
A REVIEW AND REFOCUS OF UNIVERSITY EDUCATION FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE AND SUSTAINABLE PEACE IN RIVERS STATE

STELLA OFOR-DOUGLAS, Ph. D

INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION, FACULTY OF EDUCATION, RIVERS STATE UNIVERSITY, NKPOLU, OROWORUKWO, PORT HARCOURT, RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA

MOBILE NO: 08033097472, Email: stellaofor031@gmail.com

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6855-2106>.

&

SABASTINE TAGBO

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT, FACULTY OF EDUCATION RIVERS STATE UNIVERSITY, NIGERIA

MOBILE NUMBER: 08035796715, EMAIL: tagbosabastine2015@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper is titled "A Review and Refocus of University Education for Good Governance and Sustainable Peace in Rivers State." It emphasizes the pivotal role of university education in advancing good governance and fostering lasting and sustainable peace within the society. The work investigates the role of university education in Nigeria, with particular attention to Rivers State, assessing university education contributions to governance and peacebuilding. It also examines the connection between education, governance, and peace, highlighting the critical significance of university education in cultivating leadership, resolving conflicts, and promoting nation-building. Furthermore, the paper underscores the necessity of incorporating ethical leadership, peace studies, and community-oriented policies into university curricula to amplify their societal impact. Key challenges identified in the paper include corruption, lack of accountability and transparency, ineffective leadership and governance, insufficient funding, policy inconsistency, inadequate infrastructure, political interference, limited access, poverty, unemployment, inequity, poor research culture, brain drain, weak regulatory frameworks, and the erosion of moral values. These issues are analyzed to reveal their far-reaching effects on educational outcomes and their broader implications, showing how they collectively undermine education potential to support sustainable peace. By addressing these flaws and fostering accountability, Nigerian universities can significantly enhance their contributions to national development. This paper offers practical solutions including promoting openness and responsibility, ensuring campus security, providing adequate financial support, and implementing well-structured policies to strengthen governance. Ultimately, this paper pushes the position that university education in Rivers State can serve as a powerful driving force for governance reforms, socio-economic progress and enduring peace.

Keywords: Refocusing, University Education, Good Governance, Sustainable Peace

Introduction

The progress and living standards of a nation cannot be enhanced without a robust and efficient educational system. In fact, quality education should be a pivotal aspect of a nation at all levels, as it is essential for fostering good governance and strengthening Africa's economy, including Nigeria's (Agbede, 2015). In this regard, the case of Rivers State is particularly crucial, as the region grapples with issues such as corruption, insecurity, and declining educational standards. Therefore, the need for an educational overhaul becomes more urgent. Additionally, education forms the backbone of societal progress and economic development. Specifically, universities, in particular, serve as centers of knowledge creation, innovation, and critical thinking. However, insufficient funding poses a significant challenge, threatening the quality and sustainability of university education. Moreover, in Rivers State, the alarming decline in values and morality among Nigerian youth, as manifested across political, cultural, socioeconomic, and religious domains (Nwankwoala & Waaka, 2021), further exacerbates this crisis, necessitating urgent reform in the education sector. In addition, the evolving landscape of university education in Nigeria has brought its leadership under investigation due to issues such as surging enrollment rates, funding constraints, market dynamics, shifting student aspirations, technological innovation, and the effects of globalization. In the case of Rivers State, these challenges are further compounded by ineffective leadership and governance structures, which hinder progress and innovation in the educational system. Given this, in the face of globalization and increasing worldwide challenges, leadership in higher education (university education inclusive) must, therefore, focus on delivering high-quality educational outcomes. This includes engaging in collaborative efforts to tackle societal challenges through research and highlighting the practical use of essential knowledge and skills for solving real-world problems (Steward, 2015). Thus, such a refocusing of leadership is especially important in the Rivers State context, where university leaders must actively engage with both local and international issues, balancing academic rigor with community development. In turn, these functions aim to develop human resources and distribute vital information across different industries and sectors. For instance, in Rivers State, universities must be restructured not just as centers of academic learning, but also as incubators for innovative solutions that address local and regional issues such as youth unemployment, environmental degradation, and political instability. Additionally, Farley (2010) noted that education fosters awareness of inequalities and injustices, thus playing a significant role as a tool for enlightenment. In essence, knowledge enables advancements, originality, and ingenuity, which in turn drive progress and societal transformation. For Rivers State, promoting a curriculum that integrates peace-oriented values and social justice will have a profound impact on nurturing socially responsible individuals capable of promoting good governance and sustainable peace. Moreover, competent leadership is another critical driver of progress in university education. Unfortunately, poor leadership practices have hindered the development of many institutions. Thus, this paper, therefore, highlights the role of effective leadership in advancing excellence in Nigerian universities. In particular, challenges such as corruption, insecurity, and financial shortfalls undermine governance and sustainable peace. In conclusion, practical solutions to address these issues will be discussed, along with suggestions for fostering positive change. Ultimately, overcoming these interconnected challenges will enable Nigerian universities, particularly those in Rivers State, to achieve effective governance and contribute meaningfully to societal advancement. Finally, higher education in Africa is integral to economic growth and the development of skilled professionals capable of addressing global challenges. It remains a cornerstone for achieving holistic and enduring growth across the continent (Khaled, 2018). For Rivers State, refocusing higher education with an emphasis on

sustainable peace and good governance will, therefore, contribute to both local and national progress, creating a resilient and dynamic educational system that produces leaders capable of steering the region toward greater prosperity.

The focus of this paper surrounds the sustainable development goals 4 and 16 which entail quality education and peace, justice and strong institutions. The aims of this paper include redirecting university education in Rivers State toward effective governance and lasting peace by adopting transformative strategies and implementing leadership reforms. Its objectives are to evaluate university education and governance and identify barriers to peace and societal harmony in Rivers State universities.

The gap identified in this paper is that although numerous investigations into tertiary education and administration in Rivers State emphasize on the surface topics on university education such as funding and facilities, there is scant examination of how academic and non academic initiatives can be updated and redesigned to build an environment where competencies essential for effective leadership and sustainable growth can flourish within the ever-evolving socio-political landscape of Rivers State.

Refocusing for University Education

Realigning university education entails adapting academic programs to meet societal demands by nurturing critical thinking, ethical behavior, innovation and more. This ensures graduates are well-prepared to tackle issues and foster enduring peace. Refocusing involves shifting attention or altering the approach toward something already established. In other words, it signifies dedicating greater energy to a specific task or initiative, with the conviction that this adjustment will enhance its effectiveness compared to its previous state (Ofor-Douglas, 2019). Therefore, this implies that refocusing is not simply about making superficial changes but requires a fundamental shift in perspective with the aim of making substantial improvements in a system. Similarly, the term refocusing refers to altering the focus of something to achieve greater clarity. Hence, to refocus university education implies modifying, realigning, or redirecting the emphasis or trajectory of academic learning from its current state toward a new methodology aimed at achieving meaningful objectives that promote harmony and development. In light of this, considering the idea of refocusing university education, it suggests that the existing education framework is inadequate to effectively tackle the issues it is intended to address (such as the nation security challenges). As a result, it must undergo modifications or changes in its approach and content to align with and fulfill the current needs of the society it caters to (Ezeh & Njoku, 2019). Thus, this indicates that the term refocusing highlights the need for a strategic shift in university education to address contemporary challenges effectively. Moreover, it connotes that the existing system is outdated or misaligned with societal needs, especially in areas like security, suggesting that a comprehensive redesign is necessary to foster national stability and progress.

The education system of any country is a crucial sector that requires careful management due to its pivotal role in driving progress and fostering growth in other areas. Consequently, it is essential to realign and refocus leadership in education to achieve enduring progress (Akuh, 2018). This, in turn, connotes that education is a central driver of national development, influencing not just the economy but also societal values and innovation.

For this reason, it is believed that refocusing the education system will greatly aid in nurturing the mindset and traditions of entrepreneurship within the nation (Garba, 2010). This is because restructuring the education system goes beyond academic knowledge; it can also

foster a culture of entrepreneurship that drives economic development. In addition, it indicates that the current educational framework may not sufficiently equip students with entrepreneurial skills. Thus, there needs to be an intentional restructuring to build a future-oriented, innovative workforce. Accordingly, the necessity to refocus education arises from the numerous obstacles impacting the Nigerian higher education system, which prevent it from fulfilling its anticipated functions in fostering national safety and progress. Therefore, efforts to leverage university education in tackling matters of peace and national security imply that institutions must be reoriented by providing an alternative form of education—one that is more comprehensive in peace and conflict resolution studies while also enhancing practical skills relevant to industry needs (Ezeh & Njoku, 2019). Ultimately, this connotes that the current educational system faces significant barriers that hinder its potential to contribute to national security and development. As such, universities need to adjust their curricula, incorporating not only peace studies but also practical skills that align with industry demands, ensuring that graduates can effectively contribute to resolving national challenges.

University Education

University education acts as a catalyst for transformation because it equips individuals with essential knowledge, competencies, and principles to actively contribute to society. Education is the primary avenue for social advancement. Through this avenue, individuals can be assured of progress within their communities (Aminigo, 2003, as cited in Uyanga & Emanu, 2016). In essence, this indicates that education is the cornerstone for achieving social mobility and advancement. Similarly, education, as described by Ajiboye and Ajitoni (2018), is the act of transferring and expanding knowledge and abilities to learners to foster both personal and national growth. This means that education plays dual roles: promoting personal growth and serving as a driver for national development.

In the same vein, Leonard, Collins, and Felix (2014) characterized education as the comprehensive development of intellectual, emotional, and physical domains, preparing individuals for participation in society. This suggests that well-rounded education is crucial for societal integration, as it prepares individuals to contribute meaningfully in various aspects of life. Likewise, Soyinka (2012), cited by Williams and Udo (2020), stressed that education is an intentional societal mechanism for passing down accumulated insights, principles, and competencies across generations. As such, this suggests that education serves as a vehicle for cultural transmission and societal continuity. Furthermore, Osokoya (2014) viewed education as an ongoing process that empowers individuals to engage constructively in gaining new insights and skills while safeguarding their cultural heritage. Additionally, Olugbako and Asagba (2014) emphasized that education is both a societal benefit and a fundamental human right, crucial for safeguarding all other rights and addressing global security issues. This underscores that access to education is essential for the protection and advancement of other rights.

Nigeria is endowed with vast resources that can propel progress in various sectors. However, the educational framework remains ineffective, mirroring the wider societal tendencies where unethical and unproductive irregularities have become normalized (Usman, 2018). This implies that, despite Nigeria's abundant resources, the potential for societal progress, particularly within education, is hindered by deeply rooted unethical practices. Thus, this emphasizes the need for reform in educational management to realize growth. Moreover, Peters (2019) noted the significance of educational governance in promoting optimal practices, efficient resource utilization, and high-quality training. In conclusion, effective

governance in education is key to overcoming existing challenges and achieving the desired progress.

In light of the appalling conditions, the fact that Nigerian universities are keys to capacity building becomes unquestionable and repositioning them so that they can be the example of sustainable development in the society is vital (Akani, 2017). A university is made up of instructors of great positions who influence and handover knowledge to students through education, research and public services for national advancement (Ofor-Douglas, 2024a). In the university system, the lecturers form the core of the information base, as they have the central duty of training and distributing knowledge to the students who have registered to commence courses in the campus. Likewise, University education can be regarded as a systematized higher education (university education inclusive) learning experience that reassures investigative thinking, originality, public responsibility, logical development and individual growth (Ofor-Douglas, 2024b).

University education involves the development of the individuals for the greater good of the model society where the individual wants to achieve innermost contentment, which would let the government to profit from the agreement of fulfilled citizen satisfying their proper rules (Allen, 2018). The establishment of excellent infrastructure in universities aids in preparing students for the severities of the labour market in the information communication technology age where the call for stirring civilization onward counts on the familiarity with ICT (Shehu, Dauda & Abubakar, 2018). Higher education plays a decisive part in the amount of skilled manpower for the socio-economic progress of a nation (Castell, 1998) as cited in (Ofor-Douglas, 2021).

This is of topmost importance because university education plays a vital role in training individuals to more efficiently implement novel skills to use ground-breaking tactics to start and achieve more trying enterprises and organizations and to use resources well. (Iyayi et al, 2011) as cited in (Akani, 2017).

Sustainable Peace

Sustainable peace can be understood as a condition of enduring tranquility that not only addresses current conflicts but also establishes frameworks, systems, and attitudes that avert future tensions. UN Women (2024) opined that sustaining peace should be viewed comprehensively as both an objective and a continuous effort, involving actions focused on conflict prevention. Likewise, sustaining peace is a process that seeks to avert the onset, intensification, persistence, and reoccurrence of conflict, tackle underlying causes, assist opposing parties in halting hostilities, foster national reconciliation, and support recovery, rebuilding, and progress (United Nations Development Programme, 2024).

Philologically, the Latin term for peace, 'pax,' signifies 'the absence of civil unrest,' whereas the Hebrew word 'Shalom' encompasses a broader meaning, representing not merely the cessation of strife but also harmony, fulfillment, and holistic well-being (Nsengimana, 2015). Therefore, this implies that the concept of peace varies across cultures and languages, thus suggesting that peace is multidimensional and context-dependent. Nwafor (2012) saw peace as the lack of disputes or aggression in a specific period and location, thereby narrowing its definition to situational tranquility. In contrast, Oku, Anugom, and Onuoha (2017) extended this understanding, perceiving peace as a condition of internal tranquility and a setting devoid of turmoil, distrust, hostility, and discord. Additionally, peace can be seen as a state of inner calmness. More specifically, it is perceived as a situation or environment devoid of crisis, rancor, fighting, suspicion, and any such thing (Oku, Anugom, and Onuoha, 2017). This

perspective suggests that peace is not limited to the absence of conflict but is also linked to psychological and emotional states.

Moreover, Jonah, Abdullahi, and Olawole (2018) offered a comprehensive definition of peace, describing it as liberty from disruption, serenity, the lack of warfare, apprehension, strife, worry, distress, and aggression. This definition significantly expands the scope of peace to include mental and emotional well-being, which are often integral to achieving long-term societal peace. Accordingly, integrating peace education into university curricula has the potential to establish an alternative environment that fosters peace, stability, and harmony - an environment of sustainable peace (Ebot-Ashu, 2024). In a similar context, Işoraitè and Kolegija (2019) stated that peace education aids the youth in acquiring awareness of the need for peace, while also enhancing their skills in the realm of peace and helping them develop the mindset towards the significance of peace. Furthermore, it prevents the onset of conflicts and fosters an environment conducive to peace (Işoraitè & Kolegija, 2019). Consequently, it is very possible to create environments conducive to peaceful coexistence and social stability.

Good Governance

Governance refers to the efficient organization and utilization of resources, institutions, and regulations to promote transparency, fairness, and public participation in the establishment of structures that meet the needs of the people of a nation. Governance denotes the systematic structures and processes through which higher education institutions (including university education establishments) are officially organized, administered, and directed. Good governance is the means by which public institutions conduct municipal affairs and utilize resources in a means that encourage the respect for the rule of law and the recognition of human rights. (Ofor-Douglas, 2022).

The principal officers of higher education include the Vice-Chancellor/Rector/Provost, the Chancellor, the Pro-Chancellor, the Registrar, the University Librarian, and the Bursar. Moreover, governance encompasses the organizational frameworks and procedures, the development and execution of regulations to direct institutional operations, and the protocols and mechanisms through which universities manage their activities (Hladechenko, Antonowicz & de Boer, 2017; Kwiek, 2015; Shattock, 2013). This implies that within universities, governance structures determine critical aspects such as finances and regulations, which, in turn, influence overall institutional performance. Furthermore, effective governance promotes the development of human resources, stimulates economic expansion, alleviates poverty, and enhances educational standards (Peters, 2019).

The rationale behind promoting governance initiatives in university education lies in the notion that transparent and effective government institutions are essential for fostering economic growth (Audu, 2016). At its core, governance involves the decision-making process and the mechanisms through which those decisions are executed. As such, a governance analysis for educational development should focus on the official and unofficial stakeholders involved in the decision-making process and the implementation of those decisions affecting an educational institution (UNESCAP, 2018, as cited in Ogochukwu, 2024). This suggests that the involvement of all relevant stakeholders in decision-making processes is vital for the effective functioning of educational institutions and the broader educational system.

However, Nigeria's governance frameworks frequently exhibit ineffectiveness, red tape, and a lack of accountability (Adebayo, 2016). This is particularly problematic because ineffective leadership and inadequate governance can significantly contribute to stagnant or slow

economic progress and development. Consequently, this leads to negative repercussions for various socio-economic interactions and processes, notably in the industrial sector, which serves as the linchpin of a nation's economic growth (Onyema, 2012). Moreover, without strong and efficient governance, key sectors such as education will suffer. In turn, this undermines the entire national economy.

Good governance

Good governance highlights agreeable qualities like responsibility and fairness in the decision-making processes of the government to ensure collective welfare and societal cohesion. Okpaga (2017) argued that before discussing good governance, it is essential to first comprehend the concept of governance. In line with this, Agunna (2018) defined governance as the overall capacity to coordinate, integrate, and direct the various functions of government components, ensuring that the government operates effectively, reliably, and appropriately. Moreover, Ibezim (2018) stated that good governance encompasses the protection of human rights, decentralization of power, and respect for local independence, all of which are essential for effective democracy and progress. Similarly, Toyin and Rahim (2012, as cited in Offiah, 2024) explained that good governance refers to the just and equitable distribution of resources to achieve the objectives of the state, focusing on advancing the collective welfare of its citizens. In addition, Cangas (2014) posited that good governance can be regarded as a moral stance and a core principle that enhances the common good, and therefore, it should be upheld in both public and private domains.

Furthermore, good governance requires strong leadership that is attentive to academic freedom, particularly in areas such as leadership, responsibility, and the pursuit of scholarly achievement (Abdul-Rashidi, Yakubu, & Mohammed, 2023). Good governance thrives in a democratic environment. Thus, for good governance to be achieved, a democratic system must be established (Odo, 2015). Additionally, it entrusts certain key responsibilities to the government, including promoting learning and medical services, structural development, environmental equity, implementing robust environmental protections, and defending people against violence, injustice, and criminal activities (Sachs, 2015). Importantly, good governance is also considered a crucial factor in determining economic growth and development, as it empowers local communities, establishes institutions, and fosters advantageous regulatory environments and governance frameworks (Nnadozie et al., 2023). Moreover, good governance promotes development by prompting adherence to the rule of law, fostering inclusiveness and respect for minority groups, ensuring openness in political processes, maintaining judicial independence, establishing a neutral police force, upholding civilian authority over the military, supporting press freedom, empowering dynamic civil society organizations, and ensuring elections are conducted peacefully (Collins & Udumaga, 2017).

However, Williams (2015) and Collins (2014) suggested that obsolete and ineffective governance and administration can prevent university education from achieving their mission. As a result, the integration of good governance into educational administration and management plays a crucial role in addressing the issues that hinder the education sector and aids in improving organizational effectiveness (Haddassah, 2020, as cited in Ogochukwu, 2024). This underscores the idea that the government is vital to resolving systemic inefficiencies in education, such as corruption, funding challenges, and leadership issues.

Sustainable Development

Sustainable development encompasses the responsible use of resources to meet current needs while safeguarding the ability of future generations to thrive. The concept of sustainable development revolves around harmonizing the social, economic, and ecological dimensions of advancement to create a more equitable, wholesome, and just world. In fact, these concerns gave rise to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, endorsed by United Nations member nations and centered on 17 objectives (Grano & Prieto, 2020). To elaborate, Adebayo (2012) defined sustainable development as efforts and actions aimed at preserving and enriching our environmental heritage to enhance human well-being without jeopardizing the prospects of future generations. Similarly, Haque and Mudacumura (2017) argued that sustainable development as a notion has matured into a widespread philosophy, resonating globally across advanced and developing nations alike. This observation highlights that sustainable development transcends being a mere academic or policy concept, evolving into a universal doctrine. Moreover, education and scientific advancements are crucial in achieving sustainable development in the everyday life of people (Gagnidze, 2017). In particular, Ogunkan (2022) stated that without environmental sustainability, other sustainability dimensions would be severely impacted, as it provides the foundation for other sectors such as economic and social sustainability to thrive. This underscores the idea that environmental sustainability is the cornerstone of broader sustainability efforts and should be integrated into the curricula of Rivers State universities.

Addressing these challenges, tackling present-day issues and promoting sustainable development on a global scale will demand sustained and intensified efforts from higher education institutions (Leal Filho, 2011). To this end, lecturers must acquire competencies in Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) to facilitate integrated learning on sustainability within schools. Accordingly, ESD orientation programs are among the tools used to prepare future educators with the skills required for sustainable development. In addition, Rivers State universities can conduct and disseminate research to foster institutional knowledge exchange and creativity, as these activities support the achievement of sustainable development goals (Berchin et al., 2021). This demonstrates that research serves as a catalyst for progress in sustainable development by facilitating the flow of ideas and solutions.

Issues

There are several issues thwarting efforts to refocus university education for good governance and sustainable peace, they are as follows:

- 1. Lack of Transparency and Accountability:** The absence of accountability and transparency hampers the efficiency of university education, promoting poor management, corruption, and fragile governance systems, which obstruct sustainable peace and advancement in Rivers State. Bridging this gap is essential for development. Effective university leadership requires transparency and responsibility. A lack of openness leads to covert decision-making, concealed agendas, and ineffective communication, which erode trust among stakeholders. Furthermore, inadequate accountability can encourage favoritism. This is a deep-rooted issue because it persists outside the university system and is practically normalised in Nigeria where, politicians often appear to value the electorate only during election campaigns. Once in office, they tend to regard their positions as personal entitlements, governing based on their own interests while ignoring the voices and concerns of the citizens who placed them in power (Egugbo, 2016).

2. Insufficient Funding and Its Impact: Financial limitations significantly impact universities by constraining infrastructure development, diminish research productivity and reduce access to education for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Thus, explains why (Lucky, 2024) noted that Nigeria's education sector suffers from persistent underfunding, with the government falling short of UNESCO's recommended 26% budget allotment. This shortfall has resulted in resource inadequacies, congested classrooms, deteriorating infrastructure, and frequent industrial actions. Furthermore, poor financial management, lack of strategic prioritization, and increasing students' enrollment intensify these issues within Nigerian universities.

3. Ineffective Leadership and Governance: Individuals aiming for leadership roles should be exposed to administrative duties at entry levels. They need to be trained to embrace the institution's culture and fundamental values. This approach enables them to effectively guide the institution toward fulfilling its goals. Ensuring proper adaptation to leadership roles can be achieved through ongoing training and professional development as individuals progress in their careers (Ogunraku, 2012). On the other hand, ineffective leadership undermines universities by fostering poor decision-making, unclear objectives, and a lack of direction. This results in subpar teaching standards, insufficient students support services, and limited opportunities for extracurricular engagement. Furthermore, weak leadership leads to disengaged faculty, inadequate professional development, and improper allocation of resources, all of which hinder institutional progress and success.

4. Corruption: Corruption poses a significant threat to the integrity and effectiveness of any institution, including universities. In the context of education, corruption manifests in various forms, such as bribery, nepotism, embezzlement, and unethical practices. This work aims to shed light on the detrimental effects that corruption can have on university education and its long-lasting implications. In the submission of Mohammed (2021) viewed corruption in the education system as any action that contradicts the mission of an academic institution in delivering the highest standards of education and learning. Academic corruption can take many forms such as paying for grades, embezzlement of university funds, coercing students to pay bribes etc.

5. Poor Curriculum Design: The ever-evolving nature of society has served as a cornerstone for curriculum reform and since its independence Nigeria has made several updates to its curriculum (Babalola et al., 2016). However, the curricula utilized in Nigerian universities does not meet up with international standards in that it does not focus enough on non-academic pursuits and practical learning which are relevant to students outside the university system. Ineffective curriculum planning results in insufficient skill acquisition, mismatched educational objectives, and unmotivated learners. It discourages critical analysis, undermines professional preparedness, and neglects societal demands. Consequently, graduates emerge ill-equipped, less employable, and lacking in innovation, which hinders individual progress and national advancement.

Conclusion

The successful execution of good policies in university education is essential for the advancement of both students and the society. In Rivers State, university education is pivotal in promoting effective governance and encouraging long-term peace. Nevertheless, this can only be realized by thoroughly reassessing and redirecting the current educational structure. As such, it is necessary to make key changes that emphasize moral leadership, sustainability, civic duty, and peace education to equip graduates for the challenges of society. The proper

enforcement of policies, together with tackling issues such as corruption, insufficient funding, and inadequate infrastructure is crucial to enhancing the standard of education. By combining practical training on sound morals and improving on academic learning to match realities of an evolving world, universities can enable students to make significant contributions to societal development. Through joint efforts between the government, educational bodies, and other stakeholders, Rivers State can transform its universities into centers of innovation, transformation and social harmony. A reformed education system will not only produce future leaders but also create a foundation for enduring peace and sustainable growth in the region.

Suggestions

With the intent of promoting good governance and enduring peace in universities in Rivers State, several suggestions have been proffered as follows;

1. The administrators in Rivers State universities must prioritize openness in their decision-making processes and implement frameworks that foster trust, curb favoritism and halt the perpetration of unethical practices.
2. The government needs to ensure sufficient monetary allocation to universities to enhance facilities, promote research and supporting financially disadvantaged learners.
3. Effective leaders with defined objectives and strategic vision need to be assessed by unbiased councils and get employed to handle the management of Rivers State universities.
4. Rivers State universities can eliminate corrupt practices through robust regulations and accountability mechanisms that ensure the efficient use of resources and improvement on the standards and credibility of those institutions.
5. Rivers State universities should allocate financial and material resources for faculty training and contemporary curriculum revisions to prepare graduates that have industry-relevant expertise.

References

- Abdul-Rashidi, I., Yakubu, A., & Mohammed, A. (2023). Financial sustainability in technical Universities: The view point of top management. *ADDR. Journal of arts and social sciences Ghana*, 19 (3 & 7), 16-46.
- Adebayo, R. (2016). Ethnic and Religious Conflicts in Nigeria: Implication for peace and security: *Nigerian Journal of peace studies*, 14(2), 78-92.
- Adebayo, R.I. (2012). Ethno-Religious Crisis and the Challenges of Sustainable Development in Nigeria, *Journal of sustainable development in Africa*, 12(4),53-69.
- Agbede, E.A. and Ugwu, S. (2011) Business education in Nigeria: Importance and problems associated by Nigeria Association of Vocational and Technical Education FCE, Kano July.

- Agunna, K. (2018). Good governance and revenue generation in local government development using Mbaitoli LGA of Imo State as the focal point. *Journal of research and contemporary issues*, 3(1&2), 19-38.
- Ajiboye, C.L. & Ajitoni, R.N. (2018). ICT and secondary education in Nigeria. *British Journal of education*, 3(6),18-48.
- Akani, C. (2017). Capacity building and sustainable development in Nigerian universities. *Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal*, 4(17), 150-159.
- Akpa (2019), indicated that the complex relationship between education and other sectors, such as , highlights its vital role in national development. Education must be prioritized in the developmental agenda to ensure functionality and progress.
- Akpa, O. (2019). Educational system re-engineering for functionality in Nigeria. In U. M. O. Ivowi (Ed) *Educating for functionality* (pp 367-375). Foremost Educational Services.
- Akuh, E. A. (2018). Refocusing leadership in education for sustainable national development in Nigeria. *International Journal for innovative research in Multidisciplinary field*, 4(2), 54 68. <https://www.ijirmf.com>
- Allen, N. (2018). Poor funding of Education and National Development Challenges in Nigeria. *Journal of Human Development*, 5(8), 12-19.
- Audu, J. (2016). Good governance, bad governance and national security: Interrogating the dichotomy. In M.O. Aloysius, I. Shuaibu, S. Hassan, (Eds). *Governance, economy and national security in Nigeria* (pp. 30-39) Enugu: Timex.
- Babalola, Samuel & Kolawole, Clement. (2016). A Critique of Attempts at Curriculum Innovation in Nigeria. 10.5281/zenodo.13200423.
- Berchin, I. I., de Aguiar Dutra, A. R., & Guerra, J. B. S. O. A. (2021). How do higher education institutions promote sustainable development? A literature review. *Sustainable Development*, 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1002/sd.2219>
- Cangas, A. H. (2014). The good governance agenda of civil society. In *Implications for ACP–EU cooperation*. European centre for development policy management.
- Collins, C.S. (2014). An overview of African higher education and development. The development of higher education in Africa: Prospects and challenges.1(2), 21-65. <https://doi/10.1108/51479-3679>.
- Collins, F.O. & Udumaga C. (2017). Democracy and good governance: imperatives for the attainment of goals in Nigeria. *South East political science review*, 1(1), 192 – 203.
- Ebot-Ashu, F. (2024). Decolonizing colonization through peace education curriculum in Cameroon universities for sustainable development. *Journal of Human Resource and Sustainability Studies*, 12(4), 1-14.

- Egugbo, C. C. (2016). Governance and sustainable peace in Nigeria. *AFRREV: An International Multi-disciplinary Journal, Ethiopia*, 10(4), 41–55. <https://doi.org/10.4314/afrev.v10i4.3>
- Ezeh, S. C., & Njoku, C. A. (2019). Refocusing university education for peace and national security. *Journal of resourcefulness and distinction*, 17(1), 7-8.
- Farley, J. E. (2010). *Majority-Minority Relations* (6th ed). New York: Prentice Hall.
- Gagnidze, I. (2017). The role of international educational and science programs for sustainable development (systemic approach). *Kybernetes*, 47(2), 409–424. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1108/K-03-2017-0114>.
- Garba, A. S. (2010). Refocusing education system towards entrepreneurship development in Nigeria: A tool for poverty eradication. *European Journal of Social Sciences*, 15(1), 140-155.
- Gayson, Y. (2022). Examining University Education: Problems and Prospects. *IJT Scholars Publications*, 12-18.
- Grano, C., & Prieto, V. C. (2020). Sustainable development goals in higher education. In proceedings of the international joint conference on industrial Engineering and operations management-ABEPRO-ADINGOR-IISE-AIM-ASEM (IJCIEOM 2020).
- Hladchenko, M., Atonowicz, D. & de Boer, H. (2017). Understanding the changes of the Higher Education Governance in Poland and Ukraine. *The University as a Critical Institution*. 55-74.
- Ibezim, C. (2018). Power struggle and ethnic tension in Nigeria (2000-2015). *The White Head Journal of Diplomacy and International relations*, 3(2), 71-89.
- Işorait'e, M. & Kolegija, V. (2019). The importance of education in peace marketing. *Integrated Journal of business and economics*, 3(1), 43–51.
- Jonah, A. & Olawole, Y. (2018). “Conflict peace and security”: The Nigerian experience ERPA. *International Journal of multidisciplinary research*, 12. 1-14. <https://www.academic.edu/37961/02-conflict-peace-and-security-the-Nigeria-experience>.
- Khaled, S. (2018). Higher education in Sub Saharan Africa: challenges and prospects.
- Kwiek, M. (2015). The unfading power of collegiality University governance in Poland in a European comparative and quantitative perspective. *International Journal of educational development*, 43, 77-90.
- Leonard, C.I., Collins, C.N., & Felix, O.U (2014). Education and development disconnect in Nigeria: Education for sustainable development (ESD) as the 21st century imperative for Nigerian’s National transformation, sustainable development and global competitiveness. *Journal of economics and sustainable development*, 5(23),44-52.

- Lucky Uko, A (2024). Challenges of inadequate funding in the administration of university education in Nigeria. *Research invention Journal of current research in humanities and social sciences*, 3(1), 32-40. <https://rijournals.com/current-research-in-humanities-and-social-sciences>.
- Mohammed, Y. M. (2021). Combating academic corruption and enhancing academic integrity through international accreditation standards: The model of Qatar University. *Journal of academic ethics*, 20(2), 119-146.
- Mokski, E, Leal, W, Sehnem, S and Andrade Guerra, JBSOD (2023). Education for sustainable development in higher education institutions: an approach for effective interdisciplinarity. *International Journal of sustainability in higher education*, 24(1), 96-117.
- Mudacumura, G. M. Mebratu, D. & Haque, M. S. (2017). Sustainable development policy and administration. New York: Tailor and Francis.
- Nnadozie, E., Jerome, A., & Aregbeyen, O. (2023). Perspective Chapter: Sustaining University Education for and National Development in Nigeria. Intechopen.doi:10.5772/intecghopen.10.9454
- Novidsa, I., Purwianingsih, W., & Riandi. (2020). Exploring knowledge of prospective biology teachers about education for sustainable development (ESD). *Journal pendidikan biologi Indonesia (JPBI)*, 6(2), 317-326. doi: <https://doi.org/10.22219/jpbi.v6i2.12212>.
- Nsengimana, C. (2015). Peacebuilding initiatives of the Presbyterian church in the post-genocide Rwandan society: An impact assessment. Geneva:Globethics.net International secretariat. Retrieved on November, 1st 2024. From <https://www.globeethnics.net/documents/4289936/14503252/GE.Focus24Web.pdf>
- Nwafor, N.H.A. (2012). Peace education and national development: A critical appraisal. *Journal of economic and sustainable development*, 3(11), 132-135.
- Nwankwoala, H. N. L., & Waaka, L. (2021). Distance education and value re-orientation for quality education in Nigeria. *Journal of education and Society*, 11(3), 1999-2006.
- Odo, L. U. (2015). Democracy and good governance in Nigeria: challenges and prospects. *Global Journal of human social science for political science*, 15(3), 16-34.
- Offiah A. (2024). Good governance and sustainable democracy in Nigeria: Challenges and solution. *International Journal of African development and sustainable research (IJADSR)*, 6(2), 111-125.
- Ofor-Douglas, S. (2019). Refocusing security in Higher Institutions for peace in Nigeria. *Academic Discourse: An international Journal*, 11(1), 235-48.
- Ofor-Douglas, S. (2022). University education, good governance and challenges and challenges of insecurity in Nigeria. *East African Journal of education studies*, 5(1), 54-65. doi:10.372.84/eajes.5.1.555.

- Ofor-Douglas, S. (2024a). Entrepreneurship education in Nigerian universities for a productive society in the 21st century. *The innovative Journal of Educational research*, 8(2), 1-13.
- Ofor-Douglas, S. (2024b). Value orientation through educational management: A panacea for curbing insecurity in a productive Nigerian society. *Advance Journal of research in education*, 9(2), 110-125.
- Ogochukwu, N. (2024). Challenges of Good Governance and School Security: Educational Management as the Rescue. *Unizik Journal of educational management and policy (UJOEMP)*, 6(2), 46-52.
- Ogunkan, D.V. (2022). Achieving sustainable environmental governance in Nigeria: A review for policy consideration. *Urban Governance*, 1 (2), 1-9.
- Ogunraku, A. O. (2012). Leadership and governance in higher education: Challenges and prospects of developing the next generation of university leaders, academics, and researchers; The management models. Consultative Policy Dialogue on the future and relevance of Nigerian universities and other tertiary institutions: Towards higher education transformation. (2012). CVC/AVCNU Conference Hall, Abuja, Nigeria.
- Okpaga, A. (2017). "Ideology and the challenges of good governance and development in Nigeria" in Edoh, T. et al (eds), Opcit.
- Oku, O.O; Anugom, F.O. & Onuoha, K.K. (2017). Inclusion of Peace Education in teacher curriculum: The needful for Nigeria's sustainable development. In G.C. Unachukwu & B.C. Ijioma eds. Nigeria Academy of Education. 236-243.
- Olugbako, S.O. & Asagba, E.N. (2014)// Quality Education as a Panacea to global security Challenges: A Case Study of Nigeria. Paper Presented at the Intertic Social of arts, Economics and management.
- Onyema, A.C. (2012). Management of Industrial Sector for National Development in Nigeria. Evergreen Publishers.
- Osokoya, I.O. (2014). *Education in Nigeria history, strategies, issues and problems*. Bininaike Education Publishers.
- Peters, L.A. (2019). Education Governance as a Tool for Enhancing Economic Development in Akwa Ibom State. Education for Today. *Journal of Faculty of Education, University of Calabar, Nigeria*. 15(2), 158-165.
- Sachs, J. (2015). The age of sustainable development. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Shattock, M. (2013). University Governance, Leadership and Management in a Decade of Diversification and Uncertainty. *Higher Education Quarterly*, 67(3), 217-233.
- Shehu, S. Dauda, W. & Abubakar, I. (2018). *ICT and Human Capital Development in Africa*. Retrieved from <https://www.mybib.com/#/projects/kW9wwk/citations/new/webpage>
- Steward, R. (2015). Managing change in schools. Retrieved <http://migooptimics-education.com/managing-change-schools-tips-headteacher>.

- UN Women(2024). 'Building and sustaining peace'. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/peace-and-security/building-and-sustaining-peace>.
- United Nations Development Programme (2024). Sustaining Peace. <https://www.peaceinfrastructures.org/thematic/sustaining-peace>.
- University education and value re-orientation for socio-economic development in Nigeria. *East African Journal of education studies*, 3(1), 211-222. <https://doi.org/10.37284/eajes.3.1.389>.
- Uyanga, U. D. & Eman, I. E. (2016). Education as an instrument for achieving social justice and good governance. *Journal of educational and social research*, 6(2), 205-220. <https://doi.org/10.5901/jesr.2016.v6n2p205>.
- Williams, M. (2015). The relationship between organizational governance and faculty governance in higher education: A National study of shared governance. Doctoral dissertation, Texas A and M University Corpus Christi.
- Williams, P.S. & Udo, B.D. (2020). Scaling up educational intervention in entrepreneurship development for youth employment in Nigeria, *Journal of education*, 15(1), 1-8.