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Resources Verification in Tertiary Institutions: Challenges, Implications, and Strategies for Effective Implementation

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Abstract: Resources verification is an essential quality assurance mechanism employed by regulatory agencies to determine whether tertiary institutions possess adequate human, physical, financial, and instructional resources for the establishment and operation of academic programmes. Effective resources verification ensures that institutions comply with minimum academic standards and provide a conducive environment for teaching, learning, research, and community service. Despite its importance, the implementation of resources verification in many tertiary institutions is constrained by inadequate funding, shortage of qualified academic staff, poor infrastructure, weak institutional planning, poor data management, corruption, inadequate training of quality assurance personnel, and weak monitoring mechanisms. These challenges undermine the credibility of the verification process and negatively affect the quality of higher education. This paper reviewed the concept of resources verification, identified major problems militating against its effective implementation, and proposed practical strategies for strengthening the process. The paper concludes that effective resources verification is indispensable for maintaining academic standards, enhancing institutional accountability, promoting public confidence, and ensuring sustainable quality assurance in tertiary institutions. It recommends increased funding, digitalization of verification processes, improved institutional planning, capacity building for quality assurance personnel, and stronger monitoring by regulatory agencies to enhance the effectiveness of resources verification.

Keywords: resources verification, quality assurance, tertiary institutions, academic planning, higher education, regulatory agencies

Introduction

Tertiary education plays a vital role in national development through the production of skilled manpower, generation of knowledge, promotion of innovation, and provision of community services. To achieve these objectives, tertiary institutions must possess adequate human, physical, financial, technological, and instructional resources that support effective teaching, learning, research, and administration. Consequently, quality assurance has become a central component of higher education management worldwide, with resources verification serving as one of its most important mechanisms.

Resources verification is a systematic assessment conducted by regulatory agencies before the establishment or commencement of academic programmes to determine whether institutions possess the minimum resources required for quality programme delivery.

In Nigeria, agencies such as the National Universities Commission (NUC), the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), and the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) are responsible for conducting resources verification to ensure compliance with established academic standards. The exercise involves evaluating the adequacy of academic staff, classrooms, laboratories, workshops, libraries, ICT facilities, administrative structures, financial capacity, and other institutional resources [1]. Effective resources verification contributes significantly to educational quality by ensuring that only adequately prepared institutions and academic programmes receive approval. It also promotes accountability, prudent resource utilization, institutional planning, and continuous improvement. However, the implementation of resources verification in many tertiary institutions is challenged by inadequate funding, shortage of qualified personnel, poor infrastructure, weak documentation systems, corruption, and inadequate monitoring. Addressing these challenges is essential for strengthening quality assurance and improving the overall performance of tertiary education institutions [2].

Resources verification refers to the systematic process of assessing the availability, adequacy, functionality, and quality of human, physical, financial, technological, and instructional resources in a tertiary institution before the commencement or continuation of academic programmes. The exercise is conducted to determine whether an institution complies with the minimum academic standards prescribed by regulatory agencies. Resources verification is a preventive quality assurance mechanism because it ensures that institutions possess the required facilities and personnel before students are admitted into new academic programmes [3]. It also enables regulatory agencies to identify deficiencies, recommend improvements, and ensure that educational resources are effectively utilized to achieve institutional objectives.

The major components assessed during resources verification include academic staff strength and qualifications, classrooms, lecture theatres, laboratories, workshops, libraries, ICT facilities, offices, student support services, instructional materials, financial capacity, and institutional governance structures. Through this process, institutions are encouraged to improve their capacity for effective teaching, learning, research, and community service. From a broader perspective, resources verification is an indispensable instrument for promoting educational quality, institutional accountability, compliance with regulatory standards, sustainable programme development, and continuous improvement within tertiary education systems [4].

Ogunode put the following down as importance, processes and components of resources verification in the tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Materials and Methods

Resources verification helps to maintain quality standards in tertiary education by confirming that institutions possess the required personnel, facilities, equipment, and learning resources before academic programmes commence. This promotes excellence in teaching, research, and community service.

The verification process ensures that classrooms, laboratories, workshops, libraries, ICT facilities, and instructional materials are adequate. When these resources are available, lecturers can teach effectively, and students enjoy a conducive learning environment that improves academic performance.

Resources verification serves as a prerequisite for programme accreditation. Regulatory agencies verify that institutions meet minimum academic standards before granting approval to establish or continue academic programmes. Institutions that fail to meet these standards may be denied approval or accreditation.

The verification exercise enables institutional managers to identify shortages and gaps in staffing, infrastructure, equipment, and learning materials. This information supports evidence-based planning, budgeting, and prioritization of resources, thereby improving institutional management.

Resources verification prevents students from enrolling in programmes that lack qualified lecturers or adequate facilities. By ensuring that only programmes with sufficient resources are approved, students receive quality education and qualifications that are widely recognized.

Institutions that successfully pass resources verification demonstrate compliance with national standards. This strengthens their reputation, increases public trust, attracts prospective students and staff, and enhances opportunities for research collaboration and funding.

Resources verification is a systematic quality assurance exercise conducted by regulatory agencies before the commencement of a new academic programme or during programme review. The process ensures that tertiary institutions possess the minimum human and material resources required for effective teaching, learning, research, and community service. The major stages of the process are discussed below.

The process begins when a tertiary institution submits an application to the relevant regulatory agency requesting verification of resources for a proposed academic programme. The application is usually accompanied by required documents, including the programme proposal, curriculum, staffing profile, and evidence of available facilities.

Upon receipt of the application, the regulatory agency conducts a preliminary review of the submitted documents to determine whether the institution has provided all the necessary information. Any omissions or deficiencies are communicated to the institution for correction before the verification visit.

The regulatory agency appoints a panel of experts drawn from universities or other tertiary institutions, relevant professional bodies, and quality assurance units. The panel members are selected based on their expertise and experience in the discipline under review.

After constituting the panel, the regulatory agency fixes a date for the verification exercise and formally notifies the institution. The institution is expected to make all relevant documents, facilities, and personnel available during the visit.

The verification panel visits the institution to inspect physical facilities required for the proposed programme. These include lecture rooms, laboratories, workshops, libraries, studios, offices, ICT facilities, hostels, health facilities, and other supporting infrastructure. The panel assesses the adequacy, functionality, safety, and suitability of these facilities.

The panel verifies the availability and qualifications of academic, administrative, and technical staff. Staff credentials, professional registrations, years of experience, academic ranks, and staff-to-student ratios are examined to ensure compliance with minimum standards.

The panel evaluates curriculum documents, course outlines, academic regulations, laboratory equipment, library holdings, teaching materials, and electronic learning resources. The objective is to ensure that the institution has adequate academic resources to support quality teaching and learning.

The verification team holds meetings with the institution's management, including the Vice-Chancellor, Rector, Provost, Registrar, Librarian, Deans, Heads of Departments, and Directors of relevant units. These interactions provide clarification on institutional preparedness, funding, strategic plans, and programme implementation.

After completing the inspection, the panel prepares a comprehensive report highlighting the strengths, deficiencies, observations, and recommendations. The report indicates whether the institution satisfies the prescribed minimum standards for the programme.

Based on the verification report, the regulatory agency makes a final decision. The programme may receive full approval to commence, conditional approval requiring identified deficiencies to be corrected, or rejection where major deficiencies exist. The decision is communicated formally to the institution, together with recommendations for improvement where necessary.

Resources verification in tertiary institutions involves assessing whether an institution possesses the minimum human, physical, financial, and academic resources required for the establishment and effective operation of academic programmes. The following are ten major components of resources verification.

Academic staff verification focuses on the availability, qualifications, experience, rank, and number of lecturers assigned to each academic programme. Regulatory agencies verify that institutions have sufficient full-time academic staff with the required academic and professional qualifications to

deliver courses effectively. Staff-to-student ratios are also examined to ensure compliance with approved standards.

Resources verification also assesses the availability of administrative, technical, laboratory, and support staff. These personnel facilitate teaching, research, record management, laboratory operations, and the day-to-day administration of academic programmes. Adequate support staff contribute significantly to institutional efficiency.

Physical facilities constitute a major component of resources verification. These include lecture theatres, classrooms, seminar rooms, offices, laboratories, workshops, studios, libraries, hostels, staff offices, and recreational facilities. The adequacy, safety, accessibility, and maintenance of these facilities are carefully evaluated.

The library is assessed to determine whether it contains adequate textbooks, scholarly journals, reference materials, electronic databases, digital libraries, and internet facilities relevant to the academic programmes. The quality of library services and seating capacity are also examined.

Science, engineering, agriculture, medical, and technology-based programmes require specialized laboratories, workshops, studios, and practical equipment. Verification teams assess whether these facilities are functional, adequately equipped, safe, and capable of supporting practical instruction and research.

Modern tertiary education depends heavily on ICT infrastructure. Verification includes the assessment of computer laboratories, internet connectivity, learning management systems, multimedia facilities, institutional websites, digital classrooms, software applications, and ICT support services that facilitate teaching, learning, and administration.

The institution must present approved curriculum documents, programme specifications, course descriptions, course allocation, academic regulations, and programme handbooks. These documents are examined to ensure alignment with the standards prescribed by the relevant regulatory agencies.

Verification teams assess the availability of instructional materials such as textbooks, laboratory manuals, teaching aids, simulation equipment, models, multimedia resources, projectors, and other educational technologies required for effective teaching and learning.

The financial capacity of the institution is evaluated to determine whether adequate funding exists to sustain academic programmes. Verification considers budgetary allocations, sources of revenue, financial sustainability, and the institution's ability to maintain facilities, recruit staff, and procure learning resources.

Student support services are essential for effective learning. Resources verification assesses facilities and services such as student registration systems, counselling units, health services, career guidance, security services, accommodation, sporting facilities, disability support services, and academic advisory services. These services enhance students' welfare and improve their overall educational experience.

Results and Discussion

Inadequate funding is one of the most significant obstacles to the effective implementation of resources verification in tertiary institutions. Resources verification requires institutions to provide adequate classrooms, laboratories, workshops, libraries, ICT facilities, staff offices, and instructional materials before academic programmes can be approved [5]. However, many public tertiary institutions in Nigeria receive insufficient government allocations, making it difficult to procure modern teaching facilities and maintain existing infrastructure. Financial constraints also affect the ability of regulatory agencies such as the National Universities Commission (NUC), National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), and National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) to organize regular verification visits, train evaluators, and monitor compliance. Consequently, institutions often struggle to meet the minimum academic standards required for programme approval, thereby affecting the quality of education. According to the National Universities Commission, adequate funding is fundamental to the provision of quality teaching and learning resources that support accreditation and resources verification exercises. Similarly, Pillah et al. observed that inadequate financial resources significantly limit institutional preparedness for successful resources verification [6], [7].

Human resources constitute a critical component of resources verification because regulatory agencies evaluate the quantity, quality, and competence of academic and non-academic staff before approving academic programmes. Unfortunately, many tertiary institutions experience shortages of qualified lecturers, professors, technologists, laboratory scientists, librarians, and ICT personnel. The shortage results from inadequate recruitment, retirement without replacement, poor remuneration, brain drain, and increasing student enrolment. The consequence is that many departments fail to meet the staff-student ratio prescribed by regulatory agencies [8]. Some institutions resort to temporary appointments or part-time lecturers solely to satisfy verification requirements. Such practices compromise programme quality and reduce the credibility of the verification exercise. Pillah et al. identified inadequate staffing as one of the major constraints affecting institutional readiness for resources verification. Likewise, the National Universities Commission emphasizes that qualified academic staff remain the most important resource for maintaining academic quality.

Physical infrastructure represents one of the major areas assessed during resources verification. Verification teams inspect lecture theatres, classrooms, laboratories, libraries, workshops, offices, hostels, medical facilities, water supply, electricity, internet connectivity, and other institutional facilities. Unfortunately, many tertiary institutions operate with obsolete laboratory equipment, overcrowded lecture halls, inadequate office accommodation, poorly stocked libraries, unreliable electricity supply, and insufficient ICT infrastructure [9]. Population growth in student enrolment has not been matched with proportional expansion of physical facilities. These infrastructural deficiencies prevent institutions from satisfying regulatory requirements and negatively affect teaching, learning, and research activities. Iguodala reported that inadequate physical facilities remain one of the major reasons institutions experience difficulties during programme verification and accreditation exercises [10].

Effective resources verification depends on accurate institutional planning and reliable documentation. Academic Planning Units are expected to maintain updated records relating to staff qualifications, students' enrolment, departmental facilities, equipment inventories, financial records, library holdings, and institutional development plans [11]. However, many tertiary institutions still rely heavily on manual record-keeping systems characterized by incomplete documentation, poor filing, missing records, and outdated information. Weak planning also results in poor forecasting of infrastructural needs and human resource requirements. During verification exercises, institutions often spend considerable time gathering documents that should ordinarily be readily available. Poor data management reduces the efficiency, transparency, and credibility of the resources verification process and may lead to inaccurate assessment decisions. Iguodala noted that poor documentation and weak institutional planning hinder effective quality assurance and resources verification in Nigerian universities.

Corruption has remained one of the most serious challenges affecting the credibility of resources verification in tertiary institutions. Some institutions engage in unethical practices such as borrowing laboratory equipment, library books, computers, office furniture, and instructional materials from neighbouring institutions immediately before verification exercises. Others temporarily employ academic staff or manipulate staff records to satisfy regulatory requirements.

In some situations, attempts are made to influence verification outcomes through unofficial inducements or the presentation of misleading information [12], [13]. Such practices undermine the objective of resources verification, which is to ensure that only institutions with adequate facilities and personnel are permitted to operate academic programmes. Transparency, accountability, and strict adherence to ethical standards are therefore essential for strengthening the integrity of resources verification. Ogunode et al. identified unethical practices and weak accountability mechanisms as factors undermining quality assurance implementation in Nigerian higher education institutions.

Resources verification requires highly skilled Academic Planning Officers, Quality Assurance Officers, ICT personnel, institutional administrators, and regulatory evaluators who possess adequate knowledge of verification procedures, minimum academic standards, digital documentation systems, and quality assurance policies. However, many institutions provide limited opportunities for continuous professional development [14]. As regulatory requirements continue to evolve, staff

members who are not regularly trained may struggle to prepare appropriate documentation, interpret regulatory guidelines correctly, or coordinate verification activities efficiently. Continuous capacity building enhances institutional preparedness, improves compliance with quality assurance standards, promotes digital record management, and strengthens the effectiveness of verification exercises. Ukozor et al. emphasized that inadequate professional development and insufficient training of quality assurance personnel constitute major challenges confronting quality assurance units in Nigerian tertiary institutions.

Although regulatory agencies have developed comprehensive guidelines for resources verification, effective implementation depends largely on continuous monitoring and enforcement. Unfortunately, follow-up inspections after verification exercises are often irregular due to inadequate funding, manpower shortages, and logistical challenges. Many institutions fail to implement recommendations issued by verification teams because enforcement mechanisms are weak [15]. In some cases, deficiencies identified during previous verification exercises remain unaddressed for several years. Weak monitoring reduces institutional accountability and allows academic programmes to continue operating despite significant resource deficiencies. Strengthening post-verification monitoring, digital reporting systems, institutional self-assessment mechanisms, and periodic compliance audits would significantly improve the effectiveness of resources verification in tertiary institutions. Ogunode et al. argued that effective monitoring and continuous quality assurance are indispensable for sustaining educational standards in Nigerian higher education institutions.

Conclusion

Resources verification remains one of the most important quality assurance mechanisms in tertiary education because it ensures that institutions possess adequate human, material, financial, and technological resources before academic programmes are approved or expanded. Effective implementation of resources verification contributes to the maintenance of minimum academic standards, improved teaching and learning, enhanced institutional planning, and greater public confidence in higher education. Nevertheless, challenges such as inadequate funding, shortage of qualified personnel, poor infrastructure, weak data management systems, corruption, inadequate staff training, and weak monitoring continue to hinder its effectiveness.

Based on the identified challenges militating against the effective implementation of resources verification in tertiary institutions, the following recommendations are proposed:

Government should increase funding for tertiary institutions and regulatory agencies. Adequate financial resources should be provided to enable institutions to procure modern teaching facilities, expand infrastructure, recruit qualified personnel, and maintain facilities required for successful resources verification. Regulatory agencies should also receive sufficient funding to conduct regular and comprehensive verification exercises.

Tertiary institutions should recruit and retain qualified academic and technical staff. Governing councils and management should ensure continuous recruitment of competent lecturers, technologists, librarians, ICT personnel, and laboratory scientists to meet the minimum staffing requirements prescribed by regulatory agencies. Competitive remuneration and improved working conditions should also be introduced to reduce brain drain.

Institutions should invest in modern physical infrastructure and learning resources. Priority should be given to the construction and renovation of lecture halls, laboratories, libraries, workshops, offices, hostels, and ICT facilities. Existing facilities should be regularly maintained and upgraded to comply with current regulatory standards.

Academic Planning and Quality Assurance Units should strengthen institutional data management systems. Institutions should adopt digital record management systems for storing and updating information on staff, students, facilities, equipment, library holdings, and financial resources. Accurate and accessible data will improve preparedness for resources verification and enhance institutional planning.

Transparency and accountability should be strengthened during resources verification exercises. Regulatory agencies should enforce strict ethical standards to discourage the presentation of

borrowed facilities, falsification of records, and other unethical practices. Institutions found guilty of malpractice during verification should be sanctioned to preserve the integrity of the quality assurance process.

Continuous capacity building should be organized for quality assurance personnel and Academic Planning staff. Regular workshops, seminars, conferences, and professional development programmes should be conducted to equip staff with current knowledge of resources verification procedures, digital technologies, quality assurance standards, and regulatory guidelines.

Regulatory agencies should strengthen monitoring and follow-up mechanisms. The National Universities Commission (NUC), National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), and National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) should conduct periodic monitoring visits after resources verification to ensure institutions implement recommendations and maintain compliance with minimum academic standards.

Digitalization of the resources verification process should be accelerated. Institutions and regulatory agencies should deploy electronic documentation systems, online verification platforms, digital inventories, geographic information systems, and real-time reporting tools to improve transparency, efficiency, accuracy, and accountability throughout the verification process.

Institutional management should promote strategic planning and quality assurance culture. Vice-Chancellors, Rectors, Provosts, and Academic Planning Units should integrate resources verification requirements into institutional strategic plans and annual budgets to ensure continuous compliance rather than preparing only when verification exercises are imminent.

Stakeholder collaboration should be strengthened. Governments, regulatory agencies, institutional administrators, academic staff, professional bodies, development partners, alumni associations, and the private sector should collaborate to mobilize financial, technical, and material resources necessary for improving institutional readiness for resources verification and sustaining quality assurance in tertiary education.

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