UNIJERPS
Unizik Journal of Educational Research and Policy Studies VOL.13 (1);
https://unijerps.org
*2021 Impact Factor: 5.641; 2020 Impact Factor: 5.355.*
*January-June, 2022*
***Indexing and Impact Factor URL: http://sjifactor.com/passport.php?id=21363***

# EXPLORING FACTORS INHIBITING ATTAINMENT OF EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AND LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

**Rev. Fr. Professor Ofojebe, Wenceslaus Ndubueze**
Department of Educational Management and Policy
Faculty of Education
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State
Mobile Line: 08035508464; E-Mail: Frwence@Yahoo.Com

**Ezugoh, Theodorah Chinelo (Ph.D.)**
Department of Educational Foundations
School Of Education
Federal College of Education (Technical) Asaba
Mobile Line: 08067529008; E-Mail: Theodorahezugoh@Gmail.Com
**&**
**Ukeje, Emmanuel Arinze**
National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE)
Abuja, Nigeria
Mobile Line: 08033164178; E-Mail: Ukejeemmanuel77@Gmail.Com

***ABSTRACT***
*The higher education sector is highest level of education in Nigerian educational system which anyone can obtain. It is very crucial for national development in the 21st century in all-round socio-economic, political, cultural and religious development. The higher education sector is responsible for production of manpower in the country. The sector was established with certain goals and achievement of these goals is highly dependent on the attainment of excellence in the teaching and learning. Attainment of excellence in teaching and learning in higher education sector is predetermined on certain forces or factors. Most scholars, researchers and literatures have indicated that some factors are responsible for the promotion of quality and excellence in teaching and learning in the higher education sector. This paper discussed those factors inhibiting attainment of excellence in teaching and learning in higher education sector for national development in the 21st century. Such concepts as excellence in teaching and learning together with explanations on why the need for attainment of excellence in teaching and learning in the Nigerian higher education sector, higher education and national development were described in the paper. Issues pertaining to higher education sector and national development in the 21st century, and the factors responsible for inhibiting the attainment of excellence in teaching and learning in higher education sector for national development in the twenty-first century were further discussed in the paper. Way forward for attainment of excellence in teaching and learning in higher education sector was provided in order to conclude the study.*

**Keywords:** Factors, Inhibiting, Attainment, Excellence, Teaching, Learning, Higher, Education, Sector, National, Development, 21st Century

## Introduction

Education is the fulcrum on which the development of any country hangs. It is an important instrument for national development in the 21st century which includes socio-economic, political, cultural, religious and environmental development of the society. The Nigerian education system comprises different sectors such

as the early childhood care and development (ECCDE) sector, primary/basic education sector, secondary and higher education sectors. All these sectors of the Nigeria education system have their different mandates, goals and objectives, in order to contribute towards national development. The higher education sector which is the main focus of this chapter is provided for secondary school graduates who needs to further their education in life. This education sector is popularly known for training various vibrant manpower for the nation in different fields of endeavour and professions who will effectively contribute towards national development. Oredein (2007) defined the higher education sector as all types of studies, training or training for research at the post-secondary level, provided by the universities or other educational establishments that are approved as institutions of higher education by the government. Asiyai (2017) referred to the higher education sector as postsecondary or tertiary education which is the education given after secondary education in colleges of education, monotechnics, polytechnics and universities and those institutions offering correspondence courses. These institutions according to Asiyai (2017), are recognized as fundamental instruments for the construction of a knowledge-based economy and the development of human capitals all over the world. They are fundamental to all developing countries in which Nigeria is not an exception, if they are to prosper in a world economy where knowledge has become a vital area of advantage. Countries would therefore, achieve sustainable national development in the 21st century by improving through training in higher level, the skills of their human capitals which is usually orchestrated through attainment of excellence in teaching and learning delivery in higher education sector. Peretomode (2007) simply describing the higher education sector (as cited in Asiyai, 2017) explained that higher education is the facilitator, the bed rock, the power house and the driving force for the strong socio-economic, political, cultural, healthier and industrial development of a nation as higher education institutions are key mechanisms increasingly recognized as wealth and human capital producing industries.

The intentions behind the establishment of the Nigerian higher education sector as attested by Asiyai (2017) includes contributing towards national development in the 21st century through high level manpower training, development and inculcation of proper values for the survival of the individual and the society, likewise, development of the intellectual capabilities of the individual to understand and appreciate their local and external environment. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2013, p.39) describing the Nigerian higher education sector also referred to it as tertiary education, saying that, it is the education given after post basic education in institutions such as Universities and Inter-University Centres such as the Nigeria French Language Village, Nigeria Arabic Language Village, National Institute of Nigerian Languages, institutions such as Innovation Enterprise Institutions (IEIs), and Colleges of Education, Monotechnics, Polytechnics and other specialized institutions such as Colleges of Agriculture, Schools of Health and Technology and the National Teachers' Institute (NTI). The aforementioned institutions as previously stated by authors such as Asiyai (2017) contribute greatly to national development by producing requisite manpower for various sectors of the Nigerian economy. The goals and objectives of the Nigerian higher education sector as further highlighted by the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2013, p.39) in the National Policy on Education (NPE) are to: contribute to national development in the 21st century through high level manpower training; provide accessible and affordable quality learning opportunities in formal and informal education in response to the needs and interests of all Nigerians; provide high quality career counselling and lifelong learning programmes that prepare students with the knowledge and skills for self-reliance and the

world of work; reduce skill shortages through the production of skilled manpower relevant to the needs of the labour market; promote and encourage scholarship, entrepreneurship and community services; forge and cement national unity; and promote national and international understanding and interaction. Achievement of the above goals and objectives of the higher education sector for national development in the 21st century means that the tertiary institutions under the sector such as the universities, monotechnics, polytechnics, colleges of education and other specialized institutions, among others, are supposed to make provisions for a more practical based curriculum which is relevant to the needs of the labour market through the attainment of excellence in teaching and learning. In addition to the above statement, the generation and dissemination of knowledge, skills and competencies that contribute to national development in the 21st century and economic goals which enable students to succeed in a knowledge-based economy should also be adequately given and provided through the attainment of qualitative and high standard teaching and learning coupled with research and development. Moreover, observations show that it has been difficult for the various institutions under the Nigerian higher education sector to efficiently and sufficiently make positive impacts on national development in the present 21st century because of their inabilities towards the attainment of excellence in teaching and learning. It has been observed through various literatures and studies conducted by different researchers that institutions under the Nigerian higher education sector no longer produce quality graduates that will stir or move the country's economy forward to a greater height. There have equally been so much controversy concerning the quality of teaching and learning provided at the various institutions in the higher education sector. This problem has been attributed to the poor attainment of excellence affecting the quality of teaching and learning provided in the higher education sector which needs absolute redress. Besides, teaching and learning provided in higher education institutions through relevant quality classroom instructions, research, practical exercises, field trips, Industrial Training (IT), Students Industrial Work Experiences Schemes (SIWES), among others, are supposed to assist the students acquire embodiments of knowledge, skills and competencies that will enable them contribute effectively towards national development in the 21st century.

The role of higher education in shaping students' future for national development in the 21st century therefore, depends how on credible, transparent and progressive the teaching and learning situations are. In order to achieve this, there is need for attainment of excellence in teaching and learning in the higher education sector in the 21st century. Furthermore, the 21st century which is a technological and information age requires graduates who are knowledgeable and competent in the use of various modern technologies to create inventions and innovations towards making significant impacts in building the national economy. According to Shearer (2019), a technologist, the 21st century began on Jan 1st, 2001 just as the 20th century began on Jan 1st 1901 and ushered in the use of modern technological tools in various sectors of the economy including in education. This technological development in the world as posited by Stauffer (2020) demands that students possess certain skills and abilities such critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication, information literacy, media literacy, technology literacy, flexibility, leadership, initiative, productivity and social skills, that will enable them to succeed in their careers during the Information Age. As regards, radical changes and improvements should be attainable through excellence in teaching and learning for quality education to be highly sustainable in the higher education sector. A glossary look or glance at the products and graduates of many higher education institutions showcases that there is a problem with

the teaching and learning processes. There has been difficulties and challenges in attainment of excellence in the teaching and learning processes owing to several factors. This is evident in most of the higher education graduate from various institutions like the university, polytechnics and colleges of education that are not capable of making significant contributions and impacts towards national development. In fact, one would agree with the statement of Oredein (2007) who quoted that "a nation which cannot provide quality and standard higher education through the attainment of excellence in teaching and learning for its citizens has no right to expect to achieve rapid economic and socio-cultural development in the 21st century". For attainment of excellence in teaching and learning for national development in the 21st century certain factors preventing this course from happening must be taken into considerations and absolutely eradicated. This paper therefore discussed matters surrounding the difficulties in attaining excellence in teaching and learning in higher education by exploring those factors inhibiting the attainment of excellence in teaching and learning in higher education sector for national development in the twenty-first century. The paper has been broken down into various segments and subheadings. Matters in the paper has been discussed under the following subheadings of: description of few key concepts such as excellence in teaching and learning together with explanations on why the need for attainment of excellence in teaching and learning in the Nigerian higher education sector, higher education sector and national development; higher education sector and national development in the 21st century; factors responsible for inhibiting the attainment of excellence in teaching and learning in higher education sector for national development in the twenty-first century; and way forward towards attainment of excellence in teaching and learning in higher education sector for national development in the twenty-first century.

**Description of Few Key Concepts**

**Excellence in Teaching and Learning**

Excellence in teaching and learning as a word is a merger of three concepts comprising excellence, teaching and learning. Excellence in education as viewed in the paper entails maintain best quality and standard practices in educational activities. It is the highest level of quality which is outstanding. The European Network of Education Councils (EUNEC, 2012) said that excellence has to do with 'eminence' which is also linked to quality insurance or assurance and quality control, towards benchmarking of educational institutions or educational systems, to gaining efficiency in education and in learning. The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE, 2017) attested that in the United Kingdom policy documents, excellence in teaching and learning at a system-wide level is often associated with international standards, rankings and meeting national economic goals, but it also used to enhance the status of certain institutional functions (for example, teaching) in relation to others, in particular research. The word excellence according to the Vocabulary.com Dictionary (2018) means greatness — the very best. It also has several meanings such as an outstanding feature; something in which something or someone excels; and the quality of excelling; possessing good qualities in high degree; extremely high quality. Excellence is a quality that people really appreciate, because it is so hard to find. Excellence is the quality of being truly the best at something. For instance, getting an A+ showcases excellence in teaching and learning (Vocabulary.com Dictionary, 2018). Given the above definitions of excellence, teaching as described in the chapter relates to delivering instructions in the classroom by a teacher. Teaching offers the teacher chances of changing other people's lives permanently for the better. Deng (2017) defined teaching as methods, techniques, or strategies through which a curriculum is conveyed to students. It involves series of activities such as direction, guidance,

facilitation and the imparting of instruction or knowledge. It is a process that involves helping students acquire a body of worthwhile knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for participating in such activities. Teaching is therefore, at its core, an interpretive process grounded in conceptions of what one is teaching and what value that content has for students and society. And the choices that teachers make with respect to their content have enormous consequences for the lives of students and the health of the society (Deng, 2017). The Physics Catalyst (2018) gave several definitions of teaching; and according to this group, teaching could be considered as a process in which one individual teaches or instruct another individual. Teaching is the act of imparting instructions to the learners in the classroom situation. It is watching someone (that is, the learner) systematically. It involves a manipulation of the situation, where the learner will acquire skills and insight with his own initiation. Teaching to the Physics Catalyst group (2018) is an intimate contact between the more matured personality and a less matured one. It is a face to face encounters between two or more persons, one of whom (teacher) intends to effect certain changes in the other participants (students). Teaching is an activity with four phases, a curriculum planning phase, an instructing phase, and an evaluating phase. This definition presents the organizational aspect by which one can describe and analyze the teaching process. Teaching is interpersonal influence aimed at changing the behaviour potential of another person. Teaching refers to activities that are designed and performed to produce in students behaviour. Teaching is a social and cultural process, which is planned in order to enable an individual to learn something in his life. Therefore, the nature and characteristics of teaching includes that it is a complete social process undertaken for the society and by the society; and which involves giving information by telling students about the things they have to know and students cannot find out themselves through communication of knowledge. Teaching is an interactive process between the student and the teaching sources, which is essential for the guidance, progress, and development of students. It is a process of development and learning involving face to face encounter which causes change and modification in behaviour and habits. Teaching is art as well as science which can be observable, measurable and modifiable. It is a skilled occupation involving facilitation of learning, and a continuum of training, conditioning, instruction, and indoctrination. The overall aim of teaching is to promote learning (Physics Catalyst, 2018).

Learning on the other hand as defined by the Physics Catalyst group (2019) is a process of acquiring new knowledge and new responses. It is a process by which behavior is originated or change through practice or training. Learning is the process by which the individuals acquires various habits, knowledge, and attitudes that are necessary to meet the demands of life, in general. The nature of learning is furthermore found in modification in behaviour, the organization of behaviour and the confirmation of a new process. The basis of learning is to gain knowledge after observing the whole structure which includes all activities that affect students through experiences or teaching (Physics Catalyst, 2019). Learning according to Cobb (2020) is the lifelong process of transforming information and experience into knowledge, skills, behaviours, and attitudes. It is a way of adding new thing to one's life positively or negatively through some experience. In this chapter, learning is described as acquisition of wealth of information and knowledge which leads relatively to one's permanent change in behaviour, attitudes or precepts. Learning in essence, is a natural phenomenon which is natural to all organisms including both humans and animals. Learning affects students' development. A student learns new habits only through the process of learning and through imitated traditions and customs. Intellectual skills are also developed through learning. The decision of right and wrong, the

concepts of justice and aesthetic sense, etc. develop through learning. This process of learning continues throughout life. Learning is the basis of maturation. Through learning, student's language, customs and traditions, attitudes and beliefs, personalities and goals are affected. In fact, it would not be wrong to say that learning affects all aspects of individual life (Physics Catalyst, 2019). From all the foregoing explanations, thus, the need for attainment of excellence in teaching and learning. Attainment of excellence in teaching and learning in higher education is therefore, considered in this chapter as, maintaining high quality standards and credibility features in the process of teaching and learning. The features of excellence in teaching and learning focuses on certain aspects of quality which includes as rightly pointed out by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE, 2017): the teaching quality, learning environment, and student outcomes and learning gains. Teaching quality is best considered in the context of students' learning. The outcomes of students' learning are determined by the quality of teaching they experience, the additional support for learning that is available and what the students themselves put into their studies, supported and facilitated by the provider. Teaching quality includes different forms of structured learning that can involve teachers and academic or specialist support staff. This includes seminars, tutorials, project supervision, laboratory sessions, studio time, placements, supervised on-line learning, workshops, fieldwork and site visits. The emphasis is on teaching that provides an appropriate level of contact, stimulation and challenge, and which encourages student engagement and effort. The effectiveness of course design, and assessment and feedback, in developing students' knowledge, skills and understanding are also considered. The extent to which a provider recognizes, encourages and rewards excellent teaching is also included within this aspect. Learning environment includes the effectiveness of resources such as libraries, laboratories and design studios, work experience, opportunities for peer-to-peer interaction and extra-curricular activities in supporting students' learning and the development of independent study and research skills.

The emphasis is on a personalized academic experience which maximizes retention, progression and attainment. The extent to which beneficial linkages are made for students between teaching and learning, and scholarship, research or professional practice (one or more of these) is also considered. Student outcomes and learning gain is focused on the achievement of positive outcomes. Positive outcomes are taken to include: (a) acquisition of attributes such as lifelong learning skills and others that allow a graduate to make a strong contribution to society, economy and the environment; and (b) progression to further study, acquisition of knowledge, skills and attributes necessary to compete for a graduate level job that requires the high level of skills arising from higher education (The Higher Education Funding Council for England [HEFCE], 2017). Excellence in teaching and learning according to the Scottish Government (2008), will therefore provide students with the following opportunities: a curriculum which is coherent; a broad general education, including well planned experiences and outcomes across all the curriculum areas; a phase of education which provides opportunity to obtain qualifications as well as to continue to develop in full capacities; more opportunities to develop skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work (including career planning skills) with a continuous focus on literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing at every stage of learning; ensuring connections between all aspects of learning and support for learning; and assist to prepare Nigerian students to take their place in a modern society and economy (The Scottish Government, 2008). All the above explanations necessitate the need for attainment of excellence in teaching and learning in the Nigerian higher education sector is a very

crucial owing to certain factors which has been disclosed subsequently in this study.

**Why the Need for Attainment of Excellence in Teaching and Learning in the Nigerian Higher Education Sector**

There are several reasons why the need for attainment of excellence in teaching and learning in the Nigerian higher education sector, but emphasis on only a few important ones' have been laid upon. Firstly, the achievement of all the goals or objectives of the Nigerian higher education sector which will lead to the attainment of the national goals cannot be possible without excellence in teaching and learning in the various tertiary institutions. Secondly, the Nigerian higher education sector trains manpower for national development which requires acquisition of skills for graduates of higher education. These manpower needs to be equipped through excellence in teaching and learning with various skills in order to function properly in national development. These skills as identified by Vista College (2019) includes critical thinking, analyzing, exploration of new ideas, asking questions and creativity. In line with the statements of Vista College (2019), the European Network of Education Councils (EUNEC, 2012) citing instances, noted that in the future, society will need excellent scientists able to shape future societal changes, innovative artists designing new and creative approaches, philosophers with a critical view on the spirit of society, and technicians who build the infrastructure for a sustainable economy. At the same time, society will need people that feel responsible for society, and act according to that responsibility. Achieving excellence in teaching and learning not only has to do with helping students to pull through cognition and learning outcomes, but also with soft skills such as cooperation, responsibility, communicative skills and dialogue, creativity, meta cognition, among others. Furthermore, students need to be able to question critically and permanently society and culture, and to think out of the box. With the above, excellence in teaching and learning is highly needed. Njoka and Muriithi (2020) stressed that higher education sector is established to fulfill important roles of providing adequate manpower needs by transforming the citizen into skilled human resources for the socio-economic development of the country. Consequently, higher education is viewed as the source for citizens to develop the higher-level competencies needed to rehabilitate the threatening situation that exists in all sectors of the economy and eventually take the country to its aspired state. Accordingly, higher education is associated with meeting the nation's needs, which relates to the notion of quality as 'fit for purpose' and bridging the gap between higher education and working life. In order to fulfill these roles, this calls for the need for attainment of excellence in teaching and learning processes of higher education.

Thirdly, is the need for Nigerian graduates to adequately secure jobs, fit in and compete in the labour market. Njoka and Muriithi (2020) noted that over time, the government and employers as well as universities strongly emphasizes the university graduates' relevance to the labour market. There has been an evident skill gaps between the present graduates' competences and the competences required to promote higher education responsiveness to labour market needs and to meet the aspirations of Nigerian national development agenda in the 21st century. In Nigeria, only few graduates can work in jobs that are directly related to their level of education and/or specific training. It has been noted that a good number of present day graduates in Nigeria have inadequate skills and competences critical to meet the demands of the dynamic working environment in the 21st century, especially bearing in mind that, Nigerian graduates increasingly face high competition from the other member countries of the East African Community and European countries (International Youth Foundation, 2011, as cited in Njoka & Muriithi, 2020). Due to the

above issues, it is evident that higher education institutions are on the spotlight to influence the achievement of the country's national development goals and of transforming Nigeria into a knowledge-based economy in the 21st century which cannot be sustainable without the attainment of excellence in teaching and learning. Higher education therefore, is increasingly considered as a priority for people to become effective and fulfilled citizens who are capable of facing the unique challenges imposed by the transition to knowledge-based societies/economies (Openjuru, 2011). This can only be possible when certain high degree of excellence is attainable in the teaching and learning processes in various institutions of the higher education sector. Fourthly, with the issues surrounding the technological and information age ushering in globalization, this necessitates that attainment of excellence in teaching and learning in the higher education sector be highly promoted and encouraged for national development in this 21st century.

**Higher Education Sector**

The higher education sector has been previously defined in the paper by some authorities. According to the Editors of the Encyclopaedia Britannica – Augustyn et al (2020), higher education can be described as any of various types of education given in postsecondary institutions of learning and usually affording, at the end of a course of study, a named degree, diploma, or certificate of higher studies. Higher education sector include educational institutions not only universities and colleges but also various professional schools that provide preparation in such fields as law, theology, medicine, business, music, and art. Higher education also includes teacher-training schools, junior colleges, and institutes of technology. The basic entrance requirements for most higher-educational institutions in Nigeria is usually the completion of secondary education and in most cases written external examinations such as JAMB, that is, the Joint Admission Matriculation Board, and the usual entrance age of about 18 years. The Cambridge University (2020) defined higher education as education at a college or university where subjects are studied in great detail and at an advanced level. Higher education is also the third level education after which an individual leaves school. It takes places at universities and further education colleges which normally includes undergraduate and postgraduate study. Higher education gives individuals the chance to study a subject such individuals are interested in and can boost your career prospects and earning potential. According to Vista College (2019), the higher education sector showcases great importance which can lead to many benefits, including a prosperous career and financial security in the society. In the 21st century, the higher education sector plays even more significant role in other aspects of one's life. Attaining a higher education can increase one's opportunities and improve one's overall quality of life. It is one aspect of the Nigerian education sector which leads to national development in this 21st century.

**National Development**

National development as defined by Alolor (2014) is the ability of a county or countries to improve the social welfare of the people example, by providing social amenities like quality education, potable water, transportation, infrastructure, medical care, good governance, employment, security, among others. National development as viewed within the context of this chapter involves all-round environmental growth and development of a country in her socio-economic, political, cultural and religious activities which brings about progress in such society. Mundi (2008) simple definition of national development (as cited in Oye, 2014) is the transformation of community into socially, economically, politically, educationally, orderly, and materially desirable conditions, with the aim of improving the quality of life of the people. It is also referred to as the

uniform distribution of resources, the integration of the people into national economy; it is a socio-economic process which seeks to bring about a more equitable distribution of resources and income within the society. Besides, development for Oye (2014) entailed a process of societal advancement, where improvement in the well-being of people is generated through strong partnerships between all sectors, corporate bodies and other groups in the society. It is reasonable to know that development is not only an economic exercise, but also involves both socio-economic and political issues and pervades all aspects of societal life. Development is usually taken to involve not only economic growth, but also some notion of equitable distribution, provision of health care, education, housing and other essential services all with a view to improving the individual and collective quality of life. It is not s not just a matter of getting more money into the hands of the poor, but ensuring that increased production, and its resulting increased income, leads to an improved standard of living. Sarma (2018) described national development as including all aspects of the development of a nation namely, political, social, economic etc. It is a dynamic and revolutionary development of the society. It is both qualitative and quantitative. Vaizey (as cited in Sarma, 2018) viewed national development as the total effect of all citizens, forces and addition to stock of physical, human resources, knowledge and skill. According to UN Decade report (as cited in Sarma, 2018), national development is growth plus change in turn is social, cultural as well as economic and qualitative as well as quantitative. It is the change in growth and development, which includes social, cultural and economic change. It is the ability of a country to improve the social welfare of the people.

National development would bring about the expansion and growth of people in a defined territory or government. Its standards can be measured by equal living standard for all, equal share of all in profit, equal distribution of income and capital, expansion of facilities regarding education, health, shelter and social welfare, and preservation of environment (Sarma, 2018). Through national development, rapid and sustainable economic growth and development, strengthening the financial sector and capital mobilization, strengthening of the macro economy, improvement in the quality of life and living standards, improvement in access to quality social services, empowerment of the poor and marginalized, enhancement of social cohesion as a nation, peace and security for development, improvement of transparency and accountability in governance, boosting the competitiveness of countries industries, facilitation of infrastructure development, and ensuring ecological integrity is possible and highly promoted (Alolor, 2014). From all these discussions, national development of Nigeria in the 21st century can be fostered through the higher education sector which provide manpower training for various sectors of the economy.

**Higher Education Sector and National Development in the 21st Century**

National development task will be unsuccessful without contributions from the higher education sector. Higher education sector in summary is a crucial factor for nation-building and national development through the production of human capital that participate towards the socio-economic development of a nation. Kingdom and Maekae (2013) opined that the higher education sector is an indispensable tool which will not only assist in meeting the nation's social, political, moral, cultural and economic aspirations but will also inculcate in the individual knowledge, skills, dexterity, character and desirable values that will foster national development and self-actualization. It is clear that higher education trains an individual to be useful in the society and to meet up the need of the society for national development. Therefore, it should be clear that without higher education, a nation cannot get the needed manpower for

material advancement and enlightenment of the citizenry. The trained engineers, teachers, medical doctors, inter alia are all the products of higher education. This explains why it is argued also that the quality of a nation's higher education determines the level of its national development (Kingdom & Maekae, 2013). The higher education sector promotes social and group relationships that fosters national development. Kingdom and Maekae (2013) expressed further that since higher education sector contributes to national development, consequently, the implication of the lack of attainment of excellence in teaching and learning in the 21st century, which is an information and technological age, is the declining quality of higher education system at which has far reaching negative impact on a nation's moral, civic, social, cultural and economic sustainability. Besides, the 21st century requires higher education graduate to become scientifically inclined in order to solve problems in the society. Citing an instance, Oye (2014) observed that the various national developmental strategies set out in the 21st century in agriculture, failed because of lack or insufficiency of scientific knowledge, applications and equipment to carryout activities that agriculture as an enterprise demands. But more to this is the commitment to ensure that talents are developed through the attainment of excellence in teaching and learning, because majority of the graduates do not possess the rightful skills and talents needed to boost the economy in the 21st century. Bell (2009) posited that typically teaching and learning in this 21st century must be transformational pedagogy which is seen to include the following features of: action-oriented, inquiry-based learning, systems-based learning, integrated, holistic approaches, and creative use of technology. Several 21st century skills, attributes, creativity and culture would be inculcated into the students through attainment in excellence in teaching and learning.

Higher education students should through attainment of excellence in teaching and learning in this 21st century, learn to know by understanding the challenges facing society locally and globally; learn to do things critically by developing practical skills and action competences; learn to live together through appreciation of interdependence, pluralism, mutual understanding and peace; and learn to be through the development of one's personal attributes and ability to act with greater autonomy, judgment and person responsibility (Bell, 2009). Any higher education institution be it the university, monotechnic, polytechnic and college of education and specialized institution, among others, is looked upon as a place where students learn effectively, socialize and grow into the person they will be for the rest of their lives. Having a strong higher system where excellence in teaching and learning are highly promoted, students who are there will grow to make bright, good people when they graduate. However, it has been found that if a country has a good higher education system, it contributes to so much in the national development in this 21st century. Higher education can even contribute to economic growth and the well-being of the people that attend these higher education institutions and even those who work in it. Being able to bring students together into a place that they feel they can get to adequately acquire information and develop their talents, abilities, requisite 21st century skills and competences, through excellence in teaching and learning coupled with cooperating with others and be themselves, really, is the basis of a strong and developing society which tilt towards achieving national development in the 21st century. This is why having a strong higher education system where attainment of excellence in teaching and learning is highly possible at the base of national development can really help the society as a whole. Since, the higher education sector is well-known for her significant contributions towards national development especially in the 21st century, this have warranted that certain factors inhibiting the attainment of excellence in the teaching and learning processes

be handled properly and rusticated out from the system.

**Factors Responsible for Inhibiting the Attainment of Excellence in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education Sector for National Development in the 21st Century**

In as much as that the higher education sector is an indispensable tool for national development in the 21st century which necessitates the attainment of excellence in the system; yet there are some factors inhibiting the attainment of excellence in teaching and learning in the 21st century in all the institutions under the higher education sector which includes as previously noted in the paper such as the universities and inter-university centres, institutions such as innovation enterprise institutions (IEIS), and colleges of education, monotechnics, polytechnics and other specialized and the National Teachers' Institute (NTI). Such factors inhibiting the attainment of excellence in teaching and learning in the higher education sector for national development in the 21st century as pointed out by Asiyai (2017), Njoka and Muriithi (2020), the Open Media Network (2019) and others includes; inadequate funding, lack of teaching resources, poor maintenance culture, inadequate and inconsistency in the use of modern and mobile technologies or portable devices in teaching and learning, inappropriate teaching methodologies, large class size or lecturer-students' ratio, inconsistency of staff in-service training and retraining, too much emphasis on theory and less practical, brain drain issue, outdated and rigid curricula, absence of employer engagement in the course content and skills development, lack of early-stage research experience, ineffective quality assurance system and a complete lack of accountability by institutions, bad leadership and governance, poor quality and shortage teaching staff, among others.

In explaining the above factors; by Asiyai (2017) posited that inadequate funding is the most critical challenge that has threatened the attainment of good quality higher education coupled with attainment of excellence in teaching and learning in Nigeria. The problem of inadequate funding of education has been a bane to educational development in the country. Many institutions of higher learning in Nigeria were unable to adequately provide, build or renovate lecture halls, students' hostels, equip laboratories and workshops and payment of staff salaries, research grants, allowances and medical bills. Funds are necessary for purchase of teaching resources and whereby it lacking affects the attainment of excellence of the teaching and learning processes.

Another factor which follows inadequate funding is lack and shortage of teaching resources. Recent tour to most of the higher education institutions showcases that they lacked many of the resources needed to provide excellent teaching and learning. Ukpai and Ereh (2016) observed that part of the challenges inhibiting teaching and learning effectiveness in higher education is lack of and inadequate facilities. Classrooms are substandard and grossly inadequate in many tertiary institutions. Asiyai (2017) asserted that quality higher education is dependent on the quality and quantity of human and material resources put in place in institutions of higher learning. The lack of infrastructures such as science laboratories, workshops, students' hostels, libraries and electricity will affect the quality of education. Besides, the libraries in most institutions of higher learning in the country are stocked with obsolete text books, with current journals and text books lacking. Kamm (1980, p.34) in his opinion (as cited in Asiyai, 2017) made it clear that the library is at the heart of the academic effort in a college or university. For an institution to be strong academically, it must have a formidable library put in place. This explains why the top universities of the world (Harvard, Cambridge, Tokyo and University of California also cited in Asiyai, 2017) are academically of high strength and quality. The acute shortage of educational facilities and teaching resources in institutions of higher learning

in Nigeria has led to decline in the quality of higher education in the country. Worried about the poor quality of graduates of higher education institutions in Nigeria, the national universities commission carried out a need assessment survey which was reported by Okebukola (2005) as cited in Asiyai (2017) and highlighted the following: that only about 30% of Nigerian students' population has adequate access to classrooms, workshop, lecture halls, laboratories and libraries. Also, there were deficient libraries in terms of currency and number of books, journals, and electronic support facilities. The success of every school programme including higher education, especially teaching and learning effectiveness, is highly dependent on the availability of quality and the right type of physical facilities provided for teaching and learning (Obanya, 2002). Following the issue of inadequate resources is the poor and lack of facilities or resources maintenance culture which affects the utilization of many teaching resources in the institutions. Ukpai (2013) opined that despite huge government investment in education and the persistent rise in school fees, universities in Nigeria still suffer so many setbacks due to cases of decay, dilapidation of few existing facilities, and infrastructure. There is also the problem of poor maintenance and management culture which constantly and persistently affects the use of teaching resources in order to promote excellence in teaching and learning.

It has also been observed by scholars and researchers such as Asiyai (2017), Shaibu and Mike (2014) and Ukpai and Ereh (2016) that inadequate and inconsistency in the use of modern and mobile technologies or portable devices inhibits attainment of excellence in teaching and learning in higher education sector. In citing instance, the present Covid-19 or Corona Virus pandemic have warranted that higher education institutions are supposed to use ICT in teaching students at home in order to maintain social distancing but this has not been well effected because of the lack of ICT equipment and the challenge of having access to certain software and the Internet that will aid the process. This present situation which showcases lack of attainment of excellence in teaching and learning tend to draw a lot of higher education students backwards. It was found out in Shaibu and Mike (2014) study that lack and poor use of mobile and ICT resources in educational institutions has been inhibited by regulatory issues, school curricula, inadequate funding, lack of infrastructure, over-dependence on mobile technology, attitude and fear, as well as political issues. Asiyai (2017) opined that another challenge to quality attainment in teaching and learning in higher education in Nigeria is lack of information communication technology facilities in institutions of higher learning. As part of the education reform effort Nigerian government adopted information communication technologies in all levels of education since information communication technology integration in educational practices is meant to improve teaching and learning, enhance higher education research, enhance collaboration among peers and improve quality of education. Curriculum content could be enriched through search from the internet by teachers. Through such internet search, information and relevant school practices which are unknown to teachers and students and which cannot be found in textbooks, can easily be downloaded for use. Information and communication technology in education has been continuously linked to higher efficiency, higher productivity and higher educational outcomes, including quality of cognitive, creative and innovative thinking (Olatoye, 2011 as cited in Asiyai, 2017). Ukpai and Ereh (2016) observed that with the development of multi-media channels like Internet, GSM, Television, newspapers and many others, information access and exchange have been made easy. The Internet offers a diverse information service that is of benefit to societal growth and development. Okunlaya, Amusa and Ogunlana (2015) asserted that the development in communication technology has assisted our

tertiary institutions in terms of researches, learning, sales of admission form, registration, keeping of statistical records, school web development, publication of articles, advertisement, to mention but few. Similarly, Ogbenevwogaga and Ogbenevwogaga (2006) opined that the Internet has been of great help to higher education institutions both in the developed and developing nations. If these assertions are true, it therefore suffices the claim also that the tertiary institutions are aware of the inherent benefits associated with efficient internet services in school management. Lack of equipment and resources especially for information communication technology (ICT), paradigm shift, has made excellence in teaching and learning approaches of the 21stcentury impossible.

The issue of inappropriate teaching methodologies is another factor inhibiting attainment of excellence in teaching and learning in higher education. Many lecturers still use the lecture method which teacher-centred approach in delivery instructions. The lecture method would not grant students active participation in learning which affects the slow learners. Supporting this statement Ukpai and Ereh (2016) noted that the traditional approaches to teaching and learning persist while the 21st century approaches to teaching and learning, such as the use of internet, computers, projectors, simulators and others are conspicuously unavailable. The inadequacies of poor and inappropriate teaching methodologies have triggered some challenges that have made negative impact on the students and their programmes. Students with weak knowledge background and understanding of the subject matter, who would have been brushed up, do not have the opportunity because of these difficult situations. These conditions lent breath to failure in examinations, and most often leading to examination malpractices, therefore showcasing poor attainment of excellence in teaching and learning (Ukpai & Ereh, 2016). The inappropriate teaching methodologies has made many higher education institutions to focus too much emphasis on theory and less practical; also leading to outdated and rigid curricula.

The issue of outdated curricula is as a result of the higher education sector incapability to make provision for a more practical based curriculum which is relevant to the needs of the labour market (Federal Republic of Nigeria [FRN], 2013). However, absence of employer engagement or collaborations with the private sector in the course content and skills development have also been responsible for poor teaching methodologies in the higher education sector. The Open Media Network (2019) opined that as for collaboration with education stakeholders, only very few opportunities for interdisciplinary learning. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2013) highlighted the importance of promoting teaching and learning effectiveness for excellence in higher education institutions through effective collaborations with the private sectors and industries.

Large class size or poor lecturer-students' ratio is also a factor affecting excellence in teaching and learning. Where the population of students is large, this becomes difficulties in promoting quality teaching and learning for excellence by causing serious challenge for classroom management, students control, planning and marking of students' assessments, as pointed out by Ayeni and Olowe (2016). This is usually the case experienced in higher education institutions. The problem of overpopulation of students' and high student-teacher ratio in the higher education sector as observed by the Open Media Network (2019) is due to the lack of teaching staff and pressure to enroll more students.

Inconsistency of staff in-service training and retraining Asiyai (2017) opined that most institutions of higher learning in Nigeria lack staff training and development programme for training and re-training of staff. Vibrant staff development programme on a continuous basis will help academics and non-academics to clarify and

modify their behaviour, attitude, value, skills and competencies. In this way, they grow and develop in their knowledge and thus become more effective and efficient in the performance of tasks. In addition, Asiyai and Oghuvbu report of 2009 (as cited in Asiyai, 2017) showed that lack of staff training and development programmes accounted for the decline in quality of teaching and learning in tertiary education in Nigeria. Similarly, Adeogun (cited in Asiyai, 2017) noted that an employee who is not trained and exposed to continuous retraining in the modern methods and new discoveries in his or her field will soon become irrelevant to the organization. Staff regular and continuous in-service training and retraining will always account for employees' high performance, productivity, efficiency and effectiveness, retention and turnover rate. However, the FRN (2013) noted that all teachers of tertiary institutions are required to undergo constant training and retraining in the methods and techniques of teaching for promotion of high standards in the quality of their services and maintenance of minimum educational standards. As such, in-service training shall be an integral part of continuing teacher education which is mandatory institutional leadership to provide for all teachers (FRN, 2013, p.44).

Brain drain issue is another factor inhibiting excellence in teaching and learning in the higher education sector. Asiyai (2017) attested that a big challenge to the quality of higher education in Nigeria is the problem of brain drain. Over the past decades, there has been mass exodus of brilliant and most talented lecturers to other sectors of the economy. Some of the lecturers left Nigerian universities to join the business world, some joined politics while others left Nigeria for better services or greener pastures. Brain drain has led to decline in teaching and learning, including research outputs from institutions of higher learning in Nigeria vis-à-vis the disappearance of research centers in Nigerian universities which is not good for national development in this 21st century.

Lack of early-stage research experience affecting teachers' research capacity and innovations is also another problem inhibiting excellence in teaching and learning. It has been observed that many academic staff – lecturers lack the ability to carry out researches that will create inventions and innovations in teaching and learning in higher education sector. This is caused by their lack of early exposure to research experience as pointed out by the Open Media Network (2019). Conversely, the FRN (2013, p.40) highlighted the importance of research by stating that the higher education sector shall pursue their goals of through quality research and development which will lead to generation and dissemination of knowledge, skills and competencies that contribute to national development and economic goals that enables students to succeed in a knowledge-based economy.

The shortage and poor quality teaching staff in most higher education institutions is a matter of concern for excellence in teaching and learning. The major actors in the teaching-learning process are the teachers and students. While the teachers are expected to have the competences and skills in curriculum delivery, the students are expected to show high level commitment to learning. No excellence of teaching and learning can be possible without efficiency and effectiveness of teachers. Maduewesi (2005) lamented on the dearth of competent and qualified teachers in Nigerian schools and recommended the need to formally instill the principles of teaching in all academics. The success of every school programme, especially teaching-learning, is dependent on not only the availability of the right type of physical facilities, but including the right quality and caliber of teachers, (Obanya, 2002). On the issue of shortage of academic staff, Asiyai (2017) opined that it is a big challenge to the attainment of excellence in teaching and learning including quality higher education in Nigeria.

Requisite number of the academic staff are lacking in many of the higher education institutions. According to Coombs (as cited in Asiyai, 2017), teachers are the hub of any educational system. Teachers determine the quality of education because they transmit educational policies into practice and action. As rightly pointed out by Ukeje (also cited in Asiyai, 2017) without adequate number of inspiring, well-informed teachers, fully prepared to meet their responsibilities in the institutions, the country cannot have good education and without good education, the country cannot hope for long to meet successfully, the challenges of a changing world. Despite the importance of teachers in the attainment of good higher education, institutions of higher learning in Nigeria are short of lecturers to adequately handle excellence in teaching and learning activities. Bamiro (2012) as cited in Asiyai (2017) attributed the problem of de-intellectualization of the academia to low quality of staff of some institutions of higher learning in Nigeria. Where there is inadequate teaching staff and poor quality of lecturers, the attainment of good quality in higher education will be difficult.

Bad leadership and governance is one factor inhibiting the attainment of excellence in teaching and learning in the higher education sector. According to Asiyai (2017), institutions of higher learning in Nigeria exist because they have goals to be attained. These goals can be effectively attained when the human resources within the institutions are properly managed for their positive impacts on productivity. This is the place of leadership in the institutions of higher learning. The duty of leadership is to reduce problems within the system in order to enhance efficiency and effectiveness in teaching and learning. But poor leadership of some higher education administrators by not deliberately involving staff union members in decision making has made it impossible to attain excellence in teaching and learning. Iyayi, (2002) study (as cited in Asiyai, 2017) found out that dismissal of some academics without following due process were indication of poor governance which made many academic staff de-motivated to serious academic pursuit. Additionally, Bamiro cited in Asiyai (2017) maintained that the unfavourable governance which lead to series of strikes resulting to closure of some institutions for up to 177days since 1993 to the present day accounted for low quality in higher education in Nigeria. This unhealthy situation could lead to strained relations between university staff unions and management, increased hostility and aggression and increased mutual suspicion which are all threats to mutual co-existence for the attainment of good quality in institutions of higher learning (Asiyai, 2017). This issue of bad leadership and governance in the higher education sector is usually observable in the areas of poor supervision of instructions in higher education institutions coupled with a complete lack of accountability by institutions leading to ineffective quality assurance system. Other factors which could inhibit teaching and learning excellence include poor policy implementation in higher education and inadequate staff motivation. With all these problems still existing in the various institutions of the higher education sector, it will be difficult for the attainment of excellence in teaching and learning.

**Conclusion**

Attainment of excellence in teaching and learning in the higher education sector which is predetermining by certain factors is very crucial for successful national development in the 21st century. Excellence in teaching and learning cannot be possible without checkmating the factors responsible for responsible for this course in the higher education institutions. Hence, the need to eradicate such factors as inadequate funding, lack of teaching resources, poor maintenance culture, inadequate and inconsistency in the use of modern and mobile technologies or portable devices in teaching and learning, inappropriate teaching methodologies, large class size or lecturer-

students' ratio, inconsistency of staff in-service training and retraining, among others, for attainment of excellence in teaching and learning. The situation of problem and difficulties in the attainment of excellence in teaching and learning demands absolute control and redress in the higher education sector. Upon this premise the following suggestions has been discussed as way forward towards the sustenance and attainment of excellence in teaching and learning in the higher education sector.

**Way Forward**

Based on the nature of uniqueness of the Nigerian higher education sector on national development in the 21st century as identified by Njoka and Muriithi (2020) there is need for a high degree of excellence to be attained in the teaching and learning processes. To address the factors inhibiting the of attainment of excellence in teaching and learning in the higher education sector, the following suggestions have been provided as way forward:

1. Promoting quality and excellence in teaching and learning in the higher education sector should start with adequate funding and budgetary allocations by the owners and stakeholders of various higher education institutions. Need be to also consider the UNESCO recommendation of 26 percent given to the education sector in order to promote quality and excellence in teaching and learning. This will also enable adequate provisions of both human and material resources that will contribute effectively to excellence in teaching and learning. However, adequate teaching resources provisions should be made in order to promote excellence in teaching and learning for national development in the 21st century.
2. Government and leadership of higher education institutions should ensure that goals and objectives education policy is well implemented by so doing excellence will be sustainable in teaching and learning. However, the ICT policy should effectively be implemented in order to foster the attainment of excellence in teaching and learning for national development in the 21st century.
3. Institutional leadership should ensure best performance by promoting good governance in the institutions through adequate instructional supervision of lecturers' responsibilities, staff collaborations, organization and encouragement of constant staff in-service training and retraining programmes, promotion of adequate staff motivation, among others, which will indirectly be beneficial for national development in the 21st century.
4. Key stakeholders of the non-governmental organizations and private sectors must be involved in the administration of higher education institutions in order to boost practical exercises for skill acquisition in the higher education sector necessary for national development in the 21st century.
5. Lecturers should always ensure that they apply the best teaching methodologies and application of new teaching strategies or models in delivering their lecturers which will be futile for national development in the 21st century.

**References**

Alolor, R. (2014). *What is national development?* https://www.slideshare.net/ricoalolor/what-is-the-national-development.

Asiyai, R. I. (2017). *Challenges of quality in higher education in Nigeria in the 21st century.* https://www.quora.com/Why-are-the-1900s-called-the-20th-century-and-the-2000s-the-21st-century.

Augustyn, A., Bauer, P., Duignan, B., Eldridge, A., Gregersen, E., McKenna, A., Petruzzello, M., Rafferty, J. P., Ray, M., Rogers, K., Tikkanen, A., Wallenfeldt, J., Zeidan, A. & Zelazko, A. (Eds.) (2020). *Higher education.* https://www.britannica.com/topic/higher-education.

Ayeni, O. G. & Olowe, M. O. (2016). The implication of large class size in the

teaching and learning of business education in tertiary institution in Ekiti State. *Journal of Education and Practice, 7* (34), 65-69. www.iiste.org.

Bell, D. V. J. (2009). Twenty first century education: Transformative education for sustainability and responsible citizenship. https://www.unece.org/.pdf.

Cambridge University (2020). *Higher education.* © Cambridge University Press. https://dictionary.cambridge.org/.

Cobb, J. (2020). *Definition of learning*. https://www.missiontolearn.com/definition-of-learning/.

Deng, Z. (2017). *Rethinking curriculum and teaching*. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/.

European Network of Education Councils (EUNEC, 2012), *Excellence in education.* Report of the seminar of the European Network of Education Councils, Amsterdam, 21 – 22 May 2012, with the support of the European Commission DG Education and Culture. Brussels: EUNEC secretariat. www.eunec.eu.

Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2013). *National policy on education* (6th edition). Abuja: NERDC.

Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE, 2017). *Teaching excellence and student outcomes framework specification.* https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teachingexcellence-and-student-outcomes-framework-specification.

International Youth Foundation (2011). *Assessment report: Rwanda labour market and youth survey*. https://www.iyfnet.org/sites/default/files/Rwanda_Labor_Market_&_Youth_Assessment_Report.pdf.

Kingdom, E. O. & Maekae, J. (2013). The role of education in national development: Nigerian experience. *European Scientific Journal, 9,* 312-320.

Maduewesi, B. J. (2005). *Benchmarks and global trends in education*. Benin: Dasylva Influence Enterprise.

Njoka, J. N. & Muriithi, C. M. (2020). Quality and excellence in higher education: Issues & challenges in Rwanda.https://www.academia.edu/.

Obanya, P. (2002). *Revitalizing education in Africa*. Ibadan: Stirling-Horden Publishers (Nig.) Limited.

Ogbenevwogaga, B. A. & Ogbenevwogaga, D. T. (2006). The impact of the internet on research: The experience of Delta State University, Nigeria. *Library Philosophy and Practice, 8* (2), 1-9. https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1084&context=libphilprac.

Okunlaya, R. A., Amusa, O. I. & Ogunlana, E. K. (2015). Prospects and challenges of internet use among the Postgraduate students of social and management science in Olabisi Onabanjo University, Nigeria. *Journal of Information and Knowledge Management, 5* (5). https://www.iiste.org/Journals/index.php/IKM/article/view/22301/22806.

Open Media Network (2019). *Higher education system in India: Issues, challenges and roles*. https://openthemagazine.com/open-avenue/higher-education-system-in-india-issues-challenges-and-roles/.

Openjuru, G. L. (2011). Lifelong learning, lifelong education in higher institutions of learning in Eastern Africa: The case study of Makerere University Institute of Adult and Continuing Education. *International Journal of Lifelong Education, 30* (1), 55-69.

Oredein, A. O. (2007). Effective management of higher education: A panacea for quality assurance possibility. In J. B. Babalola, G. O. Akpa, A. O. Ayeni & S. O. Adedeji (Eds.). *Access, equity and quality in higher*

*education,* (p.391-397). NAEAP Publication.

Oye, A. J. (2014). National development strategies: Challenges and options. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention, 3* (4), 51-58. http://www.ijhssi.org/papers/v3(4)/Version-1/I0341051058.pdf.

https://physicscatalyst.com/graduation/meaning-of-learning/.

Sarma, A. (2018). *National development: Meaning, scope and different perspectives*. https://www.quora.com/What-is-national-development.

Scottish Government (2008). *Curriculum for excellence building the curriculum 3. A framework for learning and teaching.* Edinburgh: The Scottish Government. https://www.education.gov.scot/Documents/btc3.pdf.

Shaibu, A. S. & Mike, J. (2014). *Barriers to m-learning in higher education institutions in Nigeria*. http://wrap.warwick.ac.uk/72082/1/shonola_joy_iceri_2014_2_final.pdf.

Shearer, N. (2019). *Why are the 1900s called the 20th century and the 2000s the 21st century?* https://www.quora.com/Why-are-the-1900s-called-the-20th-century-and-the-2000s-the-21st-century.

Physics Catalyst (2018). *Concept of teaching and its definition*. https://physicscatalyst.com/graduation/teaching-definition/.

Physics Catalyst (2019). *Meaning of learning in education, with its concept and definition*.

Stauffer, B. (2020). *What are 21st century skills*? https://www.aeseducation.com/blog/what-are-21st-century-skills.

Ukpai, U. E. (2013). Educational standards in public and private secondary schools. In Ogbodo, C. M. (Ed). *World Multidisciplinary Journal of research development and reformation,1* (1),12-21.

Ukpai, U. E. & Ereh, C. E. (2016). Current challenges and the needed competences in the management of university education in Nigeria. *British Journal of Education, 4* (2), 74-86. Published by European Centre for Research Training and Development UK. www.eajournals.org.

Vista College (2019). *The importance of higher education in the 21st century*. https://www.vistacollege.edu/blog/resources/higher-education-in-the-21st-century/.

Vocabulary.com Dictionary (2018). *Excellence*. https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/excellence.