member countries, launched the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a new development agenda. This agenda, also known as Agenda 2030, is framed into 17 Goals. Nigeria, being one of the countries that ratified and adopted the Agenda for implementation in September 2015, proceeded immediately to domesticate it. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals are depicted in Table 1.1 in the appendix.

However, to achieve these goals the role of education is critical. Specifically, to achieve goal 4 which borders on ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promotion of lifelong learning opportunities for all, the role higher education and academics are paramount. From the foregoing, it is apparent that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are hinged on improving the well-being of people globally and academics in Nigeria are no

exception. The objective of this study is to examine the mandate and investigate the challenges of the Nigerian University System (NUS) using the University of Lagos as the unit of analysis.

2. Literature Review

This section examines the mandate and challenges of the Nigerian University System. The mandate for Nigerian universities as enumerated in the NUC (2018, p.50) report include:

a) Contribute to National Development through high level relevant Manpower Training

How far the mandate has been achieved remains one of the issues this study intends to investigate. This mandate cannot be realised with inadequate number and quality of academics as well as other staff delivering quality. One of the means of achieving quality academic staff is through continuous updating of skills through training and retraining at all levels to improve their attitude, skill and knowledge (ASK) and to keep academics abreast of latest developments and techniques in their fields of specialisation. This has become imperative in view of the global, dynamic and competitive environment universities operate and to keep pace with advances in Information and Communication Technology (ICT). According to Kuan Chung Tzu, (as cited in Ojo 1998, p. 211) “if you wish to plan for a year sow seeds, if you wish to plan for ten years plant trees, if you wish to plan for a lifetime develop men”. Thus, the dearth of human capital is not one of numbers, but a scarcity of trained people with adequate and up-to-date skills and knowledge.

According to the NUC (2018) report, globally, the role of teachers in the university system is recognised as crucial in realising academic goals designed to advance learning and overall quality of university education. Academics are pivotal to the running of an effective and efficient university system and central to driving research and learning improvements in universities. The right representation of academics in the university system both in terms of quantity and quality is a *sine qua non* for instituting quality and standards in the Nigerian university system as no educational system can rise above the quality of its teachers (NUC, 2018). To a very large extent this mandate has been achieved in view of the calibre of trained manpower at various sectors of the economy including the academia.

b) Develop and inculcate proper Values for the Survival of the Individual and Society

Societal values are partly propagated via the educational system. To a large extent this mandate has been realised by higher education in Nigeria. Higher

education is meant to provide a favourable teaching, learning, research and development environment as well as moulding and remoulding character of individuals. There is a maxim that a country's level of development depends on the calibre of its people and academics are the leading lights of any society. The National Policy on Education (FGN, 2013), as cited in Oyebade (2018), posits that no country can rise above the level of its educational system. The immense contributions of academics to sustainable development of any society or institution therefore cannot be ignored.

c) Develop Intellectual Capability of Individuals to Understand and Appreciate their Local and External Environments

Higher education develops the intellectual capacity of an individual with a view to improving their knowledge of local and external environments. This mandate has been achieved to a very large extent by higher education institutions in Nigeria.

d) Acquisition of Physical and Intellectual Skills which will enable Individuals to be Self-Reliant and useful members of the Society

Higher education instills physical and intellectual skills in an individual with a view to making them self-reliant and useful members of the society. This mandate has been achieved to a very large extent by higher education institutions in Nigeria.

e) Promote and Encourage Scholarship and Community Service

Higher education and academics are critical to as they are the fountain of knowledge in any society. Academics constitute the ultimate basis of the wealth of nations and pivotal to the growth and survival of higher education. The primary roles of academics the world over are teaching, research and community service to humanity. This mandate has been largely achieved by the Nigerian University System (NUS).

f) Promotion of National and International Understanding and Interaction

Higher education in Nigeria is expected to forge and cement national unity and to promote national and international understanding and interaction. To a large extent this mandate has been realised. The National Youth Service Corps is a scheme set up by the Nigerian government to involve Nigerian graduates in nation building and the development of the country. The scheme was introduced in 1973 and has promoted national unity and integration.

International collaboration and memoranda of understanding have been entered into by many universities in Nigeria with numerous universities abroad as well as international exchange programmes. The National Universities Commission (2018) report on rapid revitalisation of university education in Nigeria (2019-2023) has identified the under-listed challenges confronting the Nigerian university system and by extension academics in rank order as follows:

a) Inadequacies in facilities for teaching, learning and research

Facilities for teaching, learning and research such as classrooms, lecture theatres, laboratories, workshops and staff offices are grossly inadequate. With Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) interventions, there seems to be some improvements in these facilities. With the upsurge of enrollment figures in higher education institutions in Nigeria, some of these facilities have been over stretched and are poorly maintained.

b) Inadequate funding

At the higher education level, governments at the Federal and State levels also bear most of the responsibilities for maintaining public institutions. This is because no tuition fees are charged at especially the undergraduate levels. There is also a special funding vehicle (Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund)) for public higher institutions derived from 2% of profits of companies in the country. There has been a progressive decline in the allocations to education at all levels. This is indicated by especially the Federal Government budgetary provision for education covering the periods 2014 to 2017 as shown in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Federal Allocation to Education 2014-2017

Federal Allocation to Education 2014-2017 (N Billion)			
2014	2015	2016	2017
495.2	492.03	403.2	398.6

Source: National Universities Commission Report (2018)

The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) as a trade union organisation has been the vanguard in the struggle for the welfare and working conditions of academics in the Nigerian university system including funding of higher education by the government at the state and federal levels. The primary

role of any trade union organisation is to improve the welfare conditions of their members. According to Nkirote and Kiiru (2018), trade unions' core objectives are to improve the welfare of their members by negotiating high earnings for their members, bettering their conditions of service, and increasing job tenure of members. Webb and Webb (1920, p.1) define a trade union as "a continuous association of wage-earners for the purpose of maintaining or improving the conditions of their working lives." Some of the terms of reference in the re-negotiation of the 2009 agreement between ASUU and the Federal Government are to reverse the brain drain, not only by enhancing the remuneration of academic staff, but also by disengaging them from the encumbrances of a unified civil service wage structure; as well as to restore Nigerian universities, through immediate, massive and sustained financial intervention *inter alia*.

However, the non-implementation of various agreements reached between ASUU and the Federal Government has always led to incessant strikes. As observed by Hassan (2014), strikes have also taken place in tertiary institutions in Nigeria over non-implementation of welfare programmes and non-implementation of 2009 agreement reached with the Academic Staff Union of Universities for their members. Thus, the issue of inadequate funding remains the bane of higher education in Nigeria.

c) Deficits in teacher quality and quantity (including quality of Professors)

The NUC (2018) report revealed that in 2016, there were 50,608 teachers in the Nigerian University System (NUS), which represents less than 70 per cent of actual need based on number of programmes, staff-mix and student enrollment. Of this number, 16.2 per cent are female and about 10 per cent are in the full-professorial cadre. The ratios by discipline were not encouraging particularly in the humanities and some science-based disciplines such as, Optometry, ICT and Architecture. The report also found that in the same 2016, there was a total of 102,213 non-academic staff in Nigerian universities. This means that the number of non-academic staff far exceeds the number of academic staff in Nigerian universities.

d) Governance deficits (including stemming the tide of strikes)

A review of the governance structures and processes in the Nigerian university system reveals a worrisome situation, characterised by underperformance, inefficiency, conflicts, poor leadership, and profound parochialism.

e) Depressed quality of graduates

The quality of graduates being turned out from some higher education institutions in Nigeria annually leaves much to be desired with many not too fit for the world of work. This has led to the call in some quarters on the need to review the curricula of the Nigerian University System. The National Universities Commission is doing magnificently well in this regard.

f) Inadequacies in access

Admission into tertiary education in Nigeria is competitive to a large extent owing to the limited carrying capacities of universities. On annual basis, millions of candidates sit for the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) in addition to the post- UTME examinations in a bid to be admitted into universities. Many candidates sit for these examinations many times and some get frustrated after a prolonged period spent in sitting for these examinations without success despite possessing sound high school or secondary school certificates and above average scores in the (UTME and the post- UTME examinations.

g) Deficiencies in research

Research is at the root of innovation and a virile and productive research system will stand the nation in good stead in the drive towards socio-economic development. Research in the Nigerian University system does not seem to be enjoying the attention and organisation it deserves. Across the system, there are only a few universities that understand and have internalised the practice of good research governance. For instance, records at NUC indicate that less than 50 of the 161 universities in Nigeria have research directorates with appropriately qualified personnel and well organised systems and sub-systems to coordinate and manage research planning and administration (including research policy, grant writing) , Intellectual property and Technology transfer issues. This accounts largely for why it is virtually impossible for most universities to win competitive grants as no serious funding entity would award grants to researchers in universities without well established and functional research governance ecosystems.

h) Official corruption and other social vices

Official corruption in higher education in Nigeria as elsewhere in other sectors is alarming and this has infected not just the educational sector but also the very fabric of the Nigerian society as a cankerworm. Given this situation, even

with the best of funding profile, resources are bound to be squandered, stolen, misapplied or spent on misplaced priorities. The current fight against corruption by the Buhari's administration is a welcome development but not much has been achieved in this regard.

i) Regulation by National Universities Commission (NUC) and professional bodies

The NUC is the regulatory agency responsible for the development of University Education in Nigeria and has the mandate to maintain standards in the Nigerian University system. The mandate of the National Universities Commission (NUC) was essentially advisory at inception in 1962, but has since expanded over the years as a statutory body with both regulatory and quality assurance functions. The federal government has established 41 conventional and specialised universities. State owned universities are now 46, while private universities grew from 3 in 1999 to 74 in 2018. On the whole, there are 161 universities today. The phenomenal increase (75%) in the number of universities took place in the last two decades. Consequently, the responsibilities of the Commission have significantly increased, with the attendant pressure on its regulatory and quality assurance functions with the preponderance of universities in Nigeria. The increase in the number of universities in Nigeria, particularly State and Privately-owned has exerted a great deal of pressure on the quality assurance and regulatory activities of NUC.

Table 2.2: Number of Universities in Nigeria by Year

Year	Federal	State	Private	Total
1992	25	11	0	36
1999	25	13	3	41
2018	41	46	74	161

Source: National Universities Commission (2018)

j) Promoting Information and Communication Technology (ICT) driven universities

Currently, higher education is driven by technology globally. In spite of advances in technology specifically Information and Communication Technology (ICT), the human factor is still necessary as computerised systems cannot be substitutes for human beings. Academics will always be needed to drive technology and create technology. Various stakeholders' engagements, surveys and analysis of the state of ICT in Nigerian Universities have been carried by the NUC, Universal Service Provision Fund (USPF), National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA), TETFund (Needs

assessment survey), etc. The results all point to the fact that the state of ICT (knowledge, infrastructure, services and application) fall short of world class standard. The state of ICT infrastructure is also largely very poor, ranging from poor state of Campus Network Infrastructure to Campuses interconnectivity infrastructure, Data centre Infrastructure, internet bandwidth, as well as poor power supply.

k) Fostering skills development and entrepreneurship

According to Okafor (2011), many educational institutions in Nigeria lack the curricula that would enable graduates to acquire technical as well as entrepreneurial skills to become job creators rather than job seekers. In this regard, it is interesting to note that Joseph Ayo Babalola University (JABU) which is a privately owned University has taken the lead as the first University in Nigeria to be accredited by the National Universities Commission (NUC) to award degrees in Entrepreneurship.

l) Gender issues

There is gender imbalance in Nigerian universities with more male students enrolled than females. Also, in the area of staffing, there are more male academic staff than female academic staff.

Table 2.3: Gender Balance in Federal Universities in Nigeria 2017

	Male (%)	Females (%)	Total	Gender Gap M/F	Gender Disparity Index F/M
Undergraduates	744,713 (59.1%)	515,697 (40.9%)	1,260,410	1.44	0.69
Academic Staff	27923 (75.2)	9196 (24.8)	37,119	3.04	0.33

Source: NUC Statistics (2018).

In furtherance of highlighting the challenges of the Nigerian University System, the present study carried out a survey of some of the challenges confronting the academic staff in Nigerian universities with a focus on the University of Lagos based on the following issues:

a) Career Progression/ Advancement

Career progression or advancement is concerned with upward mobility. Rao (2005) views promotion as an upward movement of an employee from current job to another that is higher in pay, responsibility and organisational level. Promotion is an advancement or upward movement of an employee within an organisation to a position of greater authority and responsibility, more prestige and status as well as increased pay. Respondents to the survey expressed the desire for the University of Lagos to change the current policy on promotion based on a minimum of 3 years duration to reward hardworking academics. Respondents that hold this view represents 90.2 % with Relative Importance Index (RII) of 0.851. Respondents also observed that the period of confirmation of academic staff is too long, de-motivating and should not be based on acquisition of doctoral degree. Those that hold this opinion represents 76.5 % with RII of 0.806. Respondents observed that there is cumbersomeness in the University promotional system. Of the total respondents, 73.3% hold this view with RII of 0.751.

b) Compensation/Reward

Compensation/reward refers to the totality of both the financial and non-financial rewards that an employee receives in return for his/her labour or services to an employer or organisation. It includes the basic pay, incentives and numerous financial and non-financial benefits (Banjoko, 2006). "Compensation is what employees receive in exchange for their contribution to the organisation" (Pattanayak, 2010, p.284). The three components of compensation identified by Flippo (1984, p.281) include: "basic wage or salary (to attract qualified candidates); variable compensation (to motivate job performance); and supplementary fringe benefits (to retain talented staff)". The essence of sound remuneration policies therefore is to attract, motivate and retain skilled staff. Respondents to the survey were of the opinion that they were not satisfied with their pay as an academic. This represents 83.7 % of the respondents. In the same vein, respondents were of the opinion that they were paid their monthly salaries at regular intervals but that their salaries were meagre to meet their families' monthly needs. This represents 79% of the respondents with RII of 0.785. Similarly, 88.8 % of the respondents were of the view that their salaries were not commensurate with their qualifications. These conditions have implications for academics' attraction, motivation and retention in the Nigerian University System (NUS).

c) Health, Safety and Security

The terms health, safety and security are closely related (Mathis & Jackson, 2004). Health is the general state of physical, mental and emotional well-being. A healthy person/employee is free of illness, injury or mental and emotional problems; which may impede or adversely affect normal human functioning/activity. Safety refers to protecting the physical well-being of people at work. The main purpose of effective safety programmes in organisations is to prevent work-related accidents and injuries (Mathis & Jackson, 2004). Security refers to protecting employees and organisational facilities. With the increase in workplace violence, security at work has become necessary (Mathis & Jackson, 2004). In a circular issued by the Chairperson of Academic Staff Union of Universities, University of Lagos branch dated the 16th October, 2018; it was revealed that the report of a recently conducted survey at the University's health centre shows that majority of academics are battling with severe health conditions such as high blood pressure, diabetes and other serious ailments which are not unconnected with the kind of work pressure academics are subjected to on yearly basis. Arising from the present survey, 72.2% of the respondents were of the view that there is the need to improve on the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) with regard to scope and illnesses covered. Of the total number of respondents 80.5% agreed that the security situation in the University needs a total overhaul. Currently, there exists security surveillance 24/7 with CCTV cameras at various locations on campus. Respondents were of the view that yearly health screening is mandatory for academics in the University of Lagos. This represents 95.3 % of the respondents.

d) Learning and Development

Armstrong (2006) posits that learning and development is concerned with improving an individual's performance in their present roles and preparing them for greater responsibilities in the future via the inculcation of skills, attitudes and knowledge. Of the total number of respondents to the survey, 74.3% were of the view that the University of Lagos does not have the train-the-trainers programme to keep academics abreast of latest developments in their field/profession. However, the University of Lagos academics are given the opportunity to attend learned national and international conferences sponsored by the University.

e) Office Accommodation

Office accommodation or office space is provided for workers to enable them to carry out their duties in a conducive and decent work environment and has a motivating effect on academics. From the survey results, it was found that 82.3% of respondents were not satisfied with the condition of their offices as an academic staff. While 79.8 % of the respondents disagreed that they have decent and well-equipped offices as an academic staff.

f) Staff Residential Accommodation

Staff residential accommodation or abode refers to shelter provided for workers within or around the place of work to reduce their work stress and to enhance their job performance. It was found from the survey that few academics live on campus. With respect to staff residential accommodation, 81.2 % of the respondents were of the view that there is no provision for house ownership scheme for academics in the University of Lagos as many live off campus and as far as adjoining states such as Ogun and Oyo states. Many academics live in Ibadan-Oyo state; Abeokuta, Iyana-Iyesi, Ota, Magboro, Samawa, Mowe-Ibafo, Ogiyo all in Ogun state as well as those living in remote areas of Lagos state such as Badagry, Ojo, Ikorodu, Alimosho and Epe/Ajah.

g) Staff Performance Appraisal System

Performance appraisal can be defined as the formal assessment and rating of individuals by their managers at usually an annual review meeting. According to Kandula (2011, p.5), “performance appraisal system is often confused with performance management and mostly misunderstood as synonymous. Performance appraisal is a singular activity that is employed to assess performance of employees for a predetermined duration on a set of parameters”. Performance management is viewed as an activity of goal setting and monitoring achievement of goals. According to Briscoe and Claus (2008), performance management is the system through which organisations set work goals, determine performance standards, assign and evaluate work, provide performance feedback, determine training and development needs and distribute rewards. The result of the survey indicated that in the University of Lagos, there is open as against secret appraisal system with 68.5 % of the respondents agreeing to this statement. This may not be the case in some other universities in Nigeria. The above named challenges are surmountable if the relevant stakeholders can proffer strategies and interventions to address the challenges which will no doubt usher in sustainable development of higher education and quantum leap in the Nigerian University System (NUS).

b) Sustainable Development of Higher Education in Nigeria

In this study, sustainable development of higher education in Nigeria is conceived as comprising better quality teachers and pedagogy, better product quality, conducive learning environment, infrastructure and continuous maintenance, reduction in the incidence of strikes, global competitiveness, research and innovations, adequate funding, massive deployment of ICT in teaching, host community and societal development, corruption-free educational system as well as international exchange programmes in the Nigerian university system.

3. Research Methodology

a) Area of Study

The University of Lagos is located in South-Western Nigeria; and was established by an Act of Parliament in 1962. The University of Lagos was chosen as the unit of analysis, in view of its location in Lagos state which is considered the centre of excellence. Lagos state is characterised by rapid urbanisation and has acquired the mega-city status as a result of its huge population. The slogan of the University is “The University of First Choice and the Nation’s Pride.” The mission of the University is to provide a favourable environment for teaching, learning, research and development, where staff and students will interact and compete effectively with their counterparts globally. The vision of the University is to be a top class institution for the pursuit of excellence in knowledge, character and service to humanity. The motto of the University is “Indeed and in Truth.” The core values of the University are:

- i. Commitment to excellence in learning and character
- ii. Conducive and friendly learning environment
- iii. Integrity and respect
- iv. Continuous improvement of staff professionalism and competence
- v. Commitment to continuous improvement of all facilities
- vi. Enforcement of innovative culture and ethical conduct

Of the 12 Faculties in the University, eight (8) are located at the main campus at Akoka; while four (4) of the Faculties comprising Basic Medical Sciences, Clinical Sciences, Dental Sciences and Pharmacy are located at the College of Medicine Idi-araba and the School of Radiography at Yaba. The Faculties surveyed include:

- i. Faculty of Arts
- ii. Faculty of Management Sciences
- iii. Faculty of Education

- iv. Faculty of Engineering
- v. Faculty of Environmental Sciences
- vi. Faculty of Law
- vii. Faculty of Pharmacy
- viii. Faculty of Science
- ix. Faculty of Social Sciences
- x. Faculty of Basic Medical Sciences
- xi. Faculty of Clinical Sciences
- xii. Faculty of Dental Sciences

b) Research Design and Participants

The research design used is the survey method which is amenable to the quantitative research method. As of the time of conducting this study, the population of academic staff in the University of Lagos stood at 1,722 consisting of 1,372 academic staff at the main campus and 350 academic staff at the College of Medicine (HRIS/HRM Dept. UNILAG, 2019). Participants for the study were academic staff of the University of Lagos, drawn from the main campus at Akoka, and College of Medicine at Idi-araba. Participants cut across the Distance Learning Institute, 12 Faculties of the University as well as the main Library. A total of 450 participants were randomly drawn from the target population using the simple random sampling. Four hundred and fifty copies of questionnaire were administered to participants using the platform of the Academic Staff Union of Universities, University of Lagos Branch Congress as well as personal administration of research instrument to academic staff in their offices. Of this number, 284 copies of questionnaire were returned. However, 277 were properly completed and used for data analyses. This represents 62 per cent response rate.

c) Instrumentation and Validation

The instrument was designed using opinion and factual questions or categorical questions. The Likert 4-point scale ranging from strongly agree (4) to strongly disagree (1) was adopted for opinion questions to elicit information from respondents. The research instrument was subjected to validity and reliability testing. The domain of validity also called intrinsic validity was used for the validity estimate. The domain of validity was obtained by calculating the square root of reliability (Guilford, 1954; Uwaoma, Udeagha & Madukwe, 2011). Validity estimate is 0.81 while the Cronbach's Alpha is 0.66 being the reliability coefficient of the instrument. An alpha level of 0.70 and above is generally considered satisfactory internal consistency (Nunnally, 1978; Cronbach, 1951). However, Asika (2004) argues that a value of 0.60 and below

suggests unsatisfactory internal consistency. In this study, the reliability coefficient exceeded the minimum threshold.

d) Sources of Data & Methods of Data Analyses

Secondary data were obtained from the National Universities Commission Reports as well as the review of relevant literature. Primary data obtained from the respondents were analysed using descriptive statistics and relative importance index. Descriptive data analyses were done with the aid of the Statistical Product and Service Solutions (Ho, 2006); formerly Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 20. Frequency distribution showing absolute frequencies and relative frequencies or percentages was adopted. The Relative Importance Index (RII) was used to further analyse the data. The 4-point Likert scale was converted to Relative Importance Index for each variable, in order to rank and compare the relative importance of each of the variables as perceived by the respondents. The Relative Importance Index (RII) was formulated using the following statistical equation:

$$RII = \Sigma W / A \times N = \frac{4n_4 + 3n_3 + 2n_2 + 1n_1}{4N}$$

Where $0 \leq (RII) \leq 1$: the ΣW = Sum of weights as assigned on the Likert scale. A = highest weight. N = total number in the sample or total respondents to the survey.

4. Results and Interpretation

Table 4.1: Demographic and Social Indicators of Respondents

S /N	Variables	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency
1.	Gender of Respondents		
	Male	186	67.1
	Female	91	32.9
2.	Age of Respondents		
	Less than 30 years	9	3.2
	30-39	51	18.4
	40-49	98	35.4
	50-59	107	38.6
	60-70	12	4.3
3.	Marital Status		
	Married	259	93.5
	Single	17	6.1
	Widow	1	.4

	Divorced	-	-
	Separated	-	-
4.	Highest Academic Qualification		
	First degree	-	-
	Master's degree	51	18.4
	Ph.D. degree	226	81.6
	Professional Certification	-	-
	Others (Pls. specify)	-	-
5.	Length of Service in the University of Lagos		
	1-5 years	65	23.5
	6-10 years	106	38.3
	11-15 years	39	14.1
	16-20 years	19	6.9
	21years and above	48	17.3
6.	Status of Respondents in the University of Lagos		
	Professor	28	10.1
	Associate Professor	10	3.6
	Senior Lecturer	77	27.8
	Lecturer I	59	21.3
	Lecturer II	66	23.8
	Assistant Lecturer	36	13.0
	Graduate Assistant (GA)	1	.4
7.	Are you accommodated in the University's Staff Quarters?		
	Yes	41	14.8
	No	236	85.2
8.	Area of abode of Respondents that is where they live		
	i. On Campus	41	14.8
	ii. Lagos Mainland/ Yaba/Ebute-Metta	16	5.8
	iii. Lagos Island/ Victoria Island/ Marina	-	-
	iv. Epe / Ajah	23	8.3
	v. Apapa	-	-
	vi. Amuwo-Odofin/ Festac	23	8.3
	vii. Badagry	1	.4
	viii. Ojo/Okoko-maiko	7	2.5
	ix. Agege	2	.7

x.	Oshodi /Isolo	1	.4
xi.	Ikorodu	17	6.1
xii.	Ajeromi/Ifelodun	7	2.5
xiii.	Kosofe/Ojota/ Ketu/ Ojodu/ Berger/ Mile 12	26	9.4
xiv.	Shomolu/ Gbagada/ Oworoshoki	58	20.9
xv.	Ifako/Ijaiye/ Iyana Ipaja	8	2.9
xvi.	Ikeja	1	.4
xvii.	Eti-osa/ Ikoyi	-	-
xviii.	Alimosho/ Ikotun- Egbe /Ijgun	1	.4
xix.	Mushin	1	.4
xx.	Surulere	22	7.9
xxi.	Ibeju- Lekki	-	-
xxii.	Outside Lagos (Pls specify)	22	7.9
9. Hours spent on daily basis to commute to and fro work			
	Less than 1 hour	100	36.1
	1-2 hours	46	16.6
	3-4 hours	57	20.6
	5-6 hours	60	21.7
	7 hours and above	14	5.1

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Table 4.1 shows the demographic and social characteristics of respondents. Of the 277 respondents to the survey, there are 186 male representing 67.1 per cent; while 91 are female representing 32.9 per cent. With respect to age of the respondents, 92.4 per cent of the respondents were between 30 and 59 years of age. Regarding the marital status of the respondents, 93.5 per cent were married, 6.11 per cent were single while 0.4 per cent represents widow. As regards the highest academic qualification, while 81.6 per cent have Ph.D. degrees; 18.4 per cent of the respondents have Master's degrees. With respect to status in the University, 72.9 per cent of the respondents were Lecturer I, II and Senior Lecturers. Professors and Associate Professors represent 13.7 per cent; while Assistant Lecturers and Graduate Assistants represent 13.4 per cent. Respondents who live in the University staff quarters represent 14.8 per cent; while 85.2 per cent of respondents were not accommodated in the University staff quarters. This implies that while 14.8 per cent live on campus,

85.2 per cent live outside campus. Of this, 7.9 per cent live outside Lagos state notably, Ibadan-Oyo state; Abeokuta, Iyana-Iyesi, Ota, Magboro, Samawa, Mowe-Ibafo, Ogijo all in Ogun state. Some of the respondents live in remote areas of Lagos state such as Badagry, Ojo, Ikorodu, Alimosho and Epe/Ajah.

Table 4.2: Faculty of Respondents

10.	Faculties	Frequency	Percentage
	i. Faculty of Arts	26	9.4
	ii. Faculty of Management Sciences	69	24.9
	iii. Faculty of Education	19	6.9
	iv. Faculty of Social Sciences	30	10.8
	v. Faculty of Law	10	3.6
	vi. Faculty of Engineering	39	14.1
	vii. Faculty of Science	12	4.3
	viii. Faculty of Environmental Sciences	7	2.5
	ix. Faculty of Pharmacy	12	4.3
	x. Faculty of Clinical Sciences	7	2.5
	xi. Faculty of Basic Medical Sciences	21	7.6
	xii. Faculty of Dental Sciences	4	1.4
	xiii. Distance Learning Institute	8	2.9
	xiv. Main Library	13	4.7
	Total	277	100

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Table 4.2 shows the faculties of respondents, with 66.1 per cent of the respondents emanating from Faculties of Management Sciences, Engineering, Social Sciences, Arts and Education.

Table 4.3: Challenges of Academics in the Nigerian University System

S/ N	Variables	N	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1	RII	RAN K
A	Career Progression/ Advancement of Academics							
11	My career progression has been seamless ever since I joined the service of the University of Lagos	27	12	102	108	55	0.56	7
		7	4.3%	36.8%	39%	19.9%	4	

12	I have benefitted from the services of career guidance/ counselling unit of the University	27 7	1 0.4%	21 7.6%	122 44%	133 48%	0.40 1	9
13	I have always been promoted to the next grade level within the stipulated period of three years as contained in the current University promotion policy	27 7	23 8.3%	70 25.3%	86 31%	98 35.4%	0.51 6	8
14	There is cumbersomeness in the University promotional system	27 7	78 28.2%	125 45.1%	71 25.6%	3 1.1%	0.75 1	3
15	I have been victimised in the system with respect to delay in promotion for no just cause	27 7	47 17%	71 25.6%	66 23.8%	93 33.6%	0.56 5	6
16	My promotion comes as and when due without any form of lobbying	27 7	30 10.8%	105 37.9%	79 28.5%	63 22.7%	0.59 2	5
17	Promotion in the University is based on organisational politics	27 7	22 7.9%	192 69.3%	57 20.6%	6 2.2%	0.70 8	4
18	There is the need to change the current policy on promotion based on a minimum of 3 years duration to reward hardworking academics.	27 7	156 56.3%	94 33.9%	10 3.6%	17 6.1%	0.85 1	1
19	The period of confirmation of academic staff is too long, de-motivating and should not be based on acquisition of doctoral degree	27 7	154 55.6%	58 20.9%	38 13.7%	27 9.7%	0.80 6	2
B	Compensation/Reward of Academics	N	SA	A	D	SD	RII	RAN
20	I receive substantial financial reward for	27 7	9 3.2%	10 3.6%	50 18.1	208 75.1	0.33 8	13

	displaying extra efforts in teaching and research				%	%		
21	I am praised by my HOD whenever I accomplish the tasks assigned to me	27 7	35 12.6%	83 30%	72 26%	87 31.4%	0.56 0	3
22	I am given recognition for excellent job performance	27 7	10 3.6%	64 23.1%	109 39.4%	94 33.9%	0.49 1	4
23	There is equitable distribution of share of profit / internally generated revenue among academic staff	27 7	25 9%	29 10.5%	113 40.8%	110 39.7%	0.46 3	5
24	I am paid my monthly salary at regular monthly intervals	27 7	137 49.5%	95 34.3%	28 10.1%	17 6.1%	0.81 8	1
25	My salary is meagre to meet my family monthly needs	27 7	133 48%	86 31%	22 7.9%	36 13%	0.78 5	2
26	I am satisfied with my pay as an academic	27 7	29 10.5%	16 5.8%	48 17.3%	184 66.4%	0.40 1	8
27	My salary is commensurate with my qualification and status	27 7	16 5.8%	15 5.4%	78 28.2%	168 60.6%	0.39 1	9
28	I receive end-of-year bonus every year	27 7	8 2.9%	-	31 11.2%	238 85.9%	0.30 0	14
29	I receive 13 th month salary at the end of every year	27 7	8 2.9%	-	22 7.9%	247 89.2%	0.29 2	15
30	I am paid my annual leave grant once a year whenever I go on annual leave	27 7	19 6.9%	14 5.1%	19 6.9%	225 81.2%	0.34 4	12
31	Male academics are entitled to paternity leave whenever their wives give birth	27 7	14 5.1%	35 12.6%	39 14.1%	189 68.2%	0.38 6	10
32	Academics have opportunity for vehicle loans in the University of Lagos	27 7	8 2.9%	16 5.8%	69 24.9%	184 66.4%	0.36 3	11
33	The University	27	9	43	99	126	0.44	6

	organises send forth for academics on retirement or for retirees	7	3.2%	15.5%	35.7%	45.5%	1	
34	Payment of academics' pension on retirement is prompt and hitch-free	27	7	19	126	125	0.41	7
		7	2.5%	6.9%	45.5%	45.1%	8	
C	Health, Safety and Security of Academics	N	SA	A	D	SD	RII	RAN
			4	3	2	1		K
35	As an academic I am covered by the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS)	27	116	110	28	23	0.78	4
		7	41.9%	39.7%	10.1%	8.3%	8	
36	Yearly health screening is mandatory for academics in the University of Lagos at subsidised charges	27	133	131	4	9	0.85	3
		7	48%	47.3%	1.4%	3.2%	0	
37	The guidance and counselling unit of the University has been instrumental and active in assisting academics who have personal/emotional problems	27	8	68	132	69	0.51	10
		7	2.9%	24.5%	47.7%	24.9%	4	
38	The NHIS is extended to spouses and a maximum of 4 children of academic staff	27	144	108	24	1	0.85	2
		7	52%	39%	8.7%	0.4%	6	
39	There is the need to improve on the NHIS with regard to scope and illnesses covered	27	200	67	2	8	0.91	1
		7	72.2%	24.2%	0.7%	2.9%	4	
40	There exists safety gadgets and personal protective equipment in the University of Lagos for academics who work in hazardous conditions	27	24	85	130	38	0.58	8
		7	8.7%	30.7%	46.9%	13.7%	6	
41	I am satisfied with security on campus as	27	2	129	126	20	0.60	7
		7	0.7%	46.6%	45.5%	7.2%	2	

	the security of academics on campus is assured or guaranteed			%	%			
42	The security situation in the University is top-notch or excellent	27 7	11 4%	82 29.6 %	131 47.3 %	53 19.1 %	0.54 6	9
43	The security situation in the University needs a total overhaul	27 7	87 31.4 %	136 49.1 %	45 16.2 %	9 3.2% %	0.77 2	5
44	There is security surveillance 24/7 with CCTV cameras at various locations on campus	27 7	30 10.8 %	117 42.2 %	105 37.9 %	25 9% %	0.63 7	6
D	Learning & Development of Academics	N	SA	A	D	SD	RII	RAN
			4	3	2	1		K
45	The University of Lagos has the train-the-trainers programme to keep academics abreast of latest developments in their field/profession	27 7	18 6.5%	53 19.1 %	125 45.1 %	81 29.2 %	0.50 7	5
46	The University of Lagos academics are given the opportunity to attend learned national conferences sponsored by the University	27 7	26 9.4%	185 66.8 %	62 2.4% %	4 1.4% %	0.71 0	1
47	With respect to my professional affiliation, the University pays for my annual professional fees/ subscription	27 7	-	41 14.8 %	68 24.5 %	168 60.6 %	0.38 5	8
48	The University of Lagos academics are given the opportunity to attend learned international conferences sponsored by the university	27 7	32 11.6 %	168 60.6 %	67 24.2 %	10 3.6% %	0.70 0	2
49	Faculty and Departmental seminars	27 7	41 14.8	142 51.3	74 26.7	20 7.2% %	0.68 4	3

	are often held in the University to disseminate and share knowledge and experiences among academics		%	%	%			
50	Mentoring of younger academics is prevalent and paramount in the University	27 7	31 11.2%	87 31.4%	106 38.3%	53 19.1%	0.58 7	4
51	I am satisfied with the training and development of academics in the University	27 7	12 4.3%	50 18.1%	142 51.3%	73 26.4%	0.50 1	6
52	Entrepreneurship training for academics on retirement exists in the University	27 7	2 0.7%	54 19.5%	138 49.8%	83 30%	0.47 7	7
E	Office Accommodation for Academics	N	SA	A	D	SD	RII	RAN
			4	3	2	1		K
53	I have a decent and well-equipped office as an academic staff	27 7	2 0.7%	54 19.5%	138 49.8%	83 30%	0.47 7	1
54	I share an office with a colleague owing to inadequate office space	27 7	39 14.1%	14 5.1%	39 14.1%	185 66.8%	0.41 6	3
55	I am satisfied with the condition of my office as an academic staff	27 7	11 4%	38 13.7%	117 42.2%	111 40.1%	0.45 4	2
F	Staff Residential Accommodation for Academics	N	SA	A	D	SD	RII	RAN
			4	3	2	1		K
56	I live on campus in official quarters provided by the University	27 7	39 14.1%	10 3.6%	14 5.1%	214 77.3%	0.38 6	6
57	I live in off-campus official quarters provided by the University	27 7	23 8.3%	10 3.6%	23 8.3%	221 79.8%	0.35 1	7
58	I live in a rented accommodation off campus	27 7	131 47.3%	49 17.7%	21 7.6%	76 27.4%	0.71 2	4
59	I live in my personal	27	39	3	13	222	0.32	9

	house off campus	7	14.1 %	1.1%	4.7%	80.1 %	3	
60	I have been given housing loans since I joined the service of the University	27 7	2 0.7	27 9.7%	49 17.7 %	199 71.8 %	0.34 8	8
61	There is provision for house ownership scheme for academics in the University of Lagos	27 7	13 4.7%	39 14.1 %	62 22.4 %	163 58.8 %	0.41 2	5
62	The University should provide adequate housing for academic staff within or around the campuses	27 7	233 84.1 %	14 5.1%	18 6.5%	12 4.3%	0.92 2	1
63	I am not satisfied with the modalities for allocating residential accommodation for academics in the University	27 7	127 45.8 %	76 27.4 %	43 15.5 %	31 11.2 %	0.77 0	3
64	If given the opportunity, I prefer to live on campus	27 7	220 79.4 %	28 10.1 %	6 2.2%	23 8.3%	0.90 2	2
G	Staff Performance Appraisal System of Academics	N	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1	RII	RAN K
65	I always complete my annual performance appraisal form every year	27 7	224 80.9 %	38 13.7 %	8 2.9%	7 2.5%	0.93 2	1
66	I am always called upon to read the comments of my HOD/superior prior to the processing of the APER Form.	27 7	168 60.6 %	83 30%	5 1.8%	21 7.6%	0.85 9	2
67	I receive merit pay following my performance appraisal result	27 7	37 13.4 %	69 24.9 %	46 16.6 %	125 45.1 %	0.51 6	5
68	In my Department, the result of performance appraisal is not communicated to staff	27 7	26 9.4%	104 37.5 %	40 14.4 %	107 38.6 %	0.54 4	4

		members						
69	There is open as	27	63	127	50	37	0.69	3
	against secret appraisal system in the University	7	22.7	45.8	18.1	13.4	9	
			%	%	%	%		

Source: Field Survey, 2019

From Table 4.3; the Relative Importance Index (RII) was used to rank the views of respondents as regards the challenges of academics. With respect to the career progression/ advancement of academics, 90.2 per cent of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed that there is the need to change the current policy on promotion based on a minimum of 3 years duration to reward hardworking academics. This statement was ranked first (1st). In the same vein, 76.5 per cent of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed that the period of confirmation of academic staff is too long, de-motivating and should not be based on acquisition of doctoral degree. Respondents ranked this statement second (2nd). As regards compensation/reward, 83.8 per cent of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed that their monthly salaries were paid at regular monthly intervals and this statement was ranked first (1st); while 79 per cent of the respondents were of the view that their salaries were meagre to meet their families' monthly needs. This statement was ranked second (2nd).

Concerning the health, safety and security of academics, 96.4 per cent of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed that there is the need to improve on the NHIS with regard to scope and illnesses covered, this statement was ranked first (1st). In the same vein, 91 per cent of the respondents were of the view that the NHIS is extended to spouses and a maximum of 4 children of academic staff which they ranked second (2nd). With respect to learning and development of academics, 76.2 per cent of the respondents were of the view that the University of Lagos academics are given the opportunity to attend learned national conferences sponsored by the University; while 72.2 per cent of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed that the University sponsors academics for international conferences as well. These statements were ranked first and second respectively.

Concerning office accommodation for academics, 79.8 per cent of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed that they have a decent and well-equipped office as academics. This statement was ranked first (1st). Similarly, 82.3 per cent of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed that academic staff are satisfied with the condition of my office as an academic staff, this was ranked second (2nd). With respect to staff residential accommodation for academics, 89.2 per cent of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed that the University should provide adequate housing for academic staff within or around the campuses. This was ranked first (1st). In

the same vein, 89.5 per cent of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed that they would prefer to live on campus if given the opportunity. The statement was ranked 2nd. As regards the modalities for allocating residential accommodation for academics in the University, 73.2 per cent of the respondents were dissatisfied with such modalities.

With respect to staff performance appraisal system of academics, 94.6 per cent of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed that they complete annual performance appraisal form every year. This was ranked first. Also, 90.6 per cent of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed that they also read the comments of their HODs/superiors prior to the processing of their APER Forms. This statement was ranked second (2nd). This implies that there exists open as against secret or confidential appraisal system in the University.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study examined the mandate of the Nigerian University System and investigated the challenges besetting sustainable development of higher education in Nigeria. The study has made a significant contribution to the literature on sustainability of higher education in the Nigerian context. The NUC mandate with respect to the development of intellectual capability of individuals to understand and appreciate their local and external environments has been largely achieved by the University of Lagos and many Nigerian universities. For instance, the University of Lagos academics are given the opportunity to attend learned national and international conferences sponsored by the University to widen their intellectual horizon and to keep them abreast of recent developments in their field. In the same vein, many students in Nigerian universities undergo split-academic programmes in universities abroad as well as foreign exchange programmes.

With respect to contribution to national development through high level relevant manpower training, the University of Lagos and other Nigerian universities have trained high level manpower occupying important positions in the Nigerian economy and elsewhere in the world. The Nigerian universities have produced critical manpower needs in virtually all sectors of the Nigerian economy. With respect to scholarship and community service, besides teaching and research, Nigerian universities have been heavily involved in promoting scholarship and are involved in a host of community services to give back to society as well as host communities. Nigerian Universities organise conferences and collaborate with other foreign universities to promote national and international understanding and interaction. The Nigerian university system is not only involved in scholarship, research and community service but also mould the character of students thereby developing and inculcating proper values for the survival of the individual and society at large.

The findings of the study revealed that higher education in Nigeria is faced with a myriad of challenges and the working conditions of academics leave much to be desired. Arising from the findings of the study, it is hereby recommended that for there to be sustainable development of higher education in Nigeria, governments at all levels, individual entrepreneurs as well as the University of Lagos should focus more efforts on:

- i. Ensuring that facilities for teaching, learning and research such as classrooms, lecture theatres, laboratories, workshops and staff offices are provided in institutions of higher learning for the sustainability of higher education in Nigeria.
- ii. Ensuring that the physical and social conditions under which academics work and live are satisfactory and conducive if they are to give off their best to their jobs and to contribute meaningfully to the development of higher education in Nigeria.
- iii. Adequate health care facilities beyond primary health care should be provided for academics.
- iv. Compensation/reward system should be reflective of the contributions of academics. There is the need to review the salary structure of academics in Nigeria based on the cost of living devoid of political sentiments.
- v. Government should increase the funding of the educational sector by devoting at least a minimum of between 30 and 35 per cent of annual budget to this strategic sub-sector of the economy if sustainable development of higher education in Nigeria and the mandate of the Nigerian University System are to be fully realised.

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APPENDIX**Table 1.1: Sustainable Development Goals**

Goals	Description of Goals
Goal 1	End poverty in all its forms everywhere
Goal 2	End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture
Goal 3	Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
Goal 4	Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
Goal 5	Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. Ensure the promotion, enforcement and monitoring of equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex
Goal 6	Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
Goal 7	Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
Goal 8	Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
Goal 9	Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation
Goal 10	Reduce inequality within and among countries
Goal 11	Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
Goal 12	Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
Goal 13	Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
Goal 14	Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
Goal 15	Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
Goal 16	Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
Goal 17	Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

Source: Federal Republic of Nigeria (2017). *Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Indicators Baseline Report 2016*

Adapt International Network



ADAPT is a non-profit organisation founded in 2000 by Prof. Marco Biagi with the aim of promoting studies and research in the field of labour law and industrial relations from an international and comparative perspective. Our purpose is to encourage and implement a new approach to academic research, by establishing ongoing relationships with other universities and advanced studies institutes, and promoting academic and scientific exchange programmes with enterprises, institutions, foundations and associations. In collaboration with the Centre for International and Comparative Studies on Law, Economics, Environment and Work, (DEAL) the Marco Biagi Department of Economics, University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, ADAPT set up the International School of Higher Education in Labour and Industrial Relations, a centre of excellence which is accredited at an international level for research, study and postgraduate programmes in the area of industrial and labour relations. Further information at www.adapt.it.

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