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Problems Facing Tertiary Institutions in Kogi State, Nigeria: Implications for Educational Management and Sustainable Development

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Citation: Ayoko, V. O, Problems Facing Tertiary Institutions in Kogi State, Nigeria: Implications for Educational Management and Sustainable Development. Sustainable Resource Innovation Journal 2026, 1(1), 64-71.

Received: 30th May 2026

Revised: 17th Jun 2026

Accepted: 15th Jul 2026

Published: 05th Aug 2026



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Abstract: Tertiary institutions constitute critical pillars for human capital development, technological advancement, research innovation, and socio-economic transformation. Since the creation of Kogi State in 1991, the state has witnessed gradual expansion of higher education institutions aimed at increasing access and producing skilled manpower for national development. However, despite this expansion, tertiary institutions in Kogi State continue to experience several challenges that affect effective administration, teaching, research, community service, and institutional growth. This paper examines six major problems confronting tertiary institutions in Kogi State, Nigeria. The problems discussed include inadequate funding, infrastructural deficits, shortage of qualified academic staff, poor research capacity and productivity, inadequate digitalization and technological facilities, and insecurity affecting institutional operations. The paper adopts a documentary review approach and draws evidence from government reports, regulatory agencies, and scholarly literature. The study argues that while Kogi State has expanded access to tertiary education through the establishment of universities, polytechnics, colleges of education, and specialized institutions, sustainable quality improvement requires strategic investment, effective governance, adequate funding, and stronger institutional planning. The paper recommends increased financial commitment, improved infrastructure development, enhanced academic staff recruitment and training, stronger research funding mechanisms, digital transformation initiatives, and improved security systems across tertiary institutions in the state.

Keywords: Tertiary institutions, higher education, educational management, funding, infrastructure, research development, Kogi State.

1. Introduction

Tertiary education represents the highest level of formal education responsible for advanced knowledge production, professional training, research development, and preparation of skilled human resources needed for economic transformation. In Nigeria, tertiary institutions include universities, polytechnics, colleges of education, monotechnics, and specialized professional institutions established to provide advanced academic and technical training. The development of tertiary education in Kogi State reflects the broader evolution of higher education in Nigeria. Before the creation of Kogi State in 1991, educational institutions within the geographical area were controlled under the former Benue and Kwara States. The creation of Kogi State increased the demand for indigenous tertiary institutions to address the educational needs of its growing population.

One of the earliest higher education institutions established in the state was Kogi State Polytechnic, Lokoja, established in December 1992 and commencing academic activities in 1993. The institution was created to provide technical and vocational manpower development for industry and public service.

The establishment of Kogi State University, Anyigba (now known as Prince Abubakar Audu University) marked another major milestone in the development of tertiary education in the state. The university was established to expand access to university education and provide academic programmes in various disciplines [1]. Over time, it became one of the major centres of learning, research, and manpower development in North-Central Nigeria. The Federal Government later established Federal University Lokoja as part of the expansion of federal universities aimed at improving equitable access to higher education across Nigeria. The university was approved in 2011 and subsequently established through the Federal Universities Act framework. More recently, Kogi State has witnessed further expansion of tertiary education through the establishment of specialized institutions such as Confluence University of Science and Technology, established to promote science, technology, engineering, and innovation-based education [2].

2. Materials and Methods

Currently, Kogi State has a wide range of public and private tertiary institutions. According to the Kogi State education sector documents, the state hosts universities, polytechnics, colleges of education, colleges of health technology, nursing institutions, and vocational institutions.

Public Tertiary Institutions in Kogi State

State-Owned Tertiary Institutions

Prince Abubakar Audu University (formerly Kogi State University, Anyigba)

Confluence University of Science and Technology

Kogi State Polytechnic

Kogi State College of Education, Ankpa

Kogi State College of Education Technical

Kogi State College of Health Technology

Kogi State School of Nursing and Midwifery

Egbe College of Nursing and Midwifery

Nigeria-Korea Friendship Institute of Vocational and Advanced Technology

Federal Government-Owned Tertiary Institutions

Federal University Lokoja

Federal Polytechnic Idah

Federal College of Education Okene

College of Agriculture Kabba

National Open University of Nigeria Lokoja Study Centre

Private Tertiary Institutions

Salem University

Prime Polytechnic

Gloryland Polytechnic

Other privately owned health and vocational institutions approved by relevant regulatory agencies. Kogi State Government

The rapid expansion of tertiary institutions in Kogi State has improved access to higher education and reduced the pressure on institutions outside the state. However, expansion has also created management challenges relating to funding, staffing, infrastructure, research development, technology adoption, and institutional security. Therefore, it is pertinent to examine the major challenges confronting tertiary institutions in Kogi State to provide a basis for sustainable policy interventions.

3. Results

Inadequate Funding of Tertiary Institutions

Funding remains one of the most significant challenges confronting tertiary institutions in Kogi State. Adequate financing is the foundation for effective teaching, research, infrastructure development, staff recruitment, students' welfare, and institutional expansion. Tertiary institutions require sustainable financial resources to maintain academic standards, provide modern learning facilities, support research activities, and meet the increasing demand for higher education. However, institutions in Kogi State, like many public tertiary institutions in Nigeria, continue to operate under severe financial constraints. Historically, the expansion of tertiary education in Nigeria has not always been matched with proportional financial investment. The rapid increase in the number of universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education has created pressure on government resources. Many institutions established to improve access have struggled to secure adequate funding for effective operation [3]. The situation is more pronounced in state-owned institutions because they depend largely on annual subventions from state governments, which are often affected by competing demands from other sectors such as health, infrastructure, and security. In Kogi State, public tertiary institutions such as Prince Abubakar Audu University, Anyigba; Confluence University of Science and Technology; Kogi State Polytechnic; and colleges of education depend significantly on government funding. However, inadequate and irregular releases of funds affect institutional planning and implementation of academic programmes. Education managers are often confronted with difficulties in paying operational costs, maintaining facilities, procuring instructional materials, funding accreditation requirements, and supporting research activities [4].

Funding challenges have also affected staff development. Academic staff require continuous training through conferences, postgraduate programmes, research grants, and professional development activities to remain productive and globally competitive. However, limited financial resources reduce opportunities for lecturers to participate in academic conferences, undertake research projects, and access international scholarly networks. This negatively affects institutional research output and innovation capacity. The issue of funding is also connected to the quality assurance responsibilities of regulatory agencies such as the National Universities Commission (NUC), National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), and National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE). Institutions are expected to provide adequate facilities, employ qualified staff, and maintain academic standards. However, meeting accreditation requirements becomes difficult when financial resources are insufficient.

The Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) has contributed significantly to infrastructure development, staff training, and research support in Nigerian public tertiary institutions. Nevertheless, TETFund intervention is supplementary and cannot replace the primary responsibility of government to adequately finance education. According to the TETFund report, intervention funds have improved infrastructure and academic capacity in Nigerian tertiary institutions, but institutions still require stronger internal and government funding mechanisms for sustainable development [5]. The World Bank emphasized that sustainable higher education systems require adequate and predictable financing because underfunding affects teaching quality, research productivity, infrastructure development, and institutional effectiveness. Similarly, the National Universities Commission noted that inadequate funding remains one of the major factors affecting the ability of Nigerian universities to meet global academic standards. For education managers in Kogi State, inadequate funding creates serious administrative challenges. Institutional leaders must constantly prioritize competing needs, often choosing between staff welfare, infrastructure maintenance, academic programme expansion, and research support [6]. This situation limits strategic planning and prevents institutions from fully achieving their mandates.

Infrastructural Deficits and Inadequate Learning Facilities

Another major challenge confronting tertiary institutions in Kogi State is inadequate infrastructure and insufficient learning facilities. Physical facilities constitute essential components of quality tertiary education because they provide the environment required for effective teaching, learning, research, and administration. These facilities include classrooms, lecture theatres, laboratories, libraries, hostels, staff offices, ICT centres, workshops, and recreational facilities. The expansion of tertiary education in Kogi State has resulted in increased student enrolment, but infrastructural development has not always grown at the same pace. Many institutions experience pressure on existing facilities because student populations continue to increase while available infrastructure remains inadequate [7]. Consequently, some institutions operate with overcrowded classrooms, insufficient laboratory spaces, inadequate office accommodation, and limited student support facilities. In universities such as Prince Abubakar Audu University, Anyigba, and Federal University Lokoja, continuous growth in academic programmes has increased demand for lecture halls, laboratories, libraries, and research facilities. Newly established institutions such as Confluence University of Science and Technology also face the challenge of developing complete infrastructure capable of supporting science and technology-based education [8].

Inadequate infrastructure affects teaching and learning quality. Overcrowded classrooms reduce effective interaction between lecturers and students, making learner-centred teaching difficult. Students may experience difficulties accessing library materials, laboratory equipment, and technological resources required for practical learning. In science and engineering programmes, inadequate laboratories can limit students' practical experiences and reduce their competitiveness in the labour market. Infrastructure deficits also affect accreditation outcomes. Regulatory bodies require institutions to provide adequate facilities before approving academic programmes. Institutions with insufficient facilities may experience difficulties obtaining accreditation or expanding academic programmes. This can restrict students' access to professional programmes and reduce institutional growth [9]. The problem extends to staff accommodation and welfare facilities. Poor office spaces affect lecturers' ability to conduct research, supervise students, and provide academic support. Similarly, inadequate student accommodation forces many students to seek housing outside campuses, creating additional security and welfare concerns. The COVID-19 pandemic further exposed infrastructure weaknesses, particularly inadequate digital learning facilities. Many tertiary institutions lacked sufficient ICT infrastructure, internet connectivity, and digital platforms needed to support online teaching and learning. The digital divide continues to affect institutions with limited technological investment. According to the National Universities Commission, adequate infrastructure remains a major requirement for achieving quality assurance in Nigerian universities. The World Bank also identified inadequate learning facilities as a major constraint affecting higher education quality in developing countries [10]. TETFund reported that infrastructure intervention projects have improved facilities across Nigerian tertiary institutions, but significant gaps remain because of increasing demand and limited resources.

Shortage of Qualified Academic Staff

The availability of qualified academic staff is critical to the success of tertiary institutions. Lecturers are responsible for teaching, research, supervision, innovation, mentorship, and community service. However, tertiary institutions in Kogi State face challenges associated with inadequate numbers of qualified academic personnel, uneven staff distribution, and difficulties attracting and retaining highly skilled scholars. The rapid expansion of tertiary institutions has increased the demand for academic staff. New universities, polytechnics, and colleges require lecturers across different disciplines to operate effectively. However, recruitment has not always matched institutional expansion, leading to shortages in some departments and programmes. Shortage of academic staff affects lecturer-student ratios [11]. When institutions have fewer lecturers than required, existing staff members handle excessive workloads, including teaching large classes, supervising many students, participating in administrative assignments, and conducting research. Heavy workloads reduce the time available for scholarly activities and may affect teaching quality. The shortage is particularly significant in specialized fields such as engineering, medicine, information technology, sciences, and professional programmes. Institutions often struggle to attract experts because qualified academics may prefer universities located in larger urban centres or institutions with better research funding and welfare packages.

Staff retention is another concern. Some academics leave public tertiary institutions due to limited research opportunities, inadequate remuneration, poor working conditions, or better opportunities elsewhere [12]. This movement of experienced lecturers creates institutional instability and affects academic continuity. The shortage of qualified academic staff also affects accreditation exercises. Regulatory bodies such as NUC, NBTE, and NCCE require institutions to maintain adequate numbers of qualified lecturers before approving programmes. Where staffing requirements are not met, institutions may face restrictions during accreditation. The NUC identified inadequate academic staffing as one of the persistent challenges affecting quality assurance in Nigerian universities. Similarly, the World Bank emphasized that higher education quality depends heavily on the availability of competent academic personnel, research capacity, and professional development opportunities [13].

Poor Research Capacity and Low Research Productivity

Research is one of the fundamental mandates of tertiary institutions globally. Universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education are expected to serve as centres of knowledge creation, innovation, problem-solving, and national development. In Nigeria, tertiary institutions are mandated not only to produce graduates but also to generate new knowledge through scientific investigations, applied research, publications, and community-based solutions. However, poor research capacity and low research productivity remain major challenges confronting tertiary institutions in Kogi State. Research capacity refers to the ability of an institution and its academic staff to generate, disseminate, and apply knowledge through adequate funding, skilled researchers, modern laboratories, digital resources, research networks, and institutional support systems. Unfortunately, many tertiary institutions in Kogi State experience limitations in these areas, affecting their contribution to knowledge development and societal transformation. One major factor responsible for poor research productivity is inadequate research funding. Effective research requires financial support for data collection, laboratory experiments, fieldwork, publication fees, research assistants, and dissemination activities. However, many academic staff in Kogi State tertiary institutions depend largely on personal resources to conduct research because institutional research grants are often inadequate. This limits the scale, quality, and relevance of research outputs.

Although the establishment of the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) has improved research support through the provision of institutional grants, academic conferences, and research funding schemes, many researchers still face difficulties accessing adequate resources. The competitive nature of research grants means that not all academic staff receive support, leaving many scholars unable to undertake major research projects. Another challenge is inadequate research infrastructure. Science-based research requires functional laboratories, modern equipment, research databases, and specialized facilities. Some tertiary institutions in Kogi State lack sufficient research laboratories and advanced equipment needed for cutting-edge research. This affects their ability to compete with institutions nationally and internationally. Poor research productivity is also linked to limited international collaboration. Global universities increasingly depend on partnerships, joint publications, international conferences, and research networks. However, some institutions in Kogi State face challenges establishing sustainable international research partnerships because of limited funding, inadequate institutional support, and weak research management systems [14].

Academic workload also contributes to reduced research output. Many lecturers spend significant time teaching large classes, supervising students, and performing administrative responsibilities. Heavy teaching responsibilities reduce the time available for research activities, manuscript preparation, grant writing, and scholarly collaboration. The consequences of weak research capacity are significant. Institutions with low research productivity have reduced visibility in global university rankings, limited innovation capacity, and weaker contributions to solving societal problems. For Kogi State, where agriculture, mining, environmental sustainability, technology, and industrial development require evidence-based solutions, weak research capacity limits the contribution of tertiary institutions to state development. The National Universities Commission (NUC, 2023) emphasized that research productivity, innovation, and postgraduate development are important

indicators of university quality and competitiveness. Similarly, the World Bank (2021) noted that higher education institutions in developing countries require stronger research systems, funding mechanisms, and academic capacity development to contribute effectively to economic development. Tertiary institutions in Kogi State require stronger research policies, increased research funding, improved laboratory facilities, institutional research centres, academic mentorship programmes, and partnerships with industries, government agencies, and international organizations.

Inadequate Digitalization and Technological Facilities

The increasing importance of technology in education has transformed the management and delivery of tertiary education worldwide. Digital technologies support online learning, electronic administration, research collaboration, academic records management, library services, examination systems, and institutional decision-making. However, inadequate digitalization and limited technological infrastructure remain significant challenges affecting tertiary institutions in Kogi State. Modern tertiary education requires effective integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) into teaching, learning, research, and administration. Universities and other higher institutions are expected to adopt digital platforms for student registration, learning management systems, electronic libraries, virtual classrooms, online assessment, and data-driven institutional planning. However, many institutions in Kogi State are still struggling to achieve comprehensive digital transformation. One major challenge is inadequate ICT infrastructure. Many tertiary institutions face problems such as insufficient computers, unreliable internet connectivity, limited bandwidth, inadequate digital learning platforms, and poor maintenance of technological facilities. These challenges affect both academic and administrative operations. The growth of online and blended learning has increased the importance of digital capacity. The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated that institutions with stronger digital systems were better able to continue academic activities during emergencies. However, institutions with limited technological resources experienced significant disruption because they lacked effective online teaching platforms and digital communication systems.

Digitalization challenges also affect education management. Effective institutional planning requires accurate data collection, storage, analysis, and reporting. Electronic management information systems enable administrators to make evidence-based decisions regarding student enrolment, staffing, budgeting, accreditation, and resource allocation. However, inadequate digital systems limit the ability of tertiary institutions in Kogi State to efficiently manage institutional information. Academic staff also require digital skills to effectively integrate technology into teaching and research. Some lecturers need additional training in areas such as learning management systems, digital assessment tools, data analysis software, and online research platforms. Without continuous capacity development, investments in ICT infrastructure may not achieve expected outcomes. Library services are equally affected. Modern academic libraries depend heavily on electronic databases, digital repositories, and online scholarly resources. Limited access to digital resources restricts students' and lecturers' ability to engage with current global knowledge [15]. This negatively affects research quality and academic competitiveness. The Federal Government of Nigeria has emphasized digital transformation through various initiatives, including the National Digital Economy Policy and Strategy, which encourages technology adoption across sectors, including education. However, successful implementation requires adequate funding, reliable infrastructure, and institutional commitment. UNESCO emphasized that technology can improve education access, management, and quality when supported by adequate infrastructure, policies, and capacity development. The World Bank also identified digital transformation as a critical factor for improving higher education systems in developing countries. For tertiary institutions in Kogi State, digitalization should become a strategic priority. Institutions need investment in ICT infrastructure, internet connectivity, digital libraries, staff training, cybersecurity systems, and electronic management platforms to remain competitive in the contemporary knowledge economy.

Insecurity and Its Impact on Tertiary Institution Management

Insecurity has become an emerging challenge affecting tertiary institutions in Kogi State. Although the state has historically experienced lower levels of violent conflict compared with some parts of northern Nigeria, increasing cases of kidnapping, banditry, communal conflicts, and criminal

activities have created new security concerns for educational institutions. A secure environment is essential for effective tertiary education management. Universities and other higher institutions require peace and stability for teaching, research, innovation, student mobility, and administrative operations. However, security threats have introduced new responsibilities and financial pressures for institutional managers. The kidnapping of students from the Confluence University of Science and Technology (CUSTECH), Osara, in 2024 demonstrated the vulnerability of tertiary institutions in the state to security threats. The incident generated fear among students, parents, staff, and university administrators, leading to increased attention toward campus security arrangements. Security challenges affect students' enrolment decisions. Parents may become reluctant to send their children to institutions perceived as unsafe, especially where incidents of kidnapping or violent attacks have occurred. This can negatively affect institutional reputation and student population growth. Insecurity also increases institutional expenditure. Universities and other tertiary institutions must invest more resources in security personnel, surveillance systems, fencing, emergency response mechanisms, and collaboration with security agencies. These additional expenses reduce funds available for academic development. Academic activities are equally affected. Fear of insecurity may limit evening classes, research activities involving fieldwork, conferences, and community engagement programmes. Staff and students may avoid certain locations because of safety concerns, thereby reducing institutional effectiveness. The psychological consequences are also significant. Students and staff exposed to security threats may experience fear, anxiety, and reduced concentration. This affects academic performance, staff productivity, and institutional morale. The Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack reported that attacks against educational institutions undermine access, quality, and continuity of education. UNESCO also emphasized that security threats remain a major barrier to achieving inclusive and sustainable education systems. For education managers in Kogi State, security management has become an important component of institutional administration. Tertiary institutions must develop comprehensive security strategies involving government agencies, local communities, students, and security organizations.

4. Conclusion

This Tertiary institutions in Kogi State have expanded significantly since the creation of the state, contributing to increased access to higher education and human capital development. However, challenges relating to funding, infrastructure, academic staffing, research capacity, digital transformation, and security continue to limit their ability to achieve global competitiveness and provide quality education.

Based on the findings, the study recommends the following:

The Kogi State Government and Federal Government should increase funding to tertiary institutions to improve infrastructure, research, staffing, and technological development.

Tertiary institutions should strengthen internally generated revenue mechanisms while maintaining affordability and accessibility.

Government and institutions should invest more in modern classrooms, laboratories, libraries, hostels, and ICT facilities.

Academic staff recruitment, retention, and continuous professional development should receive priority attention.

Institutions should establish stronger research funding systems and partnerships with industries, government agencies, and international organizations.

Comprehensive digital transformation plans should be developed to improve teaching, learning, research, and institutional administration.

Security systems should be strengthened through collaboration among institutions, government, communities, and security agencies.

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