

EXPLORING FACTORS THAT AFFECT STAFF AND STUDENT
PERCEPTION OF QUALITY TERTIARY EDUCATION IN NIGERIA,
WITH FOCUS ON FUNDING AND POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

By

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to Almighty God who made it possible.

It is also dedicated to the loving memory of my husband, Olugbenga Abiodun, whose love, care and cherished memories continue to inspire me. Though he is not here to witness this moment, his influence remains forever woven into my life's journey.

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To everyone who supported me directly or indirectly, I am sincerely grateful. This accomplishment is shared with all of you.

DECLARATION

I acknowledge that this thesis represents my personal work, excluding where proper acknowledgement is made, and that it has not been previously submitted to any other institution for a degree, diploma or other qualifications.

Anike Olufunke Adeoye

Abstract

This is a critical study that explores how funding allocation and policy implementation shape students' and staff's perceptions of quality in Nigerian tertiary education, specifically in Colleges of Education. Despite repeated government efforts to improve quality through reforms and funding, concerns remain about infrastructure, teaching capacity, research output, and graduate outcomes. Most existing studies focus on system-level or expert analyses, with limited empirical research on how staff and students perceive and interpret the relationship between funding, policies, and educational quality within institutions.

This study, grounded in Principal-Agent Theory and critical realist philosophy, investigates the alignment of policy goals, funding models, and institutional practices. It uses a mixed-methods approach, gathering questionnaire responses from academic staff and students, as well as semi structured interviews with institutional leaders and key stakeholders. Quantitative data were analysed descriptively to identify perception patterns, while qualitative data underwent thematic analysis to reveal the underlying mechanisms affecting policy implementation and quality outcomes.

The findings emphasise a persistent disconnect between national policy objectives and institutional realities. Although respondents generally acknowledge the role of policy frameworks in establishing quality standards, their perceptions of quality are largely affected by funding's adequacy, timeliness, and transparency. Weak accountability mechanisms, fragmented governance structures, and limited institutional autonomy further hinder policy implementation. Together, these factors result in inconsistent quality across Colleges of Education, fostering scepticism about the effectiveness of policy reforms to produce significant improvements without continuous, well-coordinated funding.

The study contributes to knowledge by emphasising staff and student perceptions in analyses of quality assurance and policy implementation in Nigerian tertiary education, an area that remains insufficiently explored. By combining Principal-Agent Theory with a critical realist perspective, the research provides a detailed explanation of how structural constraints and institutional agencies interact to influence educational quality. The findings offer evidence-based insights for policymakers, funding bodies, and institutional leaders, underscoring the importance of closer alignment among funding structures, governance mechanisms, and policy implementation to improve quality outcomes in colleges of Education and the broader tertiary education system.

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Definition of Key Terms

For clarity and consistency, the following terms are defined in this study below. These definitions aim to differentiate between related concepts and to contextualise the discussion within the Nigerian tertiary education sector.

Tertiary Education

Tertiary education encompasses all forms of education following secondary school. In Nigeria, this includes universities, polytechnics, colleges of education, and other specialized post-secondary institutions. It involves teaching, research, professional training, and community service aimed at developing advanced knowledge, skills, and abilities essential for national development. In this study, tertiary education broadly refers to the entire postsecondary education sector in Nigeria.

Tertiary Institutions

Tertiary institutions are formal organisations providing higher education. In Nigeria, this includes universities, polytechnics, monotechnics, colleges of education, and other recognised post-secondary institutions approved by regulatory agencies like the National Universities Commission, the National Board for Technical Education, and the National Commission for Colleges of Education. For this research, 'tertiary institutions' describe the organisational structures used to deliver tertiary education.

Institutions

In this thesis, the term 'institutions' is used to collectively refer to all tertiary institutions in Nigeria. These include universities, polytechnics, monotechnics, and colleges of education, organised and formally established bodies within the tertiary education system. Therefore, the

colleges of education are recognised as an integral part of the broader institutional structures of tertiary education in Nigeria.

Colleges of Education

Colleges of education, or Colleges as used in this study, are institutions within the Nigerian educational system that are post-secondary and typically focus on training. In this study, the term specifically refers to Colleges of Education. These colleges form part of Nigeria's tertiary education system and mainly train preservice teachers, leading to the award of the Nigeria Certificate in Education and other degree qualifications through university affiliation or by gaining university status. It is important to note that the participants in this research are students and staff of colleges of education in Nigeria.

Colleges of Education are a specific type of tertiary institution. Although every College of Education is part of a tertiary institution, not all tertiary institutions are designated as colleges. These definitions help clarify the terminology used in this thesis, enhancing understanding and preventing confusion.

CHAPTER 1: Introduction

This research explores the factors that affect staff and students' perceptions of quality tertiary education in Nigeria, with a focus on funding and policy implementation. This chapter presents a comprehensive overview of Nigeria and its tertiary education system, highlighting the historical development, the goals and policies that guide it, and the key regulatory bodies responsible for ensuring its effectiveness. It also briefly examines the roles of various stakeholders, including the government, the private sector, and international donors, in funding and sustaining tertiary education. Furthermore, it critically assesses the implications of these roles on access, equity, and quality within Nigerian tertiary education.

By examining how these important factors shape stakeholders' expectations and perceptions of quality, the study aims to shed light on the structural and systemic challenges affecting tertiary education in Nigeria. Additionally, it seeks to enrich the broader discussion on educational quality by analysing the experiences and views of those directly engaged in the higher education system while identifying opportunities for tangible reform. The research aims to guide policymakers in education planning and management at the Ministry of Education and agencies under the Education sector in Nigeria, would contribute to literatures on developing African Nations and international organisations that may need information and research on the state of Nigeria tertiary education sector, particularly the Colleges of education, to enhance institutional administrative practices, and foster the development of more adaptive and sustainable strategies for quality within the Nigerian tertiary education landscape.

1.1.0 The UK-Nigerian Educational Differences

While this research is conducted within a UK university setting (University of Staffordshire), it focuses entirely on Nigeria's tertiary education sector. Given the significant contextual, structural, and policy differences between the UK and Nigeria, it is essential to provide a thorough background on Nigeria's education system. This information will help readers properly contextualise the research (Obasi, 2007; Okebukola, 2015). Nigeria's education system faces distinctive challenges shaped by its colonial history, the socio-political landscape, and inconsistent policy implementation, which differ markedly from those in higher-income countries, such as the UK (Adeogun & Osifila, 2008; World Bank, 2021). By establishing this

contextual foundation early in the thesis, the study ensures that its findings are analysed within the appropriate national framework, minimising the risk of applying global standards without considering local realities (Altbach and Salmi, 2011).

1.1.1 Background to the Study

Importance of Quality Education Globally and in Nigeria

Education occupies a pivotal position in the developmental strides of nations. (Blaike, 2002; Holmes and Tuomi, 2022) They opined that education constitutes the largest industry, encompassing every area of human development. According to Olaleye, Ukpabi, and Mogaji (2020), Nigeria has committed itself to improving education for the benefit of its population. Tertiary education, globally, is viewed as a significant contributor to workforce development and fosters the overall advancement of countries (Blaike, 2002), as education helps generate ideas, enhance skills, and improve human capital. Nevertheless, reports indicate that education, in general, and Tertiary education, in particular, are fundamental to building a knowledge-based economy and society in all nations (World Bank, 2012). Yet, the potential of Tertiary education systems in developing countries, including Nigeria, to fulfil this responsibility is often impeded by long-standing issues of finance, efficiency, equity, quality, and governance (Saint, Hartnett, and Strassner, 2004; Chankselliani and McCowan, 2021).

Hence, the reason why many nations are striving to expand the tertiary education sector can be seen as illustrated by Goldin and Katz (2010). In Nigeria, education is culturally valued as a tool for national empowerment and social mobility. However, there are issues with implementation and actual impact. People's expectations of tertiary institutions' products are that they will become drivers of societal development. (Anyanwu, 2011; Fafunwa, 2018). Moreover, Hong (2010) asserted that the success of tertiary education is anchored on a tripod of adequate funding, planning, and sound policy. Scholarly research indicates that organisational effectiveness and sustainability depend heavily on access to sufficient resources.

In the education sector, empirical studies show that funding plays a vital role in driving institutional growth and progress (Adeyemi, 2011; Ahmadu and Egbewole, 2022).

Since the first school was established in Badagry, Nigeria, in 1842, the country has made significant progress in education. The establishment of the first tertiary institution in Nigeria, Yaba College, in 1942, eventually led to the creation of University College Ibadan (UCI) in 1948, which was later renamed the University of Ibadan in 1962 after gaining autonomy from the University of London, opening the gateway for the establishment of tertiary Institutions in Nigeria (Ibukun, 1997; Otonko, 2012; Fafunwa, 2018). In Nigeria, as in many other parts of the world, the tertiary education sector has experienced significant growth. It has shifted from serving only a small niche of people to becoming a broad system that accommodates a larger and more diverse student body (Dauda, 2010; Adekola, 2012; Agubosim, et.,al. 2023). This expansion has led to increased enrolment and a wider variety of providers, including public, private, and faith-based Institutions. It has introduced new challenges in defining, managing, and perceiving quality across the sector. As the system continues to expand, there is a growing need for detailed research into how key stakeholders, especially those involved in daily institutional operations, perceive and respond to policies aimed at enhancing quality. (Agubosim, et.,al,2023) While students are often viewed as the main beneficiaries or "customers" of higher education (Chua, 2004), they are part of a broader system that includes academic and non-academic staff, government policymakers, employers, professional bodies, and regulatory agencies. All these groups influence what defines quality education, how it is delivered, and how it is experienced.

This study highlights explicitly the perception of tertiary institutional staff responsible for interpreting and implementing policies, managing resources, and ensuring the effective operation of teaching, learning, and support services. Their insights, alongside those of students, are crucial for understanding how funding arrangements and policy choices are experienced in practice and how these experiences shape perceptions of quality in Nigeria's tertiary Institutions.

Nigeria's tertiary education rests on a tripod of colleges of education, polytechnics/monotechnics, and universities. As of December 2021, Nigeria has 97 public and private Colleges of Education (NCCE, 2021), 152 public and private polytechnics/monotechnics (NBTE, 2021), and 202 private and public universities (NUC, 2021). Arguably, as stated by Tikly (2011), the development of a nation's socio-economic stratum depends heavily on the quality of its tertiary education system, which produces the required staffing needed to

drive the country's economy. The tertiary Institutions provide not only an educated workforce but also the platform on which political leadership will drive the nation's progress, as opined by Anyanwu (2011). This number has grown considerably when checked on the websites of regulatory agencies in 2025, indicating an increase in the number of tertiary Institutions in Nigeria.

The report from the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB), a body responsible for conducting admissions into tertiary Institutions in Nigeria, as reported in 2020, revealed that only 60% of the candidates who applied for admission could be admitted. This is due to the non-availability of spaces in the Institutions. The implication is that 40% of the candidates will be unable to study in tertiary Institutions in Nigeria that year, and this trend has been consistent year after year (Idoko, 2021). Opinion is divided on whether the government should establish more tertiary Institutions to cater for the youths who seek admission every year or the government should concentrate on developing the existing ones to meet international standards. (Nyewisura & Yusuf, 2018).

Table 1.1 UTME applications and university admissions in Nigeria from 1999 to 2022

Year	Applications (UTME)	Admissions (Degree)	Acceptance Rate (%)
1999	593,670.0	64,358.0	10.8
2000	467,490.0	45,681.0	9.8
2001	749,727.0	90,769.0	12.1
2002	994,381.0	51,845.0	5.2
2003	1,046,950.0	105,157.0	10.0
2004	841,878.0	122,492.0	14.5
2005	916,371.0	76,984.0	8.4
2006	803,472.0	88,524.0	11.0
2007	1,028,984.0	129,445.0	12.6
2008	1,192,050.0	113,100.0	9.5
2017	1,722,269.0	566,719.0	33.0
2018	1,653,127.0	549,763.0	33.0
2022	1,100,000.0	600,000.0	55.0

Table 1.1. shows trends in JAMB UTME applications and university admissions in Nigeria from 1999 to 2022. It highlights the gap between applicants and the admitted students. The tables show that although the application numbers increased, the admission capacities did not grow at the same rate, resulting in a low acceptance rate. Data for 2017 and 2018 are from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). Earlier data, including 2022 data, are from archival research and JAMB records.

Despite the significant advantages nations gain from having functional tertiary Institutions, these benefits will only be realised by those whose tertiary Institutions provide qualitative service (Ogbuofor, 2021). In Nigeria, the quality of education depends on fulfilling the five national goals that underpin its strength: (1) to create a democratic and free society; (2) a just and egalitarian society; (3) a united, strong, and self-reliant nation; (4) a great and dynamic economy; (5) a land full of bright opportunities for all citizens (Otonko, 2012, NPE, 2013). Research has shown that quality determines the functionality of the education provided. For instance, Idowu (1999) notes that functional education involves the comprehensive process of nurturing individuals to develop their potential fully and thus contribute significantly to societal development. In this context, retaining teachers is vital for enhancing both the quality and effectiveness of education, as stability and the continuous presence of educators are linked to better learning outcomes. The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 from 2015 stipulated a need to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and to promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Quality education emphasises skills development and social equity, empowering individuals to harness their potential and engage in the social, political, and economic advancement of their countries. Studies indicate that quality education is supported by effective funding and policies implemented at the institutional administrative level. Madani (2019) argued that quality is reflected by a range of indicators, including government spending on education, student/teacher ratios, teacher qualifications, test scores, and the length of time students spend in school. The revelation by Budgit (2021) regarding Nigeria's tertiary Institutions suggests that these Institutions are significantly underfunded, which has profound implications for their quality and standards.

Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria have enacted various administrative policies to enhance quality and standards. Researchers and educationists have raised concerns about the quality of Nigeria's tertiary education, especially given the low rankings of Nigerian universities in global assessments (Arong and Ogbadu, 2010; NUC, 2021). According to the 2021 global ranking by Webometrics, three Nigerian universities, the University of Ibadan, Covenant University, and Obafemi Awolowo University, were ranked 1,196th, 1,314th, and 1,503rd, respectively among 30000 universities (Oyeleke, 2021). Arguably, the underfunding of Nigerian tertiary Institutions is widely regarded as a key factor affecting their ability to maintain quality, which

may be reflected in global university rankings. Researchers such as Saint, Hartnett, and Strassner (2003) suggest that inconsistent funding and a lack of political commitment to long-term investment have led to infrastructural decay and frequent industrial actions. Furthermore, Babalola (2012) highlights that gaps in policy implementation further hinder the sector's capacity to deliver quality education.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) recommends that developing countries allocate 26% of their annual budget to education (Ekaette, Owan, and Agbo, 2019; as cited by Odigwe and Owan, 2019). However, the 2021 annual budget of the Federal Republic of Nigeria allocated only N771.5 billion to education, which is just 5.68% of the total budget (Budgit, 2021). To comply with UNESCO's recommendations, Nigeria should allocate approximately N2.7 trillion to education, emphasising that only a small fraction of Nigeria's annual budget is devoted to this sector.

There have been various efforts to develop education in Nigeria, both before Nigerian independence in 1960 and after independence up to the present. Notably, the British colonial government introduced the Arthur Richards Constitution of 1946, which established a federal structure that shared responsibility for education between the central and regional governments. This arrangement placed education on the concurrent legislative list, meaning both levels of government are constitutionally allowed to legislate, fund, and manage education-related matters (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999; Iruonangbe, Imhonopi and Egharevba, 2015). For instance, while the federal government has the authority to set national education policy and establish federal universities, state governments can also develop and fund their own tertiary Institutions according to local needs and priorities. This dual authority, although intended to promote wider access and regional responsiveness, has sometimes led to fragmented implementation, inconsistent standards, and debates over funding responsibilities. (Fafunwa, 2018) The National Policy on Education further recognises the shared role of federal, state, and local governments in education governance and stresses the need for coordination to ensure quality and equitable service delivery across the system (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013).

Unfortunately, this led to unhealthy competition and disparities among the different regions in the development of tertiary education in Nigeria. (Babalola et al., 2007) Before Nigeria's political independence, Ashby's (1959) commissions of enquiry were established by the central

government to advise on the higher educational needs of the emerging independent nation for the following twenty years. The Ashby Commission, specifically, submitted its report in September 1960, emphasising the significant importance of tertiary education for the development of the Nigerian nation. The need for skilled personnel in various sectors of the Nigerian economy also necessitated the establishment of regional tertiary Institutions, which resulted in the founding of the first- generation universities such as the University of Ibadan for the Southern region, the University of Nsukka for the Eastern region, and Ahmadu Bello University, Kano for the Northern region.

These Institutions have served as valuable instruments for both political and educational development in Nigeria at all levels, including higher education. (Anyanwu, 2011) The Asquith Commission was established after Nigerian independence in 1962 to review the recommendations of the Ashby Commission and provide further guidelines for improving the quality of the tertiary education sector. The focus was on funding, policies, governance, and curriculum development. The commission advised the Nigerian government to be more proactive in funding its tertiary education and encouraged the privatisation of the tertiary education sector in Nigeria. It emphasised the significance of quality assurance, among other recommendations. (Anyanwu, 2011)

Various policies have been formulated to promote quality education in Nigeria; however, these policies have not yielded the desired results. For example, the implementation of the Ashby and the Asquith Commission has led to the establishment of the National University Commission, the introduction of scholarship schemes and boards, and the establishment of the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND). (Daniel and Inaegbu, 2020) Yet, the Nigerian tertiary education sector still struggles to meet its goals as stated in the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) Constitution, which is to develop high-level, relevant skills that support both individual progress and societal development. The Constitution seeks to build intellectual ability, instil key values vital for national unity, and prepare students with both mental and practical skills needed to face local and global issues effectively. (Ogunode and Musa, 2020) To achieve these objectives, Nigerian tertiary Institutions are required to provide quality teaching and conduct research that informs policy and practice. Emphasis is also placed on staff development and the expansion of diverse learning options, including full-time, part-time, block-release, and sandwich programs to improve access and flexibility. Institutional

frameworks such as the Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) and the Industrial Training Fund (ITF) aim to connect academic training with industry relevance. Moreover, the mechanisms to ensure quality, collaboration between Institutions, and people involvement are vital parts of the broader strategy to ensure that tertiary education remains responsive, inclusive, and development focused.

As Ogundipe (2024) arguably observes, Nigeria's higher education goals are ambitious and broad, aiming to produce skilled workers, support national progress, and enhance individual potential. These objectives are outlined in the National Policy on Education and supported by various reforms (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013). However, ongoing challenges highlight a gap between policy aims and actual outcomes. For example, rising youth unemployment persists despite an increase in tertiary institution graduates, raising questions about whether university education truly meets labour market needs (Akor et al., 2021). Moreover, frequent strikes by unions such as the Academic Staff Union of Nigerian Universities (ASUU), the Academic Staff Union of Polytechnics (ASUP), and the Colleges of Education Academic Staff Union (COEASU) continue to disrupt academic schedules, diminish instructional quality, and erode public trust (Odia and Omofonmwan, 2007). These issues are likely linked to inadequate and inconsistent funding and poor policy implementation, which are key concerns of this study. This hampers tertiary Institutions in achieving their objectives and fuels scepticism about the quality and effectiveness of Nigerian tertiary education in meeting national goals (Ogundipe, 2024). By examining how funding and policy influence staff and student perceptions of quality, this research aims to identify practical barriers to the realisation of the transformative potential of Nigerian tertiary education.

Education policies are laws, principles, decisions, and guidelines that influence the operation of the education system (Olayemi, 2014). According to Okoroma (2006), policies state the directives to follow in a formal setting. Nigeria's educational system is governed by standard educational policies from which the various tertiary Institutions derive the administrative policies used to govern their Institutions. Unfortunately, policy implementation and goal achievement in these Institutions have been irreconcilable due to poor implementation (Okoroma, 2006). The policy aims to align objectives and functions, discouraging deviations from achieving stated goals. Educational policies are designed to improve the quality of instructional delivery in schools (Awokoya, 1981; Olayemi, 2014). Over several decades,

researchers have argued that the problem of Nigerian education is not a lack of workable policies, but rather issues related to implementation and policy somersault (Adesina, 1977; Jacob and Madu, 2021).

Studies have indicated that education, especially tertiary education, plays a crucial role in shaping a knowledge-based economy and society worldwide (World Bank, 2010; Odigwe and Owan, 2019). However, the ability of higher education systems in developing countries, including Nigeria, to fulfil this role is frequently hindered by persistent challenges related to funding, efficiency, equity, quality, and governance (Saint, Hartnett, and Strassner, 2004). Education is a serious investment that must yield appropriate dividends for the people. When the investment (funding) is inadequate and policy implementation is deficient, the country suffers a loss. The Nigerian 1999 Constitution, Section 18, aligns with this fact when it states as follows: "The government must focus on ensuring that everyone has access to appropriate and equal educational opportunities" (Nigerian 1999 Constitution, Chapter II, No. 18, p. 10).

1.1.2 Conceptualising Quality in this Study

Quality is a central concept in this study and is fundamental to current debates about tertiary education globally and in Nigeria. Although widely used by policymakers, researchers, educators, and regulators, there is no single accepted definition. Instead, quality is described as a complex, multidimensional, and context-dependent concept that varies with stakeholders' values, expectations, and goals (Harvey and Green, 1993; Welzant et al., 2015). Therefore, what qualifies as quality education in one setting may differ significantly from what qualifies in another. Over time, the idea of quality has evolved alongside changing societal expectations. Historically, educational systems were rated primarily by their ability to transmit knowledge, uphold cultural values, and prepare individuals for societal roles. Today, definitions of quality extend beyond these traditional roles, emphasising student learning outcomes, employability, institutional effectiveness, accountability, equity, inclusiveness, and societal impact (UNESCO, 2015; OECD, 2019). As a result, quality has become a key concern for governments, institutions, funding bodies, and international organisations seeking to ensure that tertiary education contributes to economic growth, social development, and competitiveness.

Harvey and Green (1993) made a significant contribution to the quality discourse by emphasising that quality is not a single concept but a multidimensional concept, with different stakeholders interpreting it in various ways. They describe quality as exceptional, performance or consistency, fitness for purpose, value for money, and transformation. These viewpoints suggest that stakeholders may prioritise different aspects of it, for example, governments might focus on accountability and value for money, employers may focus on graduate competencies, skills and employability, and students may be on learning experiences, support services, and educational outcomes. Among these dimensions, the idea of quality as transformation is especially relevant in tertiary education. Harvey and Green argue that education should do more than only transmit knowledge, it should also transform learners socially, intellectually, and professionally. From this perspective, quality education fosters critical thinking, professional competence, personal confidence, and the ability to contribute meaningfully to society. This transformational view aligns with the broader objectives of tertiary education, especially in developing countries, where higher education is often seen as a catalyst for national and social development.

The focus on stakeholder perspectives, highlighted by Harvey and Green (1993), remains consistent with more recent studies in Nigeria. For instance, Okeke and Lee (2025) observed that staff and students linked teaching quality to lecturer competence, instructional effectiveness, and supportive learning environments. Similarly, Borishade et al. (2021) found that perceptions of service quality significantly affected student satisfaction and loyalty in Nigerian tertiary education institutions. These findings suggest that the term quality education goes beyond institutional standards and policy expectations; it is also shaped by how participants perceive their educational experiences. While many studies focus on teaching and service quality, this study extends the discussion by examining how funding and policy implementation influence staff and students' perceptions of the quality of tertiary education in Nigerian Colleges of Education.

Globally, the importance of quality education is emphasised in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 4, which aims to ensure inclusive, equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all (UNESCO, 2015). Here, quality extends beyond access to encompassing the overall educational experience, curriculum relevance,

faculty competence, learning resources, governance, and student outcomes. In tertiary education, quality is often assessed through the relationship between inputs, processes, and outputs. Inputs include funding, qualified staff, infrastructure, teaching resources, and support systems. Processes cover teaching and learning activities, governance, policies, and student engagement. Outputs include graduates' outcomes, research productivity, employability, student satisfaction, and societal contributions (Hoy, Bayne-Jardine, and Wood, 2005).

In Nigeria, the idea of quality tertiary education aligns with the goals of the National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013). This policy promotes tertiary education as a means of producing skilled manpower, fostering research and innovation, and supporting national development. Quality in this context involves not only meeting academic standards but also ensuring institutions have the resources, structures, personnel, and governance needed to fulfil these objectives effectively. Despite these policy aims, concerns about educational quality persist in Nigeria's tertiary sector. Studies highlight issues such as inadequate funding, poor infrastructure, weak policy implementation, limited research support, staff shortages, and governance challenges (Asiyai, 2015; Okebukola, 2015; Ogunode and Musa, 2020). These problems continue to fuel debate over whether institutions can meet their educational mandates and deliver quality outcomes.

In this study, quality is understood as a complex and contested concept that can be interpreted differently by various stakeholders. Although Nigeria's National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013) sets out the official expectations and objectives of tertiary education, this study does not assume a single, predetermined definition of quality. Instead, it explores how staff and students perceive and interpret quality in tertiary education based on their institutional experience. This research therefore draws on the broad expectations of quality outlined in the National Policy on Education while recognising that participants' perceptions may be shaped by their experiences of teaching and learning, institutional resources, governance practices, funding arrangements and policy implementation. Consequently, quality is examined through the perspectives of staff and students, whose views provide insight into what constitutes quality tertiary education in Nigeria and how funding and policy implementation influence those perceptions.

Importantly, this study recognises that quality is not only defined by policies, standards, or performance metrics. It also includes the experiences and perceptions of staff and students, who offer valuable insights into how quality is understood and experienced in practice. In this study, quality tertiary education is described as the extent to which institutions provide effective teaching and learning, relevant curricula, qualified staff, adequate infrastructure, supportive environments, and meaningful outcomes that meet the needs of students, institutions, and society. This includes both input and output factors and considers how institutional processes, such as funding and policy implementation, influence perceptions of quality. This perspective is vital because the study focuses not just on the presence of funding and policies but on how these factors shape staff and students' perceptions of educational quality in Nigerian Colleges of Education. Consequently, quality is the key concept used to examine the relationships between funding, policy, and institutional performance in this thesis. Chapter Two offers a comprehensive analysis of the concept of quality in tertiary education, exploring its theoretical foundations, policy perspectives, and measurement methods. tools.

1.1.3 An overview of the Nigerian Tertiary Education System

Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa, located in West Africa. It is renowned for its abundance of natural resources, rich history, and diverse culture. Nigeria has 36 states, including the Federal Capital Territory. There are over two hundred and fifty (250) languages and multiple ethnic groups of people (Udo, 2023). The country is divided into six (6) geopolitical zones: South/South, Southeast, North Central, Northeast, Southwest, and Northwest (Magaji, 2024). The National Policy on Education (NPE) manages and guides the administration of education at all levels in Nigeria. (Udo, 2023) (Ogunyemi and Bada, 2020)

Within Nigeria's national framework, the tertiary education system includes universities, polytechnics, monotechnics, and colleges of education. These institutions function at federal, state, and private levels, playing a vital role in training teachers, supplying skilled labour, and fostering socio-economic growth. As of December 2021, Nigeria had 97 public and private colleges of education, with the university and polytechnic sectors still growing to meet rising demand.

The system has experienced rapid growth yet demand still surpasses available spaces. Data from the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board show that the number of applicants often exceeds the number of available places, leading to high levels of unmet demand. Although enrolments have risen, the gap between applications, admissions, and actual acceptances reveals ongoing challenges in achieving equitable access and boosting institutional capacity.

Overall, the sector's size, diversity, and rapid growth provide important context for understanding why concerns about funding adequacy, policy implementation, and quality assurance remain key issues for stakeholders. These elements form the basis of this study, which investigates the perceptions of staff and students regarding the quality of tertiary education within this system.



Fig.1.1 Nigerian Geopolitical zones (Olatomiwa et al., 2016)

1.1.4 Historical Context of Nigerian Tertiary Education

Tertiary education in Nigeria started during the colonial period, marked by the founding of Yaba Higher College in 1934, now known as Yaba College of Technology. Earlier reforms, such as the Phelps Stokes recommendations in the 1920s, criticised the limitations of missionary-led education and called for more organised teacher training and post-secondary opportunities (Fafunwa, 2018). In 1943, the British Government appointed the Asquith and Elliot Committees to review higher education in its colonies, leading to the establishment of university colleges across West Africa, including the University College Ibadan in 1948, as an affiliate of the University of London (Ajayi and Haastrup, 2000). Although these developments marked significant progress, they were primarily driven by colonial objectives aimed at

producing middle-level manpower rather than addressing Nigeria's wider educational and developmental needs (Taiwo, 1980).

Following independence in 1960, Nigeria's new government faced a significant demand for trained professionals to support its development goals. The Ashby Commission of 1959 played a crucial role in recommending the expansion of universities and other higher education institutions to meet these workforce needs (Ashby, 1960). Its recommendations led to the establishment of Nigeria's first universities and helped shape higher education as a key driver of national progress (Ajayi and Haastrup, 2000). Subsequent reforms, notably the 1969 National Curriculum Conference, resulted in the formulation of Nigeria's first National Policy on Education, which was revised multiple times in 1977, 1981, 1998, 2004, and 2013. These successive policies aimed to improve access, promote equity, and ensure national relevance by restructuring tertiary education and aligning it with the country's development objectives (FRN, 2013; Nwadiani, 2021).

During the 1970s and 1980s, as the system expanded, the Government reinforced the regulatory framework by establishing agencies such as the National Universities Commission, the National Board for Technical Education, and the National Commission for Colleges of Education. These measures aimed to enhance standards and ensure minimum requirements across institutions (Saint, Hartnett and Strassner, 2003; Okebukola, 2015). Nonetheless, the rapid expansion often exceeded available funding, creating long-term challenges that still influence the sector today (Odebiyi and Aina, 1999; Materu, 2007).

These historical developments established the groundwork for the current structure and challenges of Nigeria's tertiary education system. Colonial policies led to early regional disparities, which are still evident in the unequal distribution of institutional capacities across the country. Additionally, the rapid expansion after independence resulted in a system that outpaced available funding. Revisions to the National Policy on Education have consistently emphasised a strong central government role, continuing to influence discussions on institutional autonomy, funding adequacy, and policy effectiveness (Babalola, 2007). These long-term trends help explain ongoing issues with quality assurance, funding stability, and governance in Nigerian tertiary education today. Understanding this historical evolution is therefore crucial for interpreting the experiences of staff and students within the current system.

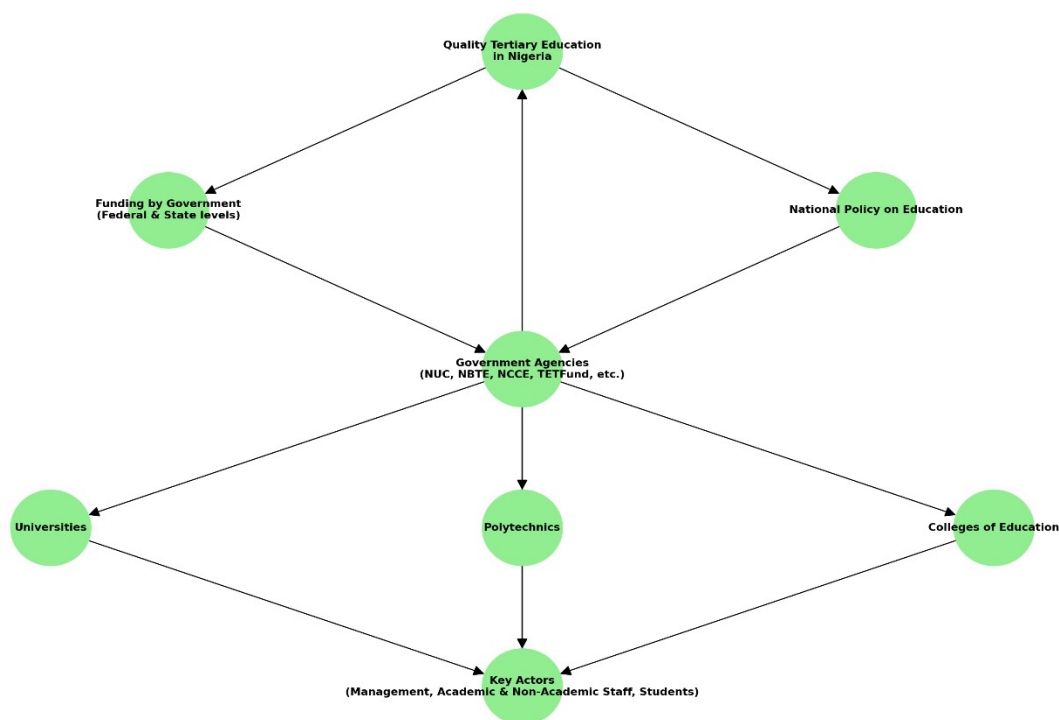


Fig 1.2. Contextual Framework for Quality Tertiary Education in Nigeria

Figure 1. 2 is the contextual framework illustrating the relationships among government funding (both Federal and State levels), national education policies, regulatory bodies (NUC, NBTE, NCCE, TETFund), tertiary Institutions (Universities, Polytechnics, and Colleges of Education), and key actors (Management, Academic & Non-Academic Staff, Students). The interactions emphasise how each element influences the provision and enhancement of quality tertiary education in Nigeria.

1.1.5 National Policy Goals of Tertiary Education in Nigeria

While Section 1.1.2 discussed the general significance of quality education for both national and global growth, this section focuses specifically on the aims of tertiary education outlined in Nigeria's policy framework. The 2014 National Policy on Education emphasises the goals of tertiary education as crucial for contributing to national growth through producing relevant, skilled personnel, enhancing research capabilities, promoting innovation, and driving the nation's progress. It includes training skilled professionals, instilling values critical for social unity, strengthening the abilities to comprehend and value their local and

global surroundings, developing physical and intellectual skills for self-sufficiency, and promoting scholarship and community engagement.

Nigeria's goals for tertiary education aim for these institutions to directly support national growth by producing graduates capable of advancing the country's economy, society, and technology. This policy aligns tertiary education with national objectives, including increased productivity, innovation, leadership development, and building a competitive workforce (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013; Idogho, 2023). Ideally, tertiary education Institutions should act as catalysts for societal transformation by nurturing individuals who possess the necessary knowledge, skills, and values to address both national and global challenges. While the larger importance of education has been discussed earlier, this section emphasises how national policy specifies the roles and expected outcomes of tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Nigeria's tertiary education system provides multiple qualification pathways beyond the usual university degree. Institutions such as universities, polytechnics, monotechnics, and colleges of education award various credentials, including the Nigeria Certificate in Education, National Diploma, Higher National Diploma, bachelor's and postgraduate degrees, as well as a variety of professional or vocational certificates (Nuffic, 2020). Furthermore, some students undertake short-term training or partial qualifications, such as professional certifications, diplomas, vocational and technical training, and basic teaching skills, all of which develop employable or transferable skills. These different outcomes demonstrate the inclusive and layered structure of Nigeria's tertiary education, aligning with the objectives of the national education policy. (Idogho, 2011)

The ability of tertiary institutions to meet these goals largely relies on sufficient funding and proper policy enforcement. Data from sub-Saharan Africa indicates that inadequate funding and weak policy implementation frequently result in poor infrastructure, low staff morale, and a misalignment between academic programs and industry requirements. (World Bank, 2020; Adeyemi, 2011) When policies are poorly executed or funding falls short, problems such as inadequate infrastructure, low staff morale, and a gap between academic programmes and industry needs can emerge. These challenges affect institutional performance and influence how staff and students perceive the relevance and quality of tertiary education (Saint, Hartnett, and Strassner, 2003; Babalola, 2012). This study extends this understanding by exploring how

funding and policy implementation influence the experiences and perceptions of key stakeholders in Nigeria's tertiary education system.

1.1.6 Funding of Tertiary Education in Nigeria

Hong (2010) stresses that the success of higher education depends on three key pillars: sufficient funding, robust policies, and effective planning. Without the necessary financial resources, no organisation can operate efficiently. Furthermore, Adeyemi (2011) emphasises that funding is vital for educational progress. Adewuyi and Okemakinde (2013) stated that in Nigeria, education is financed through various methods, including government sponsorship (for all public Institutions), private funding, endowment funds, donations and grants, commercial ventures, and external donations. The detailed discussion on this topic is provided in Chapter Three.

1.1.7 Government Responsibilities

The Nigerian government, through the National Policy on Education, is mandated to fund public educational Institutions (Imam, 2012). This includes financial allocations for personnel expenses, salaries, recurrent and capital expenditures, as well as specific interventions such as scholarships and grants (Kivisto, 2005). Despite these mandates, government funding has consistently fallen short of the UNESCO-recommended benchmark of 26% of the national budget (UNESCO, 2020; Budgit, 2021). This has led to poor and inadequate infrastructure, overcrowded classrooms, and limited access to quality education, particularly in rural communities (Ng, 2015).

1.1.8 Private Sector Roles and Responsibilities

The private sector plays a crucial role in financing education in Nigeria by establishing and operating private tertiary Institutions. Corporations, philanthropists, and NGOs offer scholarships, research grants, and infrastructure support (Ng, 2015). These contributions enhance government initiatives and broaden educational access in underserved areas.

1.1.9. External Donations

International bodies such as UNESCO, the World Bank, and various bilateral agencies provide technical aid, grants, and policy guidance (Oralu and Oladele, 2015). Their initiatives typically focus on areas including literacy, teacher development, and infrastructure enhancement. Additionally, alumni networks and philanthropic organisations play a significant role in addressing funding shortfalls (Imam, 2015).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Over the years, stakeholders in Nigeria's education sector have expressed concern about the need for quality education and adequate funding of tertiary education in Nigeria (Ogunode, Jacob & Musa, 2020). However, there has not been any significant improvement in quality, as Nigerian universities continue to rank very low in international rankings (NUC, 2021). Academic sojourning, which directly leads to an abysmal brain drain, has become the norm for Nigerian scholars and the educational system in general. Consequently, more Nigerians prefer to study abroad rather than in Nigerian tertiary Institutions (Iwara, Ishmael, and Kilonzo, 2008; Babatunde, 2018).

While issues regarding quality in Nigerian higher education are well documented, there is limited understanding of how those within the system perceive these challenges, particularly concerning funding and educational policy Implementation. Over time, the Nigerian government has formulated several national education policies, including the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2014), to enhance access, equity, and quality in tertiary education. These policies are translated into various administrative guidelines and strategic frameworks for Institutions to follow (Obanya, 2018; Yaro, 2018). Additionally, public funding mechanisms like the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) have been established to finance infrastructure, research, and capacity development in universities (TETFund, 2021).

Despite these efforts, the sector continues to face significant gaps in policy implementation and ongoing concerns about the adequacy, distribution, and use of funds (Ogunode and Adah, 2021; World Bank, 2020). Multiple studies have pointed to implementation delays, funding disbursement issues, and limited institutional autonomy as consistent obstacles to achieving

quality (Saint, Hartnett, & Strassner, 2003; Okoroma, 2006). However, little research has examined how these issues affect tertiary Institutions in Nigeria, specifically staff and students who experience these policies and funding impacts firsthand. This study aims to explore these issues from the perspectives of staff and students. It examines how these groups perceive the adequacy of current funding and the effectiveness of policy implementation in shaping educational experiences, seeking to understand how these perceptions influence their views on quality and how this, in turn, can affect the standard of education in Nigeria. Instead of assuming specific outcomes, the research offers grounded insights into how funding and policies are interpreted and experienced within Nigerian universities. These insights can be vital for guiding responsive and context-aware reforms in the sector.

1.3 Aims and Objectives

This study aims to explore the perceptions of staff and students in tertiary Institutions in Nigeria regarding issues of funding and policy implementation, as well as their impact on the quality of education in these Institutions. The specific objectives are:

1. To examine the perceptions of students and staff on what constitutes the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria.
2. To explore the perception of students and staff on the administrative policy practices as they affect the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria.
3. To examine the perception of students and staff on the effect of funding on the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria.
4. To assess the combined influence of funding and policy implementation on the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria.

To achieve these objectives, the study will attempt to answer the following research questions:

1.4 Research Questions

To achieve the stated objectives, the study will attempt to answer the following research questions:

- What are the perceptions of staff and students on the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria?
- What are the perceptions of staff and students on the influence of administrative practices when implementing policies relating to the quality of education within tertiary Institutions in Nigeria?
- What are the perceptions of staff and students on funding of education within tertiary Institutions in Nigeria?
- How do administrative policy practices influence staff and students' perception of quality tertiary education in Nigeria?
- How does funding influence staff and students' perception of the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria?
- What is the combined influence of funding and policy implementation on staff and students' perception of the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria?

1.5 Research Rationale

My passion and enthusiasm for this research stem from my experience as a Chief Educational Manager in one of Nigeria's key education sectors. This role has exposed me to policy formulation and implementation in the Nigerian tertiary education sector. I also worked as a classroom teacher in both the private and government sectors for over five years. Through this experience, I observed that the total number of students seeking admission to various tertiary Institutions could not all be accommodated yearly due to the high number of applicants, as inadequate facilities, a shortage of lecturers, and other factors restrict the universities' carrying capacity. Additionally, the current ranking of Nigerian tertiary Institutions on a global scale does not make them attractive to foreign students, as no Nigerian university, according to the Webometrics (2022) ranking, is among the world's top 1,000 universities. Meanwhile, wealthy Nigerians prefer to send their children abroad for education. (Ndulu, 2004; Olutayo, 2017). The Nigerian government allocates a yearly budget for tertiary Institutions. It has implemented various educational policies designed to enhance the sector's viability and attractiveness, but conflicting opinions persist regarding the effectiveness of these interventions or measures.

As an educational administrator, my professional experience and existing research evidence confirm that quality tertiary education is essential for national development. Research consistently shows that effective higher education systems are linked to a country's ability to build a skilled workforce, promote innovation, and ensure sustainable economic growth (Bloom, Canning, & Chan, 2006; Okebukola, 2015). For instance, Aghion et al. (2017) and Marginson (2010), as well as Arman, Purwandaya, and Saefuddin (2020), argue that investing in quality higher education transforms national progress by supporting research-driven industries, technological innovation, and knowledge-based economies. In Nigeria, improving the quality of tertiary education is particularly vital due to the country's young population, labour market needs, and goals for global competitiveness.

One of the key factors that continues to influence the quality of higher education is the availability, sufficiency, and management of funds, which are vital for sustaining academic programmes, infrastructure, attracting and retaining qualified staff, and supporting research. There has been ongoing debate in both the public domain and academic circles about whether the Nigerian government's financial contributions to tertiary education are adequate. This issue has been extensively discussed in reports by the National Universities Commission (NUC), education unions such as the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), civil society organisations, and education researchers (NUC, 2021; Bako, 2005; Adebayo, 2019). These stakeholders, including university staff unions, students, education administrators, policymakers, and development partners, have expressed concerns about persistent underfunding and questioned how funds allocated are effectively used. For instance, the Academic Staff Union of Nigerian Universities (ASUU) has repeatedly accused the government of failing to honour funding commitments, resulting in recurring strikes (ASUU, 2020). Students have also expressed their dissatisfaction through protests and public discussions, highlighting issues such as poor facilities, overcrowded classrooms, and limited access to learning resources. (Aluede, et., al, 2015). See also Africanews.com newspaper publication at (<https://www.africanews.com/2022/09/20/nigerian-students-protest-7-monthlecturers-strike/>).

Another area that piques both my professional and academic interest is policy implementation. The Nigerian government has introduced several education policies aimed at enhancing teaching, learning, and governance in the tertiary sector. Examples include the

National Policy on Education (FRN, 2014), the Education Sector Strategic Plan, developed from 2016 to 2020 (ESSP), and various institutional quality assurance policies, all designed to steer sector development. These frameworks focus on curriculum improvement, teacher quality, access, equity, and accountability. Nonetheless, the real impact of these policies largely depends on their actual application within universities. Challenges such as inadequate monitoring, bureaucratic delays, politicised appointments, and lack of policy continuity have cast doubt on whether these policies truly meet their intended goals (Obanya, 2018; Adegbite, 2020).

Given this, my research aims to understand how funding levels and the implementation of educational policy influence perceptions of quality in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions. Examining this from the viewpoints of two key stakeholder groups, students and staff, is especially important. These groups are directly impacted by the conditions of teaching, learning, and governance, and their experiences can offer practical insights into how institutional practices align with (or fail to align with) policy and funding objectives. Their perceptions provide a vital perspective through which quality can be understood beyond official statistics and policy documents.

Furthermore, existing studies on quality improvement in Nigerian tertiary education have largely focused on curriculum content, teaching pedagogies, and learning outcomes (Ogunode et al., 2020; Ige, 2016). While these areas are essential, there is limited attention to how broader systemic issues, such as funding levels and policy implementation, are experienced by staff and students, and how these factors influence their understanding of what constitutes ‘quality’. By addressing this gap, the study offers a more comprehensive view of quality education in the Tertiary education level and presents evidence that may guide more responsive and inclusive policy and funding reforms.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The present research is significant in many respects as it aims to reveal the perceptions of staff and students regarding what constitutes quality, policy, and funding, as well as their impact on the calibre of educational experiences. It also seeks to unpack the roles of funding and policy implementation on the quality of education in tertiary Institutions in Nigeria. This study has the potential to provide valuable insights into the effects of funding and policy implementation on

educational quality. It can inform policymakers and educational authorities in making evidence-based decisions concerning the equitable distribution of resources, formulation of policies, and implementation strategies that can enhance the quality of tertiary education. This research can foster dialogue and collaboration among education stakeholders, promoting a more inclusive and participatory approach to improving education quality. Furthermore, this study can support the development and refinement of educational Institutions, as well as administrative and policy practices. Ultimately, the significance of this research lies in its potential to drive and contribute to the enhancement of quality education in Nigeria.

The study examines the relationships among variables, specifically funding and policy implementation, and their impact on the quality of tertiary institutions. It ranks the factors based on the perceptions of students, educators, and administrators. This approach aims to help readers understand the interconnections between the study's variables. Moreover, the research provides empirical evidence to assist educational policymakers, administrators, and educators in planning, policy development, and implementation. It may also benefit readers worldwide, including those in developing countries in Africa.

This research will seek data and substantiated information that can contribute to the improvement of quality education by examining and critiquing the literature on educational policies, funding, and quality education. This will enable educational planners and administrators to have research-evidenced knowledge to rely on when planning and providing educational budgets, policy formulations, and needs assessments. This investigation is significant due to the current state of Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria. Thus, Tertiary Education, according to current research evidence, requires political and financial intervention (Anyira and Idubor 2020). Anyanwu (2011) opined that proper planning and adequate funding, coupled with well-trained personnel in the education sector, would help improve the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria.

1.7 Research Methods

The mixed methods approach is adopted for this research, comprising both quantitative and qualitative instruments. Quantitative data are gathered through a questionnaire, while qualitative data are collected through interview sessions. This approach aims to explore the

perceptions of students and staff at the selected tertiary Institutions in Nigeria. The participants include staff and students from the selected colleges of education in the southwestern part of Nigeria.

1.8 Thesis Layout

This thesis is structured into six chapters. Chapter One offers a thorough introduction to Nigeria's tertiary education sector, tracing its historical evolution and current state. It critically examines funding mechanisms, focusing on the Nigerian government's responsibilities and highlighting additional funding sources. The chapter presents the research problem, clearly states the aims and objectives, and discusses the study's significance. It also briefly introduces the research methodology, with more detailed descriptions reserved for chapter three. Moreover, this chapter outlines the research context and elaborates on the conceptual framework guiding the study. Since the research is conducted within a Nigerian setting but carried out at the University of Staffordshire in the UK, this clarification aims to prevent misunderstandings. Ultimately, chapter one lays the groundwork for the subsequent analysis and discussion in later chapters. The research objectives and associated variables, specifically Nigerian tertiary education, policies broken down into administrative policies and practices, and the quality of tertiary education, inform the literature review in Chapter Two.

Chapter Two reviews relevant literature, focusing on key concepts, theories, and empirical studies related to funding, policy implementation, and quality in tertiary education, specifically in Nigeria. Chapter Three explains the research methodology, including the philosophical stance, research design, data collection methods, and analysis techniques. Chapter Four reports the quantitative findings through the questionnaire, highlighting staff and students' perceptions of funding, policy implementation, and quality in Nigerian colleges of education. Chapter Five presents qualitative results from interview data, emphasising institutional experiences with funding and the implementation of policies. Chapter Six offers an integrated analysis, connecting quantitative and qualitative findings with existing literature and the Principal Agent theory to interpret patterns in policy and quality outcomes. Finally, Chapter Seven concludes and gives an overview of the findings, discussing the study's contribution to knowledge, its policy implications, practical applications, and potential directions for future research.

1.9 Summary

The Nigerian tertiary education system plays a pivotal role in achieving the nation's development objectives. However, it faces challenges related to funding, policy implementation, and accessibility. Enhancing this system requires a collaborative strategy that involves the government, the private sector, and international allies. Effective planning, robust policies, and adequate funding are essential for providing high-quality and equitable higher education in Nigeria. This chapter provides an overview of the research background, reviews the tertiary education sector in Nigeria, explains the research rationale, and outlines the objectives. Additionally, it briefly addresses the research questions and methodology that will be employed.

CHAPTER 2: Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

This research aims to investigate the factors that influence staff and students' perceptions of quality tertiary education in Nigeria, with a particular focus on the impact of funding and policy implementation. This chapter reviews existing literature on staff and students' perceptions of quality tertiary education in Nigeria, as well as the impact of funding and policy implementation on the experiences of both students and staff. To investigate the influence that these factors have on the quality of tertiary education, this section delves into the key literature that has guided this study, focusing on past research regarding funding, educational policies, and the concept of quality education within the Nigerian education sector. This chapter provides an overview of tertiary education in Nigeria, along with the theoretical framework of this study. It covers the concept of quality tertiary education, educational policy and implementation, as well as issues, challenges, and funding mechanisms associated with tertiary education in Nigeria.

Conducting the literature review is a vital part of every stage of this research, from the initial stage to the end of the entire research process. The literature was systematically scoped using diverse data searches, enabling the exploration of works, reports, and data relevant to the research under study. It focuses on the impact of funding and policy implementation on student and staff perceptions of the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria, and how these factors can contribute to improving the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria.

The process of reviewing the literature was carried out strategically by exploring academic databases, including the University of Staffordshire Library, the University of Ibadan Library, the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) Nigeria Library, JSTOR, ERIC, and Google Scholar, using basic keywords and Boolean operators. This involves using terms such as Tertiary Education in Nigeria, Quality Tertiary Education, Nigerian Educational Policies, Funding of Tertiary Education, and Policy implementation, among others. Then, adding Boolean operations such as (AND, OR, NOT) for specifics and to refine the search and results.

For example, the combination of (“Tertiary education OR” Higher Education”) AND “Nigeria AND “policy implementation gave a very comprehensive and relevant result.

In addition to keyword searches, the literature review also employed a thematic search, using themes to group findings into logical sections, such as historical context, policy evolution, funding structures, implementation strategies, and the perceptions of primary stakeholders. This approach enables a balanced and thorough examination of both conceptual breadth and depth, ensuring that all key areas are adequately covered.

The literature review also includes a focused search on empirical studies aimed at uncovering real-life research data such as questionnaires, interviews, case studies, and ethnographic studies that focus on experiences related to students and staff, as well as the policies and funding of education in Nigeria. This aids in understanding the methodological approaches implemented by other researchers, which supports building a strong empirical foundation for the present study.

Alongside data from scholarly sources, attention was also given to incorporate relevant grey literature including institutional bulletins, newspaper reports and articles, government policy documents, and operational guidelines, such as the National Policy on Education (NPE 2014), which outlines the goals and structure of education in Nigeria. The Nigerian 1999 Constitution details the laws governing the roles of government in education. Documents from educational regulatory agencies, such as the Tertiary Education Trust Fund Act, 2011 (TETFUND), play a vital role in tertiary educational funding in Nigeria. Official gazettes from the Federal Ministry of Education, the National University Commission (NUC), the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE), the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB), and the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), including their websites, were all examined to gather meaningful and current information relevant to the study. These materials and sources provide valuable contextual and policy-oriented insights, for instance, newspaper reports from the Nigerian President or Minister of Education on issues concerning the tertiary education sector. Such documents help to shed light on national discussions about funding, educational quality, and reforms, which directly align with the focus of this study.

To conduct a more in-depth exploration of the study, information on the historical phases and transformations of the Nigerian tertiary education sector must be gathered, emphasising the

significant colonial and precolonial impacts that continue to shape the Nigerian educational landscape. Classical texts by the prominent Nigerian historian of education, Prof Fafunwa, (1974 till date) have proven invaluable, along with those addressing international contexts relevant to Nigeria. Texts and literature centred the historical phases and transformations of the Nigerian tertiary education sector have been included. Furthermore, more recent works from 2019 to 2025 have been incorporated to enhance these contributions and provide up-to-date analyses of the current state of the Nigerian tertiary educational context. Incorporating a historical perspective is essential for gaining insight and a comprehensive understanding of the evolution of the tertiary education sector in Nigeria, including the changes and challenges faced in funding processes, the formulation and implementation of educational policies, and the assessment metrics over time, offering an in-depth understanding of their impact on the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria.

Scoping the literature for this study highlighted notable gaps, particularly regarding real-life experiences that gather data on students' and staff perceptions of the state of education in Nigeria. This guided the direction and focus of the research and helped to shape its significance in the ongoing discussion on educational governance, quality, and accountability. All these were conducted systematically, beginning with a global search in the form of an umbrella, before narrowing it down to Africa and then Nigeria.

This study incorporates and analyses relevant international literature on tertiary education and educational policy to draw comparisons and provide insights into best practices applicable to the Nigerian context. This will enhance understanding of global issues concerning funding and the implementation of educational policies, as well as their impact on improving educational quality. However, to fully explore and gain a deeper grasp of the realities and complexities of Nigerian tertiary education, more Nigerian literature on the subject are incorporated and examined to properly delve into the intricacies and nuances of the Nigerian educational situation.

Furthermore, due to its applicability and relevance to the operation of the Nigerian tertiary education system and the diverse dynamics among the various stakeholders involved in tertiary education, the principal agent theory is adopted and analysed in this study. To actualise the goal of tertiary education and promote quality and development, the government and regulatory

body in Nigeria (Principal) provide funding and create policies and regulations that the tertiary Institutions (Agents) can adopt and implement. These Institutions are set up and regulated to educate the country's citizens. To improve the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria, this theory's adaptation and analysis will help to highlight and provide insight into the dynamics of monitoring and accountability, resource allocation, information asymmetry, roles and responsibility strategies, as well as the implementation of educational policies, incentives, goal alignment, and methods, metrics, and assessment of the various tertiary Institutions in Nigeria.

Examining and analysing the findings in detail is the main purpose of this literature review. Primary and secondary education in Nigeria will not be covered. Publications that are not grounded in an educational context will not be included in the literature review. The mixed methods approach, which combines quantitative and qualitative research, will be analysed using semi-structured interviews and questionnaires. This approach aims to delve deeply and provide broader perspectives and understanding of the effects of funding and policy implementation on the perception of quality education among staff and students in Nigeria.

This literature review identified a notable gap in current research regarding the impact of funding and policy implementation on perceptions of quality in Nigerian tertiary education. Most existing studies focus on an expert-driven approach, examining curriculum reforms, teaching strategies, and administrative structures, while giving little attention to how staff and students view the effects of funding and policy decisions on educational quality. Zando Asabe, Ibi, and Dorathy (2025) observe that Nigeria's educational policy analysis primarily relies on institutional documents and official perspectives, rather than the lived experiences of those directly affected. Similarly, Nabaho et al. 2011, note that perception studies often concentrate on students, frequently excluding staff perspectives.

However, understanding both groups' viewpoints is essential to fully grasp how institutional factors, shaped by funding and policy, influence the delivery of quality and perceptions. While this study focuses on two institutions in the Southwest region, the patterns found align with broader national issues. Although regional disparities are outside the scope of this work, the results highlight the need for future comparative studies across Nigeria's geopolitical zones to explore whether perceptions differ by region or type of institution. This idea is supported internationally by Strydom and Loots (2020), who view student voice as crucial for institutional

accountability, and by Garwe (2015), who emphasises the importance of students' perspectives in enhancing tertiary education. This study aims to explore perceptions of both staff (academic and managerial) and students to understand better their views on the quality of Nigerian tertiary education.

Another key gap involves Nigeria's regional and institutional diversity. Despite significant differences in infrastructure, policy enforcement, and resources across the six geopolitical zones, many studies present generalised findings that ignore these contextual variables (Usi and Asabe, 2025; Asiyai, 2015). Moreover, most research focuses on universities, with limited attention to Colleges of Education and polytechnics, especially regarding how staff and students in these Institutions perceive quality in relation to funding and policy implementation. This creates a knowledge gap regarding how non-university institutions experience and interpret national educational policies and funding frameworks. Since Colleges of Education are teacher-training institutions within Nigeria's tertiary sector, addressing this gap is vital.

These gaps emphasise the need for research that highlights staff and student views while also considering Nigeria's diverse institutional types and regional contexts within its tertiary education sector.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The concept of tertiary education policy and quality is intricate and multi-layered, shaped by various institutional, political, and socio-economic factors across different countries. In both Western nations and African countries such as Nigeria, understanding tertiary education governance requires considering a range of perspectives, power dynamics, accountability systems, and historical developments. Insights from political science, economics, and sociology are particularly valuable in analysing how higher education systems function, how policies are developed, and how stakeholders engage within these frameworks (Lane & Kivisto, 2008; Busemeyer & Trampusch, 2011).

Principal-Agent Theory is the chosen theoretical framework for this study. Originating from economics and political science, it was initially introduced by Ross (1973) and expanded by Jensen and Meckling (1976). The theory explains the relationship where one party (the principal) delegates tasks to another (the agent), who then carries out those tasks. In Nigerian

tertiary education, the government functions as the principal, providing funding and setting policy goals, while universities and other tertiary Institutions act as agents tasked with implementing these policies (Kivisto, 2005; Kivisto & Zalyevska, 2015; Waterman & Meier, 1998).

This theory is applicable to this research as it facilitates the examination of accountability and performance during policy implementation. Agency theory sheds light on goal misalignments, information asymmetry, and monitoring issues that can occur between government funders and educational Institutions. It offers a valuable perspective on how agents, such as university management, may behave in ways that diverge from the principal's expectations. Additionally, mechanisms such as reporting requirements and regulatory oversight, such as those implemented by agencies like the National Universities Commission, are employed to manage this relationship (Lane & Kivisto, 2008).

In addition, this research draws on the Innovation Diffusion Theory, originally introduced by Everett Rogers in 1962 and later refined through subsequent editions that reflect its sustained relevance. The 5th edition provides a more detailed account of communication processes, uncertainty, and decision-making within organisational contexts. The theory describes how new ideas, technologies, and policies spread within and across social systems and remains influential in contemporary educational research, especially in analysing organisational change and policy transfer (Rogers, 2003). In higher education, it offers a valuable perspective on how reforms in funding, teaching methods, or governance structures developed in one country might be adopted or adapted elsewhere. Yallem et al. (2018) emphasise the importance of diffusion perspectives in understanding policy borrowing and the factors that facilitate or hinder crossnational transfer. Recent studies of cross-contextual educational practice, such as those by Machin, Richardson, and Ryan (2020), further demonstrate the sustained relevance of the theory and demonstrate the complexities involved in adapting educational models across different cultural and institutional settings, issues that closely align with diffusion-oriented discussions of innovation transfer.

In the context of Nigeria, this perspective is especially useful for analysing how international models of quality assurance, institutional autonomy, or performance-based funding influence local policy development and implementation. Tertiary education policy and quality are

complex and layered, shaped by various institutional, political, and socio-economic factors across different countries. Worldwide, including Nigeria, understanding governance in higher education involves examining different viewpoints, power relations, accountability mechanisms, and historical backgrounds. Insights from political science, economics, and sociology are particularly valuable for analysing how higher education systems operate, how policies are developed and put into practice, and how stakeholders participate within these governance frameworks (Lane and Kivisto, 2008; Busemeyer and Trampusch, 2011).

Another perspective this study considers is comparative education and policy analysis. Researchers such as Busemeyer and Trampusch (2011), who explore how political Institutions influence educational systems worldwide, and Nyewisura and Yusuf (2018), who examine governance and funding in Nigerian higher education through comparative methods, provide valuable insights. Although not an independent theory, this approach aids in comparing centralised systems like Nigeria's, where the federal government has significant control, with decentralised systems such as the U.S., where Institutions enjoy greater decision-making autonomy. This perspective helps in understanding how government structures impact funding, decision-making, and accountability. For example, decentralised systems may promote innovation and responsiveness, whereas centralised systems can support standardisation but might face challenges regarding flexibility and adaptability (Busemeyer & Trampusch, 2011; Nyewisura & Yusuf, 2018).

Finally, this study's theoretical framework draws insights from both historical and postcolonial perspectives. Nigeria's colonial history shaped the foundations of its educational system, policies, and curricula, mainly through the British colonial educational model, which established centralised administration, hierarchical decision-making, and an exam-focused curriculum. These systems were not only organisational but also ideological tools aimed at enforcing uniformity, maintaining bureaucratic control, and limiting institutional independence. As Fafunwa (1974), Taiwo (1980), and Anyanwu (2011) have documented, colonial governance depended on a highly centralised authority structure, with decisions moving from the colonial office to regional and local levels, leaving little room for participatory planning or adaptive responses. Despite independence offering opportunities for reform, many colonial administrative habits remain embedded in the policy landscape. This continuity is

evident in the central role of federal agencies, the dominance of national exams, and the ongoing preference for top-down implementation strategies.

Chapter 1 briefly traced the history of Nigerian education, but the literature reviewed here shows why colonial governance structures continue to influence current challenges. These legacies explain persistent issues such as funding shortages, practical implementation challenges, and policy instability, despite multiple reform efforts. Post-independence initiatives have often struggled to change the administrative cultures established during colonial times. (Anyanwu, 2011) These patterns impact how institutions respond to policies, how regulatory bodies exert control, and how staff and students experience the quality of education. By connecting this historical background with current governance processes, the framework helps explain how colonial legacies continue to shape funding practices, policy interactions, and stakeholder perceptions (Odia and Omofonwan, 2007; Akere and Iwayemi, 2023).

These interconnected theoretical frameworks and approaches provide a robust basis for analysing how Nigeria's tertiary education policies are formulated, implemented, and interpreted. They guide the study towards the relationship between funding, policymaking, institutional actions, and stakeholder perspectives in ensuring quality tertiary education in Nigeria.

2.1.1 Principal-Agent Theory

This study is anchored on the Principal-Agent Theory (PAT), also known as Agency Theory. The theory primarily originated from Stephen Ross's (1973) key work, where he introduced the concept to explain issues that arise in contractual relationships when a principal delegates tasks to an agent. Jensen and Meckling (1976) later expanded and formalised this theory by describing an agency relationship as a contract where a principal hires an agent to perform services on their behalf, involving the delegation of some decision-making authority. Principal Agent Theory examines responsibilities, accountability, and information gaps between two parties (i.e., the Principal and the Agent). It explains how principals attempt to ensure that agents act in their best interests, even when their goals diverge or access to information is limited (Lane & Kivisto, 2008; Waterman & Meier, 1998). This theoretical framework has become fundamental across disciplines such as economics, political science, and public

administration, and is increasingly used in higher education research. It is utilised to analyse relationships between governments, often as funders or regulators, and educational Institutions, which act as implementers or providers (Kivisto, 2005; Sani Ahmed, 2021). The relationship is structured so that the principal delegates tasks to agents, who then perform on the principal's behalf (Madani, 2019; Yallew et al., 2018). Such a relationship emphasises their respective responsibilities and obligations (Cooley, 2015). The two involved parties are the principal, who assigns the task and provides an enabling environment, and the agent, who executes the principal's instructions and ensures that decisions are in the principal's best interest (Waterman & Meier, 1998; Kivisto, 2008).

Nigeria's universities are public Institutions funded by the government, which is the principal and is under an obligation to provide the requisite resources for the universities to perform their roles of disseminating knowledge, building capacity, and transmitting societal cultural values. This theory needs the fulfilment of three primary conditions for it to be applied appropriately: There must be a principal and an agent; there exist conflicts between the principal and the agent while achieving their goals and there is the presence of lack of information about the activities of both parties which is referred to as information asymmetry in PAT (Yallew, Juusola, Ahmad and Tormala, 2018). The theory enables this present study to explore the relationship between government and tertiary Institutions in Nigeria in the areas of funding and policy and how quality can be achieved. The following is a more detailed explanation of how PAT is used in six applications within global tertiary education settings.

2.1.2 Principal Agent Theory Basic Framework

The PAT framework is rooted in the concept of a contractual relationship between the two parties in which the principal delegates responsibilities and then shared between both parties (Yallew et al., 2018). The primary decisions are under the authority and jurisdiction of the principal so that they possess the capacity to construct decisions but also to provide incentives for the agent to act following the principal's interests. The agent is responsible for carrying out the tasks delegated by the principal, and yet the agent may have their own goals and motivations which may not align perfectly with those of the principal (Nyewisura & Yusuf, 2018). One of the problems posed within the PAT model concerns the information asymmetry between the

principal and the agent so that there is a measure of risk and uncertainty in the principal-agent relationship (Yallew et al., 2018).

In addition, the principal may not have full knowledge and understanding of the agent's actions or capabilities or what their plans are, which can thereby lead to conflicts of interest and even challenges during the principal's control and monitoring processes (Kivisto, 2005; Sani Ahmed, 2021). In the Nigerian context, this is when the Universities or tertiary Institutions have more information regarding educational quality, resource allocation or learners' performance than the government and this is not communicated effectively to the government assuming there is quality standard or adequate resources can affect the standard of education due to a communication gap between the two parties.

2.1.3 Application in the Nigerian Tertiary Education.

Within the tertiary education sector in Nigeria, Principal Agent Theory (PAT) is particularly relevant for analysing the relationship between the principal and universities or colleges (the agents) (Madani, 2019). Governments often provide capital funding and resources, develop curricula, establish policies, and create regulatory frameworks for higher education Institutions. In turn, as agents, these Institutions are obligated to implement academic policies, manage resources, and achieve specified educational outcomes in terms of student and tutor performance (Nyewisura & Yusuf, 2018). PAT is leveraged to help researchers understand how governments delegate authority and resources to higher education Institutions, and how these Institutions make decisions in response to government policies. Additionally, it examines how conflicts of interest and information asymmetry may arise in this principal-agent relationship (Madani, 2019; Yallew et al., 2018).

2.1.4 Types of Agency Challenges

While previous studies have broadly identified challenges in Nigeria's tertiary education, especially regarding funding and Implementation of policy, there is limited exploration of how Principal-Agent Theory offers a structured perspective. Literature often falls short in explaining how issues like information asymmetry, moral hazard, motivational problems, and differing risk preferences directly affect institutional behaviours and influence perceptions of quality

among students and staff. This research employs Principal-Agent Theory to analyse these issues in detail, aiming to deliver deeper insights and focused suggestions to improve institutional accountability and the quality of education in Nigeria.

The Principal-Agent Theory, as outlined by Ross (1973) and other scholars such as Yallew et al. (2018) and Eisenhardt, K. M. (1989), emphasises key agency challenges related to the relationship between the government (Principal) and tertiary Institutions (Agent) in Nigeria. These challenges are closely connected to some of the issues faced by tertiary education Institutions in Nigeria, particularly concerning funding and policy implementation in the Nigerian tertiary education sector, thereby shaping perceptions of educational quality among students and staff.

Information asymmetry occurs in Principal-Agent relationships when the agent has more or better information than the principal (Ross, 1973). This can cause issues such as moral hazard and adverse selection. In the Nigerian tertiary education sector, this happens when the government (principal) allocates funds and sets policies without fully understanding the Institutions' (agent) practices and outcomes. These Institutions often possess more detailed data on enrolment, staff, internal procedures, spending, and policy enforcement. For example, universities may claim to meet quality assurance standards while classrooms are overcrowded and laboratories are poorly equipped, to obtain accreditation for a particular course (Obadara and Alaka, 2013). This lack of transparency may hinder the government's ability to accurately assess institutional performance and effectiveness, leading to poor policy implementation and underfunding, which in turn could undermine perceptions of educational quality and accountability among students and staff (Lawal et al., 2020).

Another challenges that may occur from information asymmetry is the issue of adverse selection. (Yallew et al., 2018) In relation to the Nigerian tertiary education institution, adverse selection may become apparent when governments or other principal stakeholders allocate finance or resources to agent stakeholders such as higher education Institutions without fully understanding the agent's capabilities or performance potential (Madani, 2019; Nyewisura & Yusuf, 2018).

There is also the moral hazard issue that arises when the agent may intentionally or unintentionally engage in risky behaviours or shirk their responsibilities simply because the

principal cannot effectively monitor the agent's actions. (Yallew et al., 2018). When likened to the Nigerian tertiary education sector, where the Principal is the government, the Funder and the one who formulate the educational policies to be followed by the agents which are the tertiary institution with the responsibility of carrying out the contract of the Principal to educate its citizenry, Within the tertiary education landscape, moral hazard can become a possibility if agent Institutions misuse funds because of corruption or fail to deliver on their educational mission due to lax oversight or inadequate accountability mechanisms. (Akinola and Ogunode, 2022) Another example is specialised universities in Nigeria. such as those established to focus on agriculture or technology, now offer programmes like law, business administration, or economics, areas outside their original mandate. Likewise, some colleges of technology have begun offering degree programmes in non-technical areas. This shift in mission weakens the original purpose of these Institutions and exemplifies agency slippage, where they operate beyond their designated roles due to inadequate regulatory enforcement and accountability gaps (Oyeweso, 2020; NUC, 2019).

Motivational challenges, as noted by Ross (1973), can also impair the principal's ability to oversee or verify the agent's actions. Therefore, the principal must establish fee structures or incentives to motivate the agent to focus on the principal's interests (Ross, 1973). In Nigerian tertiary Institutions, motivational problems arise from inadequate funding and inconsistent pay practices (Saint et al., 2003). For instance, delays or failures in government salary payments often lead to strikes, staff demotivation, and falling academic performance (Asiyai, 2013). Moreover, chronic underfunding of essential infrastructure, such as classrooms, laboratories, libraries, and qualified staff, seriously reduces staff morale and hampers student learning (Bamiro, 2012; Ayoko et al., 2023). Overall, existing research suggests that these issues can affect the quality of education and encourage negative perceptions among staff and students about the institution's capabilities and the government's commitment to providing quality tertiary education (Saint et al., 2003; Asiyai, 2013).

Risk preference mismatch occurs in a principal-agent relationship when the parties hold different attitudes towards risk or defer to each other's risk preferences (Ross, 1973). When applied to Nigerian tertiary education, this suggests that if the government and institutional leaders have differing risk priorities, it can hinder effective policy implementation and the utilisation of funding (Madani, 2019). Educational management leaders often prioritise short

term, visible results, such as superficial infrastructure projects or popular measures, rather than sustainable investments in academic quality (Asiyai, 2013; Afolayan, 2015). For instance, Institutions might spend heavily on ceremonial ventures, such as building ornate entrance gates or hosting expensive anniversary celebrations, instead of investing in vital academic areas, including faculty training, research support, or modernising outdated educational facilities (Afolayan, 2015). Such decisions can undermine the long-term educational quality and lead to dissatisfaction among students and staff regarding institutional priorities.

2.1.5 Managing Principal-Agent Problems

Signalling and screening mechanisms are primarily used to overcome adverse selection by reducing information asymmetry between the principal and the agent. The provision of symmetry in higher education can be expedited via signalling, in which Institutions can provide relevant evidence of their capabilities (Yallew et al., 2018). Such evidence can take the form of accreditation status or performance metrics, signalling the agent's operational and performance quality to funding sources or prospective students (Nyewisura & Yusuf, 2018).

Principal-Agent problems can also be effectively addressed by implementing strategies from the agency theory literature, particularly through behaviour-based and outcome-based approaches (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yallew et al., 2018). As suggested by Yallew et al. (2018), Behaviour-based versus outcome-based contracts are different strategies used to attenuate moral hazard by aligning the interests of the principal and the agent. In higher education, behaviour-based contracts may require agents to complete detailed reporting requirements, undergo performance evaluations, and implement oversight mechanisms, enabling the principal to monitor and manage institutional behaviour (Abubakar, 2020; Yallew et al., 2018). Outcome-based contracts focus on achieving specific educational outcomes, such as exam grades, graduation rates, or student learning outcomes, in which capital funding and resources are tied to the agent's performance.

2.1.6 Factors Influencing Contract Choice

The capacity from which institutional outcomes can be observed and measured influences the choice between behaviour-based and outcome-based contracts (Goldin & Katz, 2010; Yallew et al., 2018). In higher education, outcomes such as examination results, graduation rates, and

even gains made by research can be measured more efficiently and accurately than the specific behaviours of faculty personnel or administrators (Abubakar, 2020). There is also the uncertainty of outcomes that can impact contract choice. The extent to which outcomes depend on the actions of the agent versus external factors all informs the choice of contract design. In higher education, outcomes in terms of student success can be influenced by external factors that are outside of institutional control (Olaleye et al., 2020; Yallew et al., 2018).

Moreover, the degree to which tasks or behaviours can be specified can serve to influence the feasibility of behaviour-based contracts. In higher education, teaching or research assignments can be more easily programmable than broader institutional objectives such as fostering a culture of innovation (Abubakar, 2020). Another factor relates to the possibility of conflicts of interest between the principal and the agent, which can adversely affect the suitability or validity of outcome-based contracts (Nyewisura & Yusuf, 2018).

There may be conflicting priorities among government policymakers, institutional administrators, their faculties, and students, which can result in a complex contract design and its implementation (Abubakar, 2020; Olaleye et al., 2020). Additionally, the stability and duration of the principal-agent relationship can influence the choice of contract (Goldin & Katz, 2010; Nyewisura & Yusuf, 2018). Long-term partnerships within their jurisdiction can facilitate a setting for more extensive monitoring and learning, whereas short-term arrangements may require more transparent outcome-based incentives (Goldin & Katz, 2010; Olaleye et al., 2020).

2.1.7 Principal-Agent Theory in Higher Education Research: Strengths and Weaknesses

Principal-Agent Theory (PAT) is a valuable tool in higher education research as it clarifies the relationship between government policymakers and implementing institutions. Its main strength lies in explaining gaps between government expectations and institutional capacities, especially issues like information asymmetry, unclear incentives, and poor monitoring—common challenges in Nigeria's higher education sector. PAT provides a structured framework for analysing how funding, policies, and institutional behaviour interact, helping explain why some policies fail despite careful design.

However, applying PAT to higher education has recognised limitations. Universities and colleges are complex, with many actors holding different interests and levels of authority. As Goldin and Katz (2010) and Olaleye et al. (2020) point out, this complexity makes it challenging to identify a single principal and agent. Instead, multiple principals, such as ministries, regulatory agencies, and funding bodies, and various agents within institutions, operate at different levels. This complexity can limit PAT's capacity to fully understand decision-making, collaboration, and resistance within academic environments.

Another limitation concerns how outcomes are assessed. PAT assumes that principals can evaluate agents' performance based on clear outputs. However, in higher education, many outcomes, such as teaching quality, research productivity, or student development, are long-term, qualitative, or challenging to measure accurately. This complicates the design of effective incentives or contracts, thereby reducing the usefulness of PAT when addressing deeper educational goals/objectives.

The costs and administrative challenges of implementing PAT principles also present difficulties. Behaviour or outcome-based contracts demand detailed monitoring, recordkeeping, and reporting. Institutions require the time, expertise, and capacity for these tasks. As Goldin and Katz (2010) suggest, these extra demands can reduce the effectiveness of contractual mechanisms, especially in systems with limited resources. Selecting the appropriate contract type is itself an administrative challenge for institutions with limited funding or staff.

Overall, the literature suggests that PAT is best regarded as a useful analytical tool rather than a comprehensive solution to the governance complexities in higher education. It helps researchers and policymakers understand why implementation gaps happen and why institutions sometimes behave unexpectedly. However, due to the complex nature of higher education systems and difficulties in measuring outcomes, PAT cannot fully address the underlying structural and contextual factors. It provides valuable insights but should be complemented with other perspectives that consider the unique social and organisational realities of higher education.

2.2 An Overview of Tertiary Education Globally and in Nigeria

As Williamson (2021) stated, tertiary education is beneficial for everyone in society, not just individual students. The advantages of higher education, including knowledge, skills, and personal growth, contribute to enhancing communities, the economy, and the overall wellbeing of society. Therefore, tertiary education should not be regarded solely as a means for individuals to earn money or achieve personal success. It has broader impacts that benefit everyone. Just as Žalėnienė and Pereira (2021) emphasised, tertiary education plays a crucial role in the sustainability of nations. Tertiary education is a key agent in training and preparing the world's future leaders to achieve the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, and it plays a crucial role in cultivating the mindset necessary for their achievement.

Tertiary education plays a crucial role globally, encompassing all forms of post-secondary studies and research training programs offered by universities and other recognised educational Institutions approved by state authorities. (UNESCO, 2020). According to Curle et al. (2020), this type of education is designed to prepare individuals for various professional fields such as medicine, law, and teaching. The World Bank (2004) emphasises that higher education serves as the foundation for developing countries aiming for economic success in a global environment where knowledge is a key competitive advantage. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) argues that nations with robust tertiary education systems tend to enjoy greater innovation, social stability and economic growth. (OECD, 2019). Tertiary education is generally understood as a valid continuation of formal education, which follows secondary schooling, and a higher level of specialised knowledge, research, and professional training characterises it. (Abubakar, 2020; Teichler, 2009). Nevertheless, reports have shown that education in general, and higher education in particular, is fundamental to the construction of a knowledge-based economy and society in all nations (World Bank, 2020; Anyanwu, 2011). Yet, the potential of higher education systems in developing countries, including Nigeria, to fulfil this responsibility is frequently thwarted by long-standing problems of finance, efficiency, equity, quality, and governance (Saint, Hartnett, & Strassner, 2014).

In Nigeria, the National Policy on Education (2013) defines Tertiary education to cover education offered after Senior secondary education at Universities, Polytechnics, Colleges of education, Monotechnic, and other Institutions offering corresponding courses such as

specialised language Institutions, and other specialised Institutions covering Institutions like Colleges of Agriculture, Institutes of health and technology and the National teachers Institutes. (NPE, 2013). The Nigeria, tertiary education is triangular in construction and built on an academic vehicle consisting of Colleges of Education, Polytechnics, and Universities, as outlined in the Nigerian Policy on Education (NPE, 2004, 2013; Abubakar, 2020). This educational tripod serves to reflect the diversity of Nigerian tertiary education settings, thereby serving various academic and vocational interests, requirements, and needs (Abubakar, 2020; Otonko, 2021).

The need for economic development and national integration in the emerging new nation of the post-colonial era fuelled the driving force behind the transformation of Nigeria's tertiary education sector. (Fafunwa, 2018) This aimed to address the professional and skill shortages of the new country and to support nation-building, as argued by Anyanwu (2011) This eventually progressed to a growing acceptance of tertiary education as a productive investment, with the belief that a nation's economic improvement depends on the investment made in its members, which can contribute to the economic development of such a nation. (Anyanwu, 2011; Chankseliani et al, 2021) This perception has also grown, as education in Nigeria and most African nations is seen as a passport to wealth, implying that education can help alleviate poverty and facilitate acceptance into the elite class. This change has led to a greater desire among Nigerians to pursue higher education. (Anyanwu, 2011)

As of July 2025, Nigeria's tertiary education sector comprises of 239 Colleges of Education (both public and private) (NCCE, 2023), 189 polytechnics (approved public and private) (NBTE, 2023), and 299 universities (public and private) (NUC, 2025). This represents a significant increase in the number of Institutions compared to the 2021 figures. The growth of tertiary Institutions is largely viewed as a reaction to Nigeria's rapidly expanding youth demographic, highlighting an urgent need to enhance access to higher education (UNESCO, 2021). Despite this quantitative expansion, there has been no corresponding advancement in institutional capacity, instructional quality, or infrastructure, which continues to pose significant challenges for the sector (Saint, Hartnett, & Strassner, 2003; Okebukola, 2006).

Table 2.1. Historical growth of Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria

Year	Universities	Polytechnics	Colleges of Education
1960	1		
1977	13		
1983	20	25	35
1999	39	40	45
2005	51	50	60
2010	117	70	90
2015	140	120	140
2017	152		
2021	195	147	174
2025	299	159	205

This table presents a consolidated table showing the growth of Nigerian tertiary Institutions from 1960 to 2025, based on peer-reviewed literature and official sources. Key references include the 2003 study by Saint, Hartnett, and Strassner, which provides an overview of early expansion, and a WENR policy report covering 2005-2017.

Projections to 2025 rely on official data from NUC, NBTE, and the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE)

A robust tertiary education system plays a crucial role in advancing national development. Tikly (2011) states that a nation's socio-economic growth heavily relies on the quality of its tertiary

education, which is essential for creating a skilled workforce that drives economic growth and innovation. This workforce drives industries, encourages entrepreneurship, and contributes to the knowledge economy, all of which are vital for Nigeria's nation to reduce its reliance on crude oil (World Bank, 2020). Furthermore, tertiary Institutions provide more than just vocational training; they are essential for intellectual growth, research, and the development of political leadership. Anyanwu (2011) highlights how these Institutions form the basis for governance and leadership in policy, which are crucial for the nation's political stability and long-term development (Babalola, Jaiyeoba, & Okediran, 2007).

Despite playing critical roles, the sector faces ongoing accessibility challenges. The Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB), responsible for admissions to Nigerian tertiary Institutions, revealed in 2020 that only roughly 60% of applicants secured admission due to limited institutional capacity (JAMB, 2020). This suggests that nearly 40% of qualified candidates are annually denied access to tertiary education, a trend that has persisted over the years (Idoko, 2021). This continual exclusion not only hinders individual aspirations but also limits the nation's ability to fully leverage its human capital (Adeyemi & Adeyinka, 2022).

This disparity between demand and supply reflects more profound systemic challenges, such as inadequate funding, infrastructural shortcomings, a lack of academic staff, and political interference in educational governance (Saint et al., 2003; Babalola et al., 2007; Obasi, 2007). The inability to significantly broaden access also leads to the growing trend of 'education for few,' where quality education is reserved for a privileged minority, thereby deepening social inequalities (Odebiyi and Aina, 2019). Furthermore, the increase in private Institutions responding to demand raises questions about the standardisation and quality assurance of the programmes offered, which could impact graduates' competencies and employability (NUC, 2023; Okebukola, 2006).

The consequences of these challenges are extensive. In addition to restricting educational opportunities, the capacity limitations of higher education Institutions lead to high levels of graduate unemployment or underemployment. This occurs because the skills that some Institutions teach do not always meet the demands of the labour market (Akinyemi, Ofem, & Ikuenomore, 2012; Idoko, 2021). Such a disconnect weakens the role of tertiary education in promoting economic empowerment and alleviating poverty. Moreover, restricted access to

tertiary education may intensify social tensions, as young individuals who are denied educational opportunities face a greater risk of marginalisation (UNICEF, 2019).

To tackle these complex challenges effectively, there is a need for policy responses that extend beyond simply boosting enrolment numbers. It is crucial to invest in infrastructure strategically, enhance academic staff development, reform the curriculum, and implement quality assurance measures (World Bank, 2020; NUC, 2023). Furthermore, building stronger connections among tertiary Institutions, industry, and government can align educational outcomes with the nation's socio-economic goals (Babalola et al., 2007). Ultimately, ensuring that Nigeria's tertiary education system remains both accessible and high-quality is vital to achieving the country's broader development objectives (Tikly, 2011; Anyanwu, 2011).

A search of grey literature revealed that the Tribune newspaper dated 22nd April 2024, reported that the Minister of Education, Professor Tahir Moman, stated that only 20% of students who applied for admission in 2024 UTME would be admitted to various public tertiary Institutions in the country despite the increasing number of tertiary Institutions across the Country (Tribune online, 2024). This trend continues to decline every admission year (NBS, 2019). Also in support is the analysis report of the Nigerian education sector by UNESCO 2021, which reported that Nigeria is one of the Nations with high access to tertiary education, yet the country was far below in enrolment of students into tertiary Institutions due to inadequate infrastructure to accommodate the large numbers of admission seekers (UNESCO, 2021, pp, 86).

A need assessment report by the International Organisation for migration in 2023 confirmed further that despite increase numbers of universities established, yet issues surrounding the quality of education is on the rise due to infrastructure deficit to tackle overcrowded classrooms, strike actions by varsity staff, due to wages and infrastructure issues, teacher student ratios, outdated curriculum etc. (IOM, 2014, 2023) opinion is divided on whether the government should establish more tertiary Institutions to cater for the youths who seek admission every year, or the government should concentrate on developing the existing ones to meet international standards. (Nyewisura & Yusuf, 2018).

The goal of tertiary education, as stated by the Federal Republic of Nigeria in the National Policy on Education (NPE, 2013, p. 33), is outlined in the 2013 National Policy on Education

established by the Federal Government. This policy establishes the primary aim of tertiary education as training skilled personnel to promote national development. It emphasises the importance of instilling values essential for personal and societal well-being, enhancing individuals' abilities to comprehend their surroundings, and developing both practical and cognitive skills for engagement at national and international levels. Achieving these goals involves a combination of teaching, research, and development, comprehensive staff training, widespread knowledge sharing, and various programme delivery methods. These methods include full-time studies, where students attend classes regularly, and sandwich programmes designed for working individuals, such as teachers and civil servants, who participate during specific periods of the year, particularly during school holidays, for intensive training sessions. Block release permits learners to be excused from their workplaces for certain periods for intensive training while retaining their positions. The policy also encompasses access to funding sources, such as the Industrial Training Fund, industry attachments through the Student Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES), rigorous quality assurance processes, interinstitutional cooperation, and active community service. The National Policy on Education, 2013, outlined the goals of tertiary education and its implementation strategies.

While Nigeria's tertiary education policies clearly outline goals, particularly in fostering national development through skilled graduates, a gap remains between these objectives and the current reality. (Yaro, 2018). Despite an emphasis on human capital development, recent data and reports reveal concerning trends. For example, increasing youth unemployment and underemployment among university graduates are associated with higher involvement in cybercrime, cultism, and other criminal activities (Amos, 2021). These problems undermine the effectiveness of higher education in fulfilling its developmental aims. Systemic instability persists due to recurrent industrial actions, especially by unions like ASUU, NASU, and ASUP, which disrupt the academic calendar. Chukwudi (2021) observes that these strikes extend students' time in university, degrade academic standards, diminish motivation to learn, and erode public trust. This ongoing conflict between policy intentions and actual implementation exposes a deeper crisis surrounding quality and accountability within Nigeria's higher education sector.

Moreover, the growing trend of young, educated professionals emigrating highlights a deep dissatisfaction with Nigeria's higher education system and job market. The rising number of

Nigerians pursuing academic opportunities overseas, often at substantial financial and emotional cost, reflects a significant lack of trust in local Institutions. These issues together emphasise the urgent need for systemic reform, enhanced funding, accountability, and better alignment of tertiary education outputs with the country's socio-economic requirements (Ogundipe, 2024; Olutayo, 2017).

Globally, the advantages and benefits of tertiary education include social and economic growth as well as the overall development of the individual and society. Economic progress is driven by higher education, as it fosters innovation and enhances individual earning potential. Tertiary education has been shown to significantly impact nearly every aspect of life, including critical thinking, communication skills, and adaptability. (Hodge, 2007; Marginson & Van der Wende, 2007) According to a McKinsey Global Institute (2018) analysis, countries that invest in higher education enjoy considerably higher economic returns; degree holders earn significantly more over their lifetimes than those without a tertiary education. Research has also demonstrated that access to tertiary education affects social mobility. For instance, a study by Chetty et al. (2017) reveals that individuals from poor or low-income families who obtain a tertiary education have shown considerable upward mobility. Furthermore, tertiary education has been proven to increase civic engagement. Data from the National Centre for Education Statistics (NCES) revealed that highly educated individuals are more likely to participate in community engagement and service (NCES, 2020).

The worldwide trend towards increased demand for tertiary education is also found in Nigeria, as noted in the following sections below.

2.2.1 Higher Qualifications

When looked at from within a globalised context, it is apparent that the rapid advancements in all forms of technology and globalisation have indeed served to transform the workplace environments, thereby creating an increasing demand for those people who may possess specialised skills and unique expertise (Otonko, 2021). As the corporate setting continues to evolve and develop so has it become more complex. Employers may increasingly search for candidates who possess higher qualifications to meet job marketplace demands, in which technological innovations and even AI are now more predominant (Otonko, 2021). This type of recent trend is apparent in areas such as engineering, technology, healthcare, and finance.

Here, the employer's human resource management (HRM) department will be more likely to prioritise those candidates who may possess advanced degrees or more specialised certifications of expertise.

In Nigeria, as in many other developing economies, Abubakar (2020) reports that similar factors have driven rising demand for higher qualifications. The Nigerian economy continues to grow on an upward trajectory despite recent political volatility, raising concern about growth drivers such as entrepreneurship, finance, and technology (Ogunode & Abubakar, 2020). Abubakar (2020) further argued that to remain competitive in these rapidly changing fields, Nigerians should recognise the importance of pursuing tertiary education to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to compete in the job market. Moreover, globalisation brings increased competition in the job market, both within Nigeria and on the international stage (Otonko, 2021). Nigerian students and teaching professionals may realise that higher qualifications can enhance their competitiveness in the global job market, thereby driving the demand for tertiary education (Ogunode & Abubakar, 2020).

2.2.2 Job Opportunities

Tertiary education is widely regarded as a pathway to improved employment prospects, economic mobility, and career advancement. These perceived benefits fuel the rising global demand for higher education (Altbach et al., 2009; Zeleniene & Pereira, 2021). Individuals with advanced qualifications generally have better chances of securing formal employment, earning higher incomes, and enjoying greater job security. In Nigeria, similar patterns are evident, though they are accompanied by some complexities due to the country's youthful and rapidly growing population.

Nigeria's workforce is increasingly composed of young people entering the labour market each year (National Bureau of Statistics [NBS], 2020). This demographic change contrasts with ageing populations in nations such as Japan or Germany (United Nations, 2022). However, despite the expanding pool of job seekers, job creation has not matched this growth, leading to high youth unemployment and underemployment (World Bank, 2021). As a result, tertiary education in Nigeria is often seen not just as a pathway to employment but as an essential step

to compete effectively in an oversaturated labour market (Abubakar, 2020; Ogunode & Abubakar, 2020).

Although overall labour demand is high, the need for skilled workers, especially in sectors requiring technical and digital skills, remains relatively low and uneven across industries. For example, while sectors such as agriculture, Information Technology (IT), and the creative economy have growth potential, significant skill gaps still exist. (Dabalen, et al, 2001; Okolie, et al, 2019) Many graduates face unemployment due to a disconnect between their education and workforce needs (Dabalen et al, 2001; British Council, 2014; Okolie et al, 2019).

Despite facing economic and political challenges, Nigeria's economy is gradually diversifying, especially in fields like agribusiness, telecommunications, and fintech (PwC, 2020; UNCTAD, 2021). This continued, though uneven, transition reinforces the idea that tertiary education, particularly in science, technology, and vocational fields, can equip students with the skills and knowledge needed for these developing sectors (Olaleye et al., 2020; ILO, 2022). Nevertheless, the success of tertiary education in meeting this demand largely depends on how well Institutions adapt to labour market trends and the broader socio-economic context. (Pitan, O.S, 2016)

2.2.3 Employers' Emphasis on Certificate Acquisition

A global trend has emerged in which employers worldwide are placing increasing importance on educational qualifications as they recruit candidates into their workforce (Olaleye et al., 2020). Tertiary degrees and even certifications all serve as signals or indicators of employees' knowledge, skills, and commitment to valid professional development. Nigerian employers may require employees to possess valid qualifications as a minimum requirement for entry into the workforce. (Ogunode & Abubakar, 2020) This is especially valid in industry sectors such as banking, corporate consulting, and all forms of communications in which competition for high paying jobs is relatively high, this so Nigerian employers can possess the luxury of selecting from a large pool of qualified potential employees (Ogunode & Abubakar, 2020).

Moreover, the Nigerian government has implemented initiatives and appropriate policies to promote and increase the development of tertiary education programs and innovative skill sets, such further point to the importance of these tertiary qualifications for the Nigerian labour

market (Otonko, 2021). For example, programs in higher education in Nigeria such as the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) program may require selected university graduates to undergo mandatory one-year service programs thereby further motivating younger Nigerians to be sufficiently confident to pursue tertiary education in Nigeria. There are indicators of this form of expansion within the realm of Nigerian tertiary education. This is evident in the increase in the number of colleges of education, polytechnics, and universities (Otonko, 2021). This reflects the nation's ongoing efforts to address and meet the ongoing demands found in tertiary education. The significant increase in the number of students who seek admission to Nigerian tertiary Institutions serves to validate and underpin the importance of tertiary education within the country's educational landscape (Okoroma, 2006; Otonko, 2021).

However, despite the expansion of Nigerian tertiary education, significant challenges continue to persist in terms of issues that are related to access, quality, and relevance to colleges and universities in Nigeria (Abubakar, 2020; IOM, 2014; Okoroma, 2006,). While there is an increase in the number of tertiary Institutions which in turn has expanded access to higher education, there remain serious concerns concerning the quality of the education that is provided to the majority of the Nigerian population, and how this quality meets and aligns with the demands and needs of the nation's labour marketplace (Okoroma, 2006; Otonko, 2021).

In addition, there has been a proliferation of private tertiary Institutions in Nigeria (Otonko, 2021). This in turn raises questions about the integrity of regulatory oversight and the quality assurance mechanisms designed to ensure that Nigerian students receive a high-quality education that prepares them for the demands of the Nigerian workforce (Okoroma, 2006). Based on the literature, it is apparent that the increased demand for tertiary education in both the global context and Nigeria is driven by increasingly competitive and perhaps stressful factors (Otonko, 2021).

These factors pertain to the need for higher qualifications in an increasingly competitive Nigerian job market, the desire for better job opportunities and career advancement, and the employers' emphasis on certificate acquisition. These limiting or restrictive factors serve to confirm the importance of tertiary education as a valid pathway to economic and social mobility within both developed economies and within challenging developing African economies (Abubakar, 2020; Otonko, 2021). This translates to the need for continued investment in tertiary

education and skills development to meet the evolving needs of emerging younger individuals and increasing diversity in emerging societies.

2.2.4 Globalisation and Neoliberalism in Education Linked to the Nigerian Situation

Globalisation and neoliberalism have seriously influenced schools and universities in Nigeria, as they have in many different nations around the world. These forces have been instrumental in shaping academic policies, funding mechanisms, and the regular practice of tertiary training in Nigeria (Otonko, 2021). Globalisation has led to the internationalisation of education, with Nigerian assignment projects, changing pupil programs, and partnerships with overseas Institutions (Tikly, 2011). This has improved the possibilities for Nigerian college students and teachers to access globally accessible resources, expertise, and perspectives. However, it has created additional, more intense competition, as Nigerian neighbourhood universities try to enhance their world rankings and entice global college students and overseas funding. Neoliberalism is characterised by employing free-market standards and minimal government intervention and has influenced training policies in Nigeria by emphasising privatisation, deregulation, and the commodification of education (Oyeleke, 2021).

The proliferation of private tertiary establishments in Nigeria is a direct result of neoliberal policies which have influenced the privatization of training and the growth of market forces in greater education. (Akintola, O and Abosede Itiola, 2021) Furthermore, neoliberal policies have promoted the commercialization of training in Nigeria with personal/private universities charging excessive training costs and providing offerings tailor-made to the needs of the educational marketplace (Oyeleke, 2021). This has created disparities in get right of entry to appropriate satisfactory education, as Nigerian college students from low-income backgrounds and deprived demographics are no longer able to access sufficient funding for the excessive fee of training at non-public educational Institutions (Olatunji, 2018).

It appears that globalisation and neoliberalism each offer a blessing and possibly a curse, as whilst they have delivered possibilities for collaboration and innovation in the Nigerian tertiary education sector, they have additionally posed challenges associated with equity, access, and quality (Olatunji, 2018; Ng, 2015). It is fundamental for policymakers and stakeholders to

navigate these rising dynamics with caution by making sure that Nigerian training remains a public resource and is always on hand to all Nigerians

2.2.5 The Three Levels of Tertiary Education in Nigeria

2.2.5.1: Universities

Nigerian universities provide undergraduate and postgraduate applications in several fields, such as arts, education sciences, engineering, medicine, and social sciences (Fafunwa, 1974, & Ogundipe, 2024). Indeed, they are accountable for superior research, expertise production, and the coaching of knowledgeable professionals (Olatunji, 2018). Many, if not most, of these universities are usually funded and regulated by the Nigerian authorities at the Federal or National level, though there are also private universities situated in the country (Fafunwa, 2018; Ng, 2015). The aims of university education in Nigeria, outlined by the Federal Ministry of Education (2004) and highlighted by Asiyai (2005), are:

- Production of the essential high-level manpower is crucial for the nation's growth and development.
- They serve as centres of excellence in teaching and research, acting as repositories of knowledge to nurture the nation's manpower needs.
- Promotion and encouragement of scholarship and community services.

The Federal Ministry of Education also stated that universities in Nigeria should vigorously pursue these goals through teaching, research, and development, knowledge generation and dissemination, international cooperation, and dedicated services to the communities through extramural and consultancy services.

2.2.5.2: Polytechnics, Monotechnic and Allied Institutions.

Polytechnics generally provide technical and vocational training and education (TVET) programs centred on equipping students with practical skills to gain employment in industries and join the workforce (Olatunji, 2018; Ng, 2015). According to the Federal Ministry of

Education (FME, 2024), the vision of polytechnic education is to enhance the nation's economy and compete globally by training highly skilled and semi-skilled professionals to meet the country's manpower needs. Polytechnic Education in Nigeria is designed to provide hands-on learning, apprenticeships, and internships in addition to the acquisition of theoretical knowledge (Moody, 1968; NBTE, 2023; FME, 2023). Polytechnics are regulated by the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) and receive funding from the Nigerian government (Imam, 2012; Ng, 2015).

There are currently 221 public polytechnic Institutions in Nigeria. (FME, 2024).

2.2.5.3: Colleges of Education.

The focus of attention for the Colleges of Education in Nigeria is on education instructors and educators for placement in primary and secondary schools (NCCE, 2023; FME, 2013). They train preservice teachers who teach in pre-primary, primary and Secondary schools in the country. They provide certificates, diplomas, and diploma applications in training and associated fields. The Colleges of Education infrastructure plays a vital role in enabling instructors to provide above-average higher levels of education at the primary and Junior secondary education levels (Imam, 2012). They are regulated by the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) and are eligible for government funding (Ogunode and Adana, 2022; TETFUND ACT, 2012).

2.3 The History and Stages of Nigerian Tertiary Education

Historically, tertiary education in Nigeria has evolved through several stages, reflecting shifts in societal needs, government policies, and academic priorities. The records of tertiary training in Nigeria can be divided into the following five stages:

2.3.1 Pre-Independence Period

Before Nigeria won independence in 1960, tertiary training used to be very limited, with only a few tutorial establishments delivering advanced training programs. The emphasis used to be on training programs that searched for ways to coach civil servants and for the authorities to serve the colonial-appointed Nigerian administration (Imam, 2012).

2.3.2 Post-Independence Period

Following independence, the Nigerian educational landscape witnessed a growth in tertiary education, with the establishment of new universities, polytechnics, and faculties of education (Fafunwa, 2008; Imam, 2012). This new era of independence was at times characterised by using accelerated funding in tertiary education and the development of demand for knowledgeable tutors to aid nationwide improvement and efforts in educating a growing population.

2.3.4 Economic Boom and Expansion

During the rising oil prices of the 1970s, Nigeria underwent an economic boom which led to extended funding for training and the institution of greater tertiary Institutions (Anyanwu, 2011; Imam, 2012). This high-growth era was once marked by a significant right of entry by most Nigerian students to the rapid growth of tertiary schooling that was designed to cater for all Nigerians. This was characterized by attention directed at growing enrolment statistics and enhancing academic infrastructure inside this developing educational landscape (Imam, 2012).

2.3.5 Economic Challenges and Reforms

However, a few years later, the monetary downturn of the 1980s and 1990s in Nigeria and globally subsequently led to funding constraints and structural changes in how education was administered in Nigeria. Government policies during this period focused on cost-saving measures, privatisation, and primary assurance in tertiary education (Imam, 2012)

2.3.6 Privatisation and Diversification

In response to developing demand for greater training and complex funding constraints, Nigerian academic stakeholders witnessed a surge in non-public tertiary establishments in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries (Imam, 2012). This risky and uncertain period witnessed the expanded diversification of tertiary training Institutions, educators' responsibilities, and curricula, alongside the institutionalisation of universities and faculties that offered unique and specialised programs catering to niche fields of study and industries within Nigeria (Imam, 2012).

Quality education, both globally and in Nigeria, is a multifaceted concept that encompasses more than a few dimensions (Imam, 2012; Arcaro, 1995, 2024). This concept covers relevance, equity, access, effectiveness, and efficiency (Imam, 2012). Globally, satisfactory tertiary education is characterised by rigorous educational standards, modern educational and skill development, and a dedication to ongoing and progressive improvement. This notion was supported by Harvey and Greene (2006), that quality education must have set standards and create a means of evaluation to assess its progress and must meet the minimum criteria set by the consumer. The setting of standards for approval also means that quality education can be improved by raising those standards. (Lee Harvey & Diana Greene, 2006; Arcaro, 1995, 2024) Therefore, this research supports the exploration of the factors that affect staff and students' perceptions of quality tertiary education in Nigeria and how these factors can help improve the current standard of tertiary education in Nigeria.

2.4. Concepts of Quality Tertiary Education in Nigeria and Globally

The term 'quality' is vague, meaning different things to different people around the world. There have been several attempts by researchers to define the term quality, and they have produced different definitions based on the values they place on quality. (Welzant et al, 2015) Society's needs usually determine the values it places on the quality of education. Because it means different things to different people (Harvey and Greene, 2009). This can be seen in the old Roman Empire, which placed value on the development of physically strong young men who could defend their cities and go to war; the training was focused on physical fitness. The old African non-formal education places value on and prioritises the building of physically strong men trained to protect their community and farm, and to provide for their families. Women were trained in trading, household chores, and motherhood to raise healthy families. Therefore, quality is usually raised and defined based on the needs of the particular society. Emphasis was placed on functionality to serve society, covering cultural transmission, basic vocational skills, social cohesion, and moral and ethical values (Busia, KA. 2023; Fafunwa, AB. 2022). The notion has also attracted global attention, especially in discussions surrounding the Sustainable Development goals, as UNESCO (2015) defines it as inclusive and equitable learning that fosters lifelong learning opportunities for everyone. This notion aligns with the broader aims of SDG 4, which emphasise both access and the quality of the educational experience and its

outcomes. This concept includes aspects such as teaching effectiveness, curriculum relevance, student learning outcomes, institutional governance and resource availability.

Looking at this globally, the quality of tertiary education is viewed through various theoretical and policy perspectives. Olaleye et al. (2024) conducted a bibliometric review of the literature on higher education in developing countries, identifying governance, funding, academic performance, and employability as key indicators of educational quality. Their review highlights that, although access to higher education has expanded in many areas, issues concerning the relevance and effectiveness of educational systems persist, especially in environments where educational policies are poorly implemented or underfunded.

The diverse and elusive nature of the term 'quality' has been shown to depend on the process and the outcome. As stated by the Higher Education Policy Institute (HPI, 2022), the term 'quality education' is defined as the extent to which tertiary education expectations are met, thereby improving learners' progress and success. This involves meeting the agreed set standard. (HPI, 2023). Harvey & Greene (2006) described quality as something exceptional, outstanding, or special, meaning quality must be fit for purpose, provide value for money, and meet the needs of the consumer. They argued further that quality depends on the input and the expectation. To achieve educational quality, there must be standards put in place, and there must be means of evaluating or checks and balances put in place to ensure it performs what it is set to do. In setting standards, the Nigerian government has established regulatory frameworks through agencies like the National Universities Commission (NUC), the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) and the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) to standardise and monitor the quality of tertiary Institutions. Nevertheless, enforcement poses a challenge, especially in public tertiary Institutions which are under resourced. This highlights the necessity of aligning national educational policies with global frameworks, such as the Incheon Declaration adopted in 2015, to support inclusive, equitable quality and comprehensive development in the education sector. (UNESCO, 2015)

In tertiary education, quality is not just an abstract concept; it is a measurable aspect often reflected in students' achievement of specific academic and professional goals. In Nigeria, one of the primary aims of tertiary education, according to the National Policy on Education, is to develop individuals who can contribute meaningfully to national development by acquiring

specialised knowledge and skills (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013, Section 8, Subsection 59a). This goal necessitates structured evaluation systems that ensure students engage with the academic material and attain the competencies expected upon graduation.

The policy also stresses that assessments should involve ongoing monitoring of learners' progress, encouraging a shift from isolated examinations to more comprehensive, formative evaluation methods (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013, Section 1, Subsection 9d). At the tertiary level, this includes semester exams, coursework, practical demonstrations, research projects, and industrial attachments, each focusing on specific learning and skill development aspects. These evaluation methods serve a dual purpose: maintaining academic standards and signalling students' readiness for the labour market.

Quality is recognised as a complex, context-dependent concept that varies according to different stakeholders' perspectives and expectations (Harvey & Green, 1993/2006). Harvey and Green (1993/2006) identify five interconnected dimensions of educational quality: high standards, consistency or perfection, fitness for purpose, value for money, and transformation. They emphasise that assessing educational quality involves evaluating inputs like academic staff quality, curriculum relevance, and educational resources in relation to expected outcomes. The authors note that high-quality education is often measured by inputs such as qualified, experienced staff, appropriate curriculum design, and sufficient infrastructural support to ensure effective educational delivery. (Harvey & Green, 1993/2006).

Applying this concept to tertiary education emphasises the importance of quality education, given the sector's role in national growth, economic progress, and societal change. Harvey and Green's foundational ideas are supported by recent studies, including Tam (2010) and Okeke & Lee (2025), which argue that high-quality higher education should equip students with essential skills and critical-thinking abilities to address complex global economic issues. Okeke and Lee (2025) examined teaching quality at an urban Nigerian university and found that staff and students equated quality with lecturers' competence, effective teaching, and a supportive learning environment. Their findings indicate that the quality of higher education is shaped not only by institutional standards and policies but also by stakeholders' experiences and perceptions. Although their research focused on teaching quality in a university setting, the

current study extends this perspective by examining how funding and policy implementation influence staff and students' perceptions of quality in Nigerian Colleges of Education.

In the Nigerian tertiary education context, this framework directly addresses stakeholder concerns about quality, suggesting that assessments should thoroughly evaluate institutional resources, the relevance of academic programmes to societal and economic needs, and their transformative effects on graduates and society. (Madani, 2019) Therefore, quality tertiary education in Nigeria involves aligning academic inputs and curriculum relevance with specific educational outcomes and national development objectives. (Asiyai, 2015)

Outputs or expectations will be the results produced or that come out from investments in education. As Hoy, Bayne-Jardine, and Wood (2005) state, these can be measured using tangible indicators such as graduation rates, graduate employability, student satisfaction, and feedback from stakeholders including students, staff, society, and employers about educational experiences and outcomes. Moreover, research productivity and the societal impact of innovative practices are crucial output indicators of quality higher education (Hoy et al., 2005). Recent studies highlight that effective education systems are those that attain high graduation and employment rates while encouraging strong stakeholder involvement and positive feedback, ultimately benefiting society (OECD, 2022; Marginson, 2016). In Nigeria, output measures like graduation rates, graduate employability, and stakeholder participation serve as key indicators for evaluating institutional effectiveness and aligning educational goals with societal and economic needs (Okebukola, 2015; Saint, Hartnett & Strassner, 2003).

Borishade et al. (2021) support the importance of student satisfaction as a quality indicator by analysing its relationship with service quality and student loyalty in Nigerian higher education. Their study found that students' perceptions of service quality strongly shaped their satisfaction and trust, suggesting that educational quality assessment should extend beyond academic results. This underscores the need to consider students' experiences of institutional services and learning environments when evaluating the quality of tertiary education. While Borishade et al. (2021) focused mainly on service quality and student outcomes, this study broadens the scope by examining how funding and policy implementation shape perceptions of quality among both staff and students.

Therefore, quality higher education can also be understood through various aspects, with transformation being a key component as described by Harvey and Green (1993/2006). They characterise transformation as education's ability to improve learners' knowledge, skills, and attitudes, enabling them to make meaningful contributions to society. Recent studies, such as the review by Welzant et al. (2011, 2015), support this view by identifying four main concepts of quality in higher education: transformative, purposeful, exceptional, and accountable. In this framework, transformative quality emphasises preparing graduates to actively and positively contribute to societal progress. This aligns with Nigeria's National Policy on Education (2013). Section 1, subsection 6 states that education aims to cultivate morally upright and effective citizens capable of social integration and equipped with the mental, physical, and psychological skills necessary for meaningful participation. Section 7 highlights that delivering quality learning at all levels is vital for national development. These policy goals embody the transformative concept of quality education, where individual empowerment directly benefits society. The literature connects learner transformation to broader development goals, a relationship also stressed by Nigerian educational policy. As a result, when linked to the national policy on education statement, transformational outcomes are regarded not only as ideal but as essential to Nigeria's commitment to quality education.

From the foregoing, the achievement of quality education is based on the input which includes the amount of investment made by the various stakeholders in charge of education and in terms of Public Tertiary Institutions this includes funding of infrastructures and facilities, investment in resources e.g. staffing etc and policies put in place to achieve this in order to be able to derive a profitable output or expectations from education. . (Ogunode and Musa, 2020) The Nigerian government stated in the national policy on education preface that the policy is reviewed from time to time to ensure quality in education in Nigeria. (NPE, 2013, 6th edition) This shows effort by the Nigerian authority to meet the standards and changing needs of the Nigerian society

Moreover, in Nigeria, the National Policy on Education (NPE) is accountable for articulating the desires and requirements for first-class tertiary schooling in the country. It is also tasked to emphasise the significance of high-level manpower or vocational training, accessibility, affordability, and relevance to be applied countrywide to manage improvement priorities (Kusmaryono & Aminudin, 2021; McDowell, 1980). Quality tertiary training in Nigeria was

and is still measured by using indicators such as student performance outcomes, graduates' employability, output capacity, institutional reputation, and tutorial infrastructure.(Asiyai, 2015; Madani, 2019) Quality can be defined in terms of the societal values and needs that can be seen in terms of the contribution that education can make on the economic growth. This informed setting a standard (policy) to achieve its goals. (Madani,2019).

Tikly, (2011) stated that to achieve quality, it must be backed by evidence-based policy. Nbon, (2017) described quality as the level to which an event adheres to stated or agreed standards, and it's usually associated with conformity or adherence to set rules and standards. Quality Education is an education that develops the learner completely, it must equip the individual with knowledge, values and skills for the future that can inherently benefit both the individual and the society at large (NG.Pak, 2015). The National Policy on Education (NPE) (section 5:81) stated that the goal of tertiary education in Nigeria is: (a) to contribute to national development through high level manpower training (b) to provide accessible and affordable quality learning opportunities (c) to provide high quality career (d) to reduce skill shortages (e) to promote and encourage scholarship, entrepreneur, and community service (f) to forge and cement national and international understanding and interaction.

The NPE, further stated that tertiary Institutions shall pursue these goals through:

- i. quality student intake ii. quality teaching and learning iii. research and development
- iv. high standards in the quality of facilities, services, and resources etc (NPE, 2014, 6th edition, pp 40) <https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:EU:2d9d317e-703e-4121-ad4ea5b07ceb6960>.

From the foregoing, it can be observed that to achieve quality there must be measurable tools using input and outputs process (Babalola et al 2007). The input will be in terms of funding, educational policies and guidelines for achievement, instructional materials, quality of teachers, available resources etc while the output will be the products that are derived from the process of education in terms of employability to fill in the manpower need of the nation and contribution to the development of the nation. The basic concern in education is the quality of the products in terms of their value-driven potential. According to Brown (2011), the efforts of

educational administrators and planners are geared toward producing graduates who possess the right values needed to promote development in society.

However, the attainment of quality tertiary education in Nigeria faces several challenges, which include insufficient funding and resources, infrastructure deficits, college personnel shortages, curriculum outdatedness, and gaps or shortfalls in adequate assurance protocols (Imam, 2012; Kusmaryono & Aminudin, 2021). Addressing these long-standing challenges requires serious coordinated efforts from the Nigerian government, instructional Institutions, education associated stakeholders, and the general public (Idowu, 1999; Ogunode al, 2020). This approach is to make sure that all Nigerian Tertiary Institution students, regardless of their demographic backgrounds, have sufficient opportunities to gain entry to adequate tertiary schooling or education that meets global requirements, which demand increasingly higher levels of excellence (McDowell, 1980).

Ibidunni et al. (2023) examine the implementation of Total Quality Management (TQM) in some selected private universities in Nigeria. They emphasise that quality should be regarded as an ongoing process rather than a fixed goal. Their findings point to the importance of internal quality assurance strategies, such as feedback systems and performance monitoring, for enhancing research output and academic achievement in Nigerian universities. In this study, Total Quality Management is not used as an analytical framework. Instead, references like Ibidunni et al. (2023) are analysed to contextualise broader discussions of quality in Nigerian higher education and to demonstrate how internal institutional processes interact with wider structural factors, such as funding and policy implementation.

Figure 2.2. Quality of Education



Figure 2.2. This figure illustrates how Quality Assurance, Funding, and Educational Policy interact to achieve Quality Education. Quality Assurance is positioned at the top as the guiding framework. Funding and Educational Policy form the middle tier, representing the essential mechanisms that operationalise quality goals. The process culminates in Achieving Quality Education at the bottom, showing the outcome of effective assurance, adequate funding, and sound policy implementation. This conceptual illustration is adapted from UNESCO's 2015 education framework.

2.4.1 Ratings of Education in Nigeria

Various university ranking systems are employed to assess Nigerian tertiary education Institutions, offering comparative insights. For example, the Webometrics system ranks Institutions worldwide based on their online presence, visibility, and digital influence (Imam, 2012; Ogunode & Madu, 2021). This metrics-driven approach provides a unique perspective on institutional reach and digital engagement within the academic community. Besides Webometrics, Nigerian universities are also evaluated through internationally recognised rankings such as Times Higher Education (THE), QS World University Rankings, and the Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU). These rankings focus on traditional academic indicators like research output, teaching quality, international collaboration, and industry partnerships (Imam, 2012; Ogunode & Madu, 2021). Although these global frameworks offer useful benchmarks, critics argue they may not fully reflect Nigeria's specific educational challenges and realities. Factors such as institutional mission alignment, funding constraints, infrastructural deficiencies, and socio-political influences are often ignored.

Therefore, while these rankings are valuable tools for reflection and policy development, they should not be regarded as comprehensive measures of educational quality. Policymakers and educational leaders should use them as supplementary tools alongside other quality-assurance methods to enable more comprehensive evaluations of Nigeria's higher education system (Saint et al., 2003; Ogunode & Musa, 2020).

Table 2.2. Rating of Nigerian Universities

Ranking in Nigeria	University Name	World Ranking
1	University of Ibadan	1111
2	University of Nigeria, Nsukka	1534
3	Covenant University, Ota	1788
4	Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife	1920
5	University of Lagos	1987
6	Federal University of Technology, Akure	2043
7	Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria	2402
8	University of Ilorin	2419
9	University of Port Harcourt	2585
10	University of Calabar	3054

Table 2.2: Webometrics Ranking Web of Universities, Nigeria ranking published 12 July 2024, retrieved through University Guru.

2.5. Concept of Policy and the Nigerian Educational Policy

Policies are generally defined as a structured set of principles designed to guide decisions and actions towards a specific goal. (Hauwa, 2012) They usually include regulations, laws, or guidelines established by authoritative organisations (Hall, 2017; Isah, 2020). In the public or government affairs, policies reflect government priorities and intentions, serving as tools to influence behaviour, allocate resources, and address societal needs (Danna & Porche, 2009; Howlett & Mukherjee, 2014; Osher & Quinn, 2003; Tomé, 2020). While understanding this broad concept of policy is important, educational policy specifically concerns how these frameworks are implemented within the education system to organise, deliver, and enhance learning (Yaro, 2018). This perspective was also supported by Ogunode and Adah (2020), who defined Nigerian educational policy as a set of guidelines, rules, and regulations formulated by the government to ensure the smooth administration and management of education at all levels in Nigeria (local, state, and federal) to achieve the objectives of the Nigerian educational agenda.

Educational policy encompasses specific actions and decisions made by government and stakeholders concerning the organisation, delivery, and enhancement of education (Viennet & Pont, 2017). These policies are formal documents that set out rules and guidelines guiding the educational system toward standardised learning processes and target outcomes. In Nigeria, education policy involves a collection of regulations and decisions created by government bodies to tackle major issues such as access, equity, quality, relevance, and efficiency (Okoroma, 2006; Olatunji, 2018).

The main anchor and driver of the Nigerian education policy is the National Policy on Education (NPE), first introduced in 1977 and revised several times, with the most recent edition published in 2013 (Fafunwa, 2018; UNESCO, 2021). The NPE outlines national goals for education from primary to tertiary levels and provides a framework for addressing issues such as curriculum development, teacher training, infrastructure, and quality assurance (Ibukun, 1996; Fafunwa, 2018). To achieve the Nigerian nation's goals and objectives of education and to meet up with the different protocols that the Nigerian nation is signatory to such as the United nation convention on the right of every child (CRC) etc. Alongside the NPE, sector-specific policies and legislation like the Education Tax Fund Act (1999), the Tertiary

Education Trust Fund Act (2011), The Child act Policy, The National Policy on HIV and AIDS for the Nigerian Education Sector(2005) and various initiatives focus on areas including technical and vocational education, inclusive education, and adult literacy (BudgIT, 2021; Ogunode and Adah, 2020). These measures are supervised, monitored and authorised to be implemented by authorised government agencies, academic Institutions, and stakeholders to foster national development and enhance educational quality in Nigeria. (Ogunode and Adah, 2020).

2.5.1 Stages of Educational Policy in Nigeria

Understanding how educational policy has evolved in Nigeria is essential to this research, as each phase has influenced current issues related to funding, policy implementation, and perceptions of quality in higher education. This section examines the key policy stages, focusing on their effects on resources, regulations, and the experiences of staff and students (Rasheed, 2020).

1 Substitution of Labour and Skills Stage (Post-Independence)

After Nigeria gained independence in 1960, the country's educational policy focused on building a local workforce to replace colonial experts. The recommendations from the Ashby Commission prompted substantial investment in expanding universities to develop skilled professionals for national growth (Imam, 2012; Tickly, 2001; Saint, Hartnett & Strassner, 2003). During this period, government policy, funding, and higher education's objectives became aligned, with 'quality' often judged by the number of graduates produced. However, emphasising graduation numbers sometimes overshadowed other academic goals, such as research and critical thinking.

2 Economic Reaction Phase (1970s Oil Boom)

The 1970s oil boom led to increased government revenue and rapid university growth, aimed at supporting the country's economic progress. The 1977 National Policy on Education formalised this connection, emphasising higher education as key to national self-reliance (FRN, 2004). Nonetheless, expansion often outpaced planning and funding, and political motives sometimes drove the creation of new universities. Over time, weaknesses in quality assurance

and uneven resource allocation became more apparent, raising worries about declining educational standards (Saint, Hartnett & Strassner, 2003; Babalola et al., 2007; Awe, 2020).

3 Democratisation Phase (Late 1980s Onwards)

Since the late 1980s, there was a shift in policy focus towards increasing access and promoting fairness in higher education. Measures like catchment area policies, admission quotas, and the establishment of JAMB aimed to make university entry more democratic and address existing inequalities (Oni, 2012; Okebukola, 2021; Obasi, 2007). Although these efforts expanded opportunities, funding and infrastructure struggled to keep pace, resulting in overcrowding, staff shortages, and resource strain. These ongoing issues continue to influence staff and students' perceptions of educational quality.

4 Political Reaction Phase (Expansion of State Universities)

As federal universities faced rising demand and limitations, state governments began creating their own Institutions, especially from the 1980s onward (Akinyemi, 2020; Adebayo & Eze, 2022). This expansion improved access and supported regional growth but also caused fragmented funding, inconsistent regulation, and disparities in educational quality. Many state universities struggled with chronic underfunding and varying oversight levels, resulting in diverse experiences and perceptions within the sector (Okebukola, 2021).

5 Privatisation Phase (Late 1990s - Present)

Starting from 1999, private universities began to emerge as public universities struggled to accommodate all qualified students (Obasi, 2007; Adebayo & Eze, 2022). Although private Institutions have increased access and often offer more stable learning environments, their high fees limit opportunities for many, raising concerns about equity and social inclusion (Saint et al., 2003; Awe, 2020). The growth of the private sector has complicated funding and quality assurance, influencing how quality in Nigerian higher education is defined and perceived (Teferra & Altbach, 2004).

In summary, every stage of Nigeria's educational policy has uniquely influenced funding practices, policy implementation, and perceptions of quality. These enduring legacies still impact the experiences of staff and students in higher education today.

Summary Table 2.3: Stages of Educational Policy in Nigeria and Key Impacts

Stage	Period	Policy Focus	Main Impact on Funding & Quality
Substitution of Labour & Skills	1960s	Local workforce development	Public funding increase; output focused quality
Economic Reaction	1970s	Support economic growth	Rapid expansion; uneven funding; emerging quality issues
Democratisation	Late 1980s+	Access and equity	Broader access; resource constraints; overcrowding
Political Reaction	1980s-1990s	State-level expansion	Fragmented funding; quality disparities
Privatisation	1999-present	Private sector involvement	Greater capacity; high cost; equity and quality debates

This review provides the necessary background to understand staff and student views on funding and quality in Nigerian higher education, which the present study aims to examine.

2.5.2 National Policy on Education: Roles and Responsibilities

The National Policy on Education, 2013 (reprinted 2014) (NPE), is instrumental in guiding and structuring Nigeria's education system. It provides a comprehensive framework for management, instructional planning, and administration across various levels. The NPE defines the roles and duties of key stakeholders, including government, educational Institutions, teachers, parents, students, and the private sector, all working towards national development objectives through education. Globally, education policies are vital tools for national progress, which explains the significant investments countries make in education (Tikly, 2011; Ogunode and Adah, 2020). Investments in education are often linked to economic growth, leading to the establishment of standards, guidelines, and regulations to meet the set educational goals and objectives (NG.Pak, 2011).

In Nigeria, the NPE, which has been reviewed and revised many times, is the main document outlining government intentions, expectations, goals, and standards for education. It guides the effective management, administration, and implementation of education at all levels of government (NPE, 2013). The policy has been periodically reviewed to remain aligned with changing educational priorities. (Ibrahim, 2018)

The evolution of this policy from colonial to postcolonial times reflects shifting societal needs, values, and emerging policy requirements (Fafunwa, 1995, 2018; Imam, 2012). Each phase or stage is shaped by the societal needs and aspirations of that period, leading to policy changes that influence how educational quality is defined and pursued. For this study, understanding the roles outlined in the National Policy on Education (NPE) is important, as these responsibilities affect how funding and policy implementation are experienced by staff and students, thereby shaping their perceptions of quality in Nigerian tertiary education.

Although the National Policy on Education is a key framework for Nigeria's education system, its effectiveness remains a subject of debate within the literature. While the policy clearly aims to improve access, quality, and equity, and to support national development, many studies argued that its expected outcomes have not been fully realised because of implementation

challenges (Imam, 2012; Asiyai, 2015; Ogunode and Adah, 2020). Common issues include insufficient funding, weak monitoring, inconsistent policy execution, infrastructural challenges, and political interference in educational administration. As a result, scholars argued that the principal obstacle is not the absence of policies but the persistent gap between policy formulation and policy implementation (Imam, 2012; Asiyai, 2015; Ogunode and Adah, 2020). This distinction is particularly relevant to this present study because staff and students experience educational quality not just through policy documents, but through how well these policies are translated into practice within tertiary institutions.

Much of the existing research on Nigerian higher education and quality focuses on expert evaluations of funding, teacher training, curriculum development, teaching methods, and policy structures (e.g., Fafunwa, 2018; Ogunode, 2020; Ibrahim, 2018). These studies provide valuable insights into systemic challenges and institutional flaws but are mostly based on expert opinions, policy assessments, or institutional data rather than direct empirical input from key stakeholders, such as students and staff. While students and academic staff are frequently seen as policy beneficiaries or implementers, their perspectives are scarcely included as primary evidence.

As a result, there remains limited empirical research that specifically examines how students and staff perceive educational quality, particularly regarding funding and policy implementation in Nigerian tertiary institutions. This literature review identifies a gap in stakeholder-focused studies that move beyond expert opinions to include the voices of those directly affected by policy and funding practices, which this study seeks to address.

2.5.3 Nigerian Government

The Nigerian government bears the primary responsibility for creating and enforcing educational policies, allocating resources, establishing regulatory bodies, and ensuring fair access to tertiary education for all citizens (Anyira & Idubor, 2020; Budgit, 2021). Its role, as outlined in the NPE (2013), is to provide a sustainable framework for stakeholder collaboration and coordination, ensuring effective policy implementation and the achievement of national development goals through education (Anyira & Idubor, 2020).

This directly relates to research objectives two and three, which examine how policy practices and funding, shaped by government actions, affect perceptions of quality among staff and students. Understanding how policies are formulated, funded, and implemented is essential to grasping the realities and challenges facing Nigerian tertiary education today.

2.5.4 Educational Institutions

Universities, polytechnics, and colleges are charged with delivering quality education. They do so by adhering to teaching standards, curriculum guidelines, providing resources, and supporting student welfare and overall development (Anyira & Idubor, 2020).

These responsibilities directly influence how staff and students perceive and evaluate educational quality. The ability of Institutions to follow NPE guidelines and implement policies is central to the first and fourth research objectives, which focus on perceptions of quality and the effects of policy and funding on educational experiences.

2.5.5 Teachers

Teachers and support staff are vital to Nigeria's educational system. They deliver instruction, assess learning, offer guidance, and create supportive learning environments (Anyira & Idubor, 2020; Budgit, 2021). Because teachers are on the frontline of policy implementation and interact directly with students, their perspectives provide crucial insights into the impact of policies and the practical realities of educational quality. Teacher quality is often a key indicator by which students gauge or perceive their academic experience (objectives one and two).

2.5.6 Parents and Guardians

Parents, guardians, and legally authorised individuals support children's education by encouraging attendance, monitoring progress, and fostering a learning culture at home (Budgit, 2021). While their support is valuable, their direct influence on perceptions of quality in tertiary Institutions, from the perspectives of staff and students, is limited in this study. Therefore, this section will not be elaborated further, focusing instead on stakeholders whose actions more directly shape or reflect perceptions of quality in Nigerian higher education.

2.5.7 Private Sector

The private sector complements government efforts by providing additional resources and expertise through private schools, universities, and businesses. They offer alternative educational options and contribute to improved outcomes (Anyira & Idubor, 2020; Budgit, 2021). The growing involvement of private Institutions is relevant for research objectives three and four. Private Institutions often have different funding mechanisms and policy implementation experiences, influencing staff and student perceptions of quality. Comparing these with public Institutions can provide broader insights into how funding and policies impact educational standards.

In summary, clarifying the distinct roles in the National Policy on Education (NPE) offers valuable context for this study. It highlights the direct links between policy, funding, and perceptions of quality among staff and students in Nigerian tertiary education Institutions.

2.5.8 Tertiary Education Regulatory Bodies: Roles and Functions

Tertiary education in Nigeria is regulated by various authorities, businesses, and other bodies that are accountable for overseeing specific components of the higher education operational system. These regulatory bodies are usually required to work collaboratively, thereby ensuring there is compliance with predetermined standards, promoting high-quality assurance, and leveraging the potential effectiveness that can be gained from optimising tertiary education in Nigeria (Adesina, 1977; Madani, 2019).

These regulatory bodies play essential roles in ensuring that the quality, integrity, and effectiveness of tertiary education in Nigeria remain consistent and sustainable over the long term (Imam, 2012; Madani, 2019). Primarily, the Nigerian authorities assign these authorised bodies the task of formulating, developing, and enforcing instructional policies, programmes, and initiatives at the federal level (Imam, 2012). Their jurisdictional responsibility and key duties focus on overseeing and preparing tertiary institutions, allocating funding, and coordinating collaboration among stakeholders in Nigeria's higher education sector (Madani, 2019).

2.5.9 National Universities Commission (NUC)

The NUC, a regulatory government educational agency is accountable for overseeing the establishment, accreditation, and quality assurance of Nigerian universities. It was once operated through stipulated procedures stated in the National Universities Commission Act of 1974 (Imam, 2012; Ng, 2015). The Commission now performs an important role by creating the requirements and integrity integral to tertiary training, so these components are maintained and managed as sustainable entities into the longer term (Blaike, 2002; Ogunode and Musa, 2022).

2.5.9.1: National Board for Technical Education (NBTE).

The NBTE serves as a monitoring body to advocate for the ongoing improvement of technical and vocational education in Nigeria. It is nonetheless accountable for the accreditation of Polytechnics, mono-technics, and other technical Institutions (Okebukola, 2018). This is in addition to improvements in curriculum infrastructure and standards, and to the board's recommendations for technical education programs.

2.5.9.2: National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE).

The NCCE is responsible for regulating, supervising, and monitoring Nigeria's colleges of education, where in-service teachers for basic education, ranging from pre-primary to Junior secondary, are trained and accredited, along with the academic teaching infrastructure (Saint, Hartnett & Strassner, 2003; Yussuf & Afolabi, 2014). It has been, and continues to be, accountable for accrediting trainer education programmes. Its duties also include establishing curriculum standards and promoting the professionalisation of teaching staff through ongoing improvement initiatives. (Ogunode and Adanna, 2022)

2.5.9.3: Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board. (JAMB)

JAMB possesses the institutional capacity to coordinate student admission procedures and placements across various tertiary institutions in Nigeria (Okebukola, 2018). It has offices in every state, spread throughout Nigeria. JAMB administers the Unified Tertiary Matriculation

Examination (UTME) and manages a centralised admission system for colleges of education, universities, and polytechnics (Imam, 2012; Ng, 2015).

2.5.9.4: West African Examinations Council (WAEC) and National Examinations Council (NECO).

WAEC and NECO are institutions accountable for conducting examinations for potential tertiary Institution students who are scheduled to finish secondary school education in Nigeria. Their duties consisted of conducting the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) and the National Common Entrance Examination (NCEE), each of which serves as a condition for admission to Nigerian tertiary Institutions (Adesina, 1977; Imam, 2012).

2.5.9.5; Administrative Policy, Practices, and Quality

As previously emphasised, the National Policy on Education, 2013 (NPE) serves as the legal framework and guidance for educational administration and the realisation of quality education in Nigeria's tertiary education sector. It establishes standards for institutional governance, staffing, admissions, and resource allocation (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014; Okebukola, 2015). However, many scholars observe that the true effectiveness of the policy depends not merely on its stated goals but also on how these are interpreted and implemented through the daily administrative routines of tertiary education institutions (Saint, Hartnett & Strassner, 2003; Jacob, Monsurat & Musa, 2021). While the scope of administrative practices in Nigerian tertiary education is broad and complex, this study focuses on several key areas highlighted in policy documents and academic sources, such as staff recruitment and selection, staff-student ratios, staff training and development, and the procedures for student admissions.

These practices are not meant to be an exhaustive list but rather examples of how national policies come to life within Institutions. Literature often emphasises that administrative practices are a vital area where the differences between policy goals, available resources, and actual results become most apparent (Ogbogu, 2011; Ogunode, Jacob & Musa, 2020). By exploring these specific areas, each closely linked to the research tools used in this study, this

review aims to connect theoretical ideas, policy issues, and real-world experiences. This approach helps build a deeper understanding of how staff and students perceive the quality of education and its impact on their educational experiences. (Ofoegbu & Alonge, 2016; Olayemi, 2020).

Research shows that hiring and selecting staff (Recruitment) is crucial for an institution's success and maintaining high academic standards. While the National Policy on Education (NPE) emphasises fair and merit-based recruitment, many studies reveal that practices are often influenced by favouritism, political meddling, and lack of funding (Okebukola, 2015; Ogbogu, 2011; Ogunode et al., 2020). These issues not only dampen staff morale but also undermine teaching quality and erode students' trust in their school's processes. Evidence from researchers such as Ofoegbu and Alonge (2016) indicates that both staff and students believe that transparency in hiring is key to an institution's credibility and to the value of the qualifications they earn. (Ofoegbu and Alonge, 2016)

Staff-student ratios are a key marker of educational quality that many recognise, especially in developing nations like Nigeria, where there is inadequate infrastructure to support or make up for less staffing. (Oyebanji, 2012; Jacob, 2020). Both the National Policy on Education (NPE) and global standards recommendations such as those from UNESCO, stress the need for adequate staffing to support effective teaching and learning (UNESCO, 2021). Unfortunately, ongoing underfunding has led to ratios that are often much higher than recommended, especially in Nigerian universities where it can be as high as 1:60 (Jacob et al., 2021; Adeyemi, 2017). This situation means staff often face heavy workloads, and students frequently feel they get limited attention and rushed instruction (Saint et al., 2003; Aina, 2020). These challenges reveal that the hopes behind educational policies haven't fully come true, mainly because of inadequate of funding and insufficient infrastructure and resources (Ogunode et al., 2020).

Staff training and professional development are emphasised in the NPE as crucial for maintaining pedagogical standards and adapting to evolving educational demands (FRN, 2014; Altbach & Salmi, 2011). Nonetheless, research such as Olayemi (2020) and Jacob et al. (2021) reveals that opportunities for professional growth are often scarce and unevenly available. Challenges such as limited funding, lack of institutional backing, and unequal access to training hinder staff innovation and development. (Ogunode & Musa, 2020). This situation not only

causes frustration among lecturers but also adversely affects students, who report dissatisfaction with outdated teaching styles and limited hands-on experience (Ofoegbu & Alonge, 2016; Jacob, Jegede & Musa, 2021). Both groups perceive the insufficient investment in staff training as indicative of a wider systemic neglect of educational quality.

Admission processes arguably could shed light on how stakeholders view policy implementation and resource allocation. (Aluede, Idogho & Imonikhe, 2012). The NPE's emphasis on fairness and national unity, through assessment and selection methods like the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) and quota system, has been thoroughly documented (FRN, 2014; Obasi & Eboh, 2021). However, ongoing issues such as allegations of favouritism, lack of transparency, and the pressure to admit more students for revenue continue to undermine trust in the system (Okebukola, 2015; Ogunode et al., 2020). For staff, these issues make curriculum delivery and classroom management more difficult, while for students, perceived inequalities cause dissatisfaction and reduce confidence in the value of their education. (Asiyai, 2013)

Across various domains, literature highlights a persistent gap between the ambitious goals set by the NPE and the realities faced on the ground. This gap continues to grow due to ongoing issues like underfunding and inconsistent enforcement of policies (Saint et al., 2003; Ogunode et al., 2020). While much attention has been given to creating policies, surprisingly little research has been conducted into how these policies are experienced by staff and students, particularly how policy, funding, and quality interact in their everyday lives. The aim of this study is to provide fresh insights that can inform scholarly discussions and inspire meaningful policy reforms.

2.6 Funding of Education in Nigeria

Education funding is a shared accountability that requires collaboration, transparency, and accountability amongst each of the federal and regional governments, the private sectors, donors, and the public domain (Imam, 2012). This is conducted to construct equitable access for Nigerian students, obtain sustainable financing, and create accelerated instructional

outcomes. These initiatives should be readily achievable and made readily available for all Nigerians (Madani, 2019; Ng, 2015).

Funding simply means the financing of education, it includes all resources used in financing education, how earmarked money for education is spent that covers, purchases of goods and services which includes human and material resources. In terms of provision of amenities, payment of salaries, staff training and development, scholarships, infrastructure, plant maintenance and everything needed to keep the system running. It means everything that involves money.

The expectation of people regarding the products of tertiary Institutions is that they will become the drivers of societal development (Asiyai, 2013). This development relies on proper funding, sound policies, and effective planning. As Hong (2010) asserts, the success of tertiary education depends on the tripod of adequate financing, planning, and sound policy. It is believed that no organisation can effectively survive without sufficient resources. This point is supported by findings from Adeyemi (2011), Aina (2002), and Ogunode and Musa (2020), all of whom emphasise that funding is essential for any educational growth.

In Nigeria, funding comes from both the government and the private sector, depending on whether the institution is owned by the government or private individuals. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) recommended that nations aiming to develop education for sustainable development should allocate 26% of their annual budget to education (UNESCO, 2020). This is because, without sound education, it will be difficult for society to overcome its challenges. (Ajayi, 2016; Budgit, 2021) Fadahunsi, 2021, argued that no government in Nigeria has allocated more than 9% of its annual budget to education in the last 20 years. According to Idogho (2011), supported by Abubakar, Ibrahim & Yakubu (2020), one of the major challenges confronting tertiary education in Nigeria is underfunding.

The Nigerian government increasingly struggles to fund tertiary education due to competing national priorities, fluctuating economic conditions, and long-standing structural weaknesses in public education financing (Asiyai, 2018; World Bank, 2020). And without proper support, there will be the production of underprepared graduates. (Ogunode and Musa, 2020) Economic instability and budgetary pressures have further limited consistent investment in the sector,

restricting the resources available for effective teaching, learning, and research (Saint, Hartnett and Strassner, 2003; UNESCO, 2014). As a result, tertiary institutions often operate with inadequate infrastructure and staffing, which contributes to the production of underprepared graduates (Ogunode and Musa, 2020). These funding challenges have had significant consequences for the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria (Asiyai, 2018). Furthermore, funding and policy development have been negatively impacted by the politicisation of education, leading to inconsistent policy implementation and unstable financial commitments within the sector (Imam, 2012; Fafunwa, 2018).

Idogho (2011), supported by Uhunmwangho & Diakpomrere (2019), argued that adequate funding, including the provision of proper welfare for students, such as basic amenities like good accommodation, piped water, transportation, scholarships, and standard classrooms, would enhance the quality of education. They also opined that prompt and regular payment of staff salaries and allowances would help reduce frequent staff strikes, thereby improving the overall quality of education in Nigeria. (Idogho, 2011; Uhunmwangho & Diakpomrere, 2019)

2.6.1 Government Responsibilities

The Nigerian authorities fund education and training in Nigeria as mandated through the auspices of the National Policy on Education (NPE) (Imam, 2012). This consists of allocating financial aid from national budgeted finances to aid the operational functions and improvement of academic Institutions, infrastructure, and applications at all levels, from major to tertiary. Government funding for teaching and learning programs are designed to encompass several operational components including personnel expenses, recurrent expenditures, capital expenditures, and also specific interventions such as scholarships, grants, and subsidies (Kivisto, 2005).

However, despite the constitutionally mandated policy commitments to allocate required funding to educational bodies, government expenditure on education in Nigeria has fallen short of recommended benchmarks (Kivisto, 2005; Ng, 2015). This difficult situation has led to significant funding issues, the lack of infrastructure, overcrowded and unhygienic classrooms, and restricted access to good affordable education, such shortfalls are especially common in poorer regions within where rural Nigerian communities live.

2.6.2 Private Sector Roles and Responsibilities

In addition to government funding, the Nigerian private sector plays a vital role in financing education (Ng, 2015). Private individuals, corporations, foundations, and non-profit organisations also support Nigerian education through philanthropy, donations, endowments, and corporate social responsibility initiatives. Private sector involvement in tertiary education focuses on the operational functionality of private schools, training Institutions, and universities, as well as sponsoring scholarships, research grants, and educational programmes (Oralu & Oladele, 2015; Abubakar, Ibrahim & Yakubu, 2020). Private sector funding complements government resources and aims to expand access to education (Ng, 2015). This is particularly important in rural and tribal regions where public Institutions are inadequate or substandard.

2.6.3 External Donations

Beyond government and private sector funding, Nigerian education is also heavily dependent on support from global bodies such as the World Bank, the Alumni, and other funding sources. These are often international donors, multilateral organisations, and development partners. The World Bank, United Nations agencies, bilateral aid agencies, and nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) provide technical assistance, credit, and capacity building finance to improve education outcomes and address priority issues such as literacy, numeracy, teacher training, and, perhaps more importantly, raising awareness about educational infrastructure development (Ng, 2015). Furthermore, donations and philanthropic efforts help to supplement public funding, support innovative projects, and empower disadvantaged Nigerian students to access quality education and achieve their full potential are becoming an increasing priority due in part to public awareness (Imam, 2015; Ng, 2015).

2.7 Agencies Responsible for Funding of Education

Many government agencies and organisations are responsible for funding education in Nigeria (Imam, 2012; Ogbuofor, 2021). These agencies and organisations are tasked with collaborating to mobilise, allocate, and monitor funding for education in Nigeria. This approach ensures that sufficient resources are effectively provided and utilised to achieve

national development goals and improve the quality of education for all Nigerians (Ng, 2015).

2.7.1 Federal Ministry of Education

The Federal Ministry of Education is the primary government agency responsible for formulating and implementing education policies, programs, and budgets at the federal level (Imam, 2012; Waterman et al., 1998). It allocates funding to support educational Institutions, initiatives, and interventions across the country (Ogbuofor, 2021).

2.7.2 State Ministries of Education

State ministries of education are responsible for coordinating education policies, programs, and funding at the state level (Ng, 2015; Ogbuofor, 2021). They receive budgetary allocations from state governments to support the planning, construction, operation and development of schools, colleges, and universities within their jurisdictions.

2.7.3 Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund)

The Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) is a key government agency that supports public tertiary institutions in Nigeria. It primarily offers supplementary funding to improve infrastructure, staff training, research, and library resources at universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education. The following section will provide a more detailed overview of its history, mandate, and duties.

2.7.3.1: The Tertiary Education Trust Fund: History and Responsibilities.

The Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) is a special intervention agency established by the Federal Government of Nigeria in 2011 to provide supplementary funding through intervention programmes to public tertiary Institutions. It was formerly known as the Education Trust Fund (ETF) before its mandate was expanded to cover all tertiary Institutions in Nigeria (Imam, 2012; Otonko, 2021). The TETFund is tasked with collecting education tax from registered companies and allocating funds for the provision of essential infrastructure, academic staff development, research grants, and library development in universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education. Its primary objective is to enhance the quality and

relevance of tertiary education in Nigeria and promote excellence in teaching, learning, and research (Otonko, 2021).

Some of the key responsibilities of TETFund include providing funding for the construction, renovation, and equipping of classrooms, laboratories, libraries, and other essential infrastructure in tertiary Institutions. It also supports the training and development of academic staff through scholarships, grants, and fellowships for postgraduate studies, conferences, workshops, and research activities (Imam, 2012; Otonko, 2021).

In addition, it facilitates research and innovation in tertiary Institutions by providing grants and incentives for faculty research projects, collaborative initiatives, and technology transfer programs (Imam, 2012; Otonko, 2021). It also provides the capacity to enhance the quality of teaching and learning in tertiary Institutions through the provision of teaching aids, instructional materials, and e-learning resources (Olaleye et al., 2020).

Moreover, the TETFund promotes industry-academia-oriented collaboration and partnerships to address skills gaps, encourage entrepreneurship, and foster technology transfer and innovation in key sectors of the economy. This fund is designed to provide the resources needed to play an essential role in complementing government funding for tertiary education in Nigeria (Olaleye et al., 2020). It is also tasked to support the development of world-class academic Institutions in Nigeria that can compete globally and contribute to national development efforts (Otonko, 2021).

2.7.3.2 Historical Evolution of the Education Tax Fund and the Tertiary Education Trust Fund

The Tertiary Education Trust Fund's origins are deeply rooted in Nigeria's historical development of education financing. During colonial times, government involvement in education was minimal, with missionary organisations running most schools. This early setup led to inequalities and resulted in a fragile foundation for sustainable funding after independence. When Nigeria gained independence in 1960, higher education faced significant challenges, including inadequate infrastructure, low government investment, and poor planning (Taiwo, 1980; Fafunwa, 1974).

Following independence, successive governments recognised the importance of strengthening education. The 1977 National Policy on Education, along with its revised versions in 1981 and 1998, emphasised the need for sufficient and stable funding, particularly for the growing tertiary sector. Nonetheless, economic difficulties, population increase, and higher enrolment rates led to government funding becoming increasingly inadequate, resulting in a consistent funding shortfall (Amadi and Nwogu, 2023). By the late 1980s and early 1990s, issues such as worsening infrastructure, falling research output, and strikes by academic unions emphasised the urgent need for a dedicated funding source. These challenges led to the enactment of the Education Tax Act No. 7 of 1993, creating the Education Tax Fund (ETF). The legislation levied a 2 percent education tax on the assessable profits of companies to finance the repair and development of educational institutions at all levels (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1993; Otonko, 2021).

The ETF operated from 1993 to 2010 and helped implement various improvements. However, policymakers observed that distributing resources across primary, secondary, and higher education lessened its effectiveness. Higher education needed more focused, capital-intensive investments, especially in infrastructure and research (Otonko, 2021; Osondu & Onuka, 2017). This prompted a thorough review.

The Tertiary Education Trust Fund (Establishment, Etc.) Act 2011 replaced the earlier Education Tax Act and established TETFund with a focus exclusively on tertiary institutions. This change aimed to enhance accountability, boost efficiency, and prioritise investment in higher education to foster national development (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2011; Otonko, 2021). It signified a significant policy shift toward improving educational quality through organised and reliable funding.

Today, TETFund is central to developing infrastructure, training academic staff, funding research, and supporting innovation in public universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education. The transition from ETF to TETFund illustrates how policy changes and funding approaches impact both the performance and public perception of tertiary institutions. This historical background is relevant to this research because it highlights the importance of sufficient funding, prompt disbursement, and practical policy implementation in shaping staff and student views on quality.

2.7.4 Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC)

UBEC is responsible for coordinating the implementation of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) program, which aims to ensure free and compulsory education for all children in Nigeria (Okoroma, 2006). It provides grants and technical support to states and local governments to improve access, quality, and equity in basic education

2.7.5 State Universal Basic Education Boards (SUBEBs)

SUBEBs are state-level agencies responsible for implementing the UBE program and managing UBEC-allocated education funding. They oversee the construction of schools, the provision of teaching and learning materials, the training of teachers, and the monitoring of educational outcomes at the primary and junior secondary levels (Okoroma, 2006).

2.7.6 National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE)

NCCE provides funding support to colleges of education through grants, subsidies, and special interventions. These financial and other instruments are directed at improving teacher training, curriculum design and development, and critical infrastructure in teacher education Institutions across Nigeria (Otonko, 2021).

2.8 Challenges to Tertiary Education

2.8.1 Issues of Corruption in Education Funding

Corruption in education funding poses a major challenge, weakening the effectiveness, efficiency, and integrity of Nigeria's education system. It occurs in various forms, including embezzlement, misappropriation, fund diversion, bribery, nepotism, and favouritism, among others (Otonko, 2021). Some of the main issues and impacts of corruption in education funding are as follows:

2.8.1.1: Embezzlement and Misappropriation.

Public officials entrusted with managing education funds often engage in embezzlement and misappropriation, siphoning off resources intended for educational infrastructure, programs,

and services for personal gain (Olaleye et al., 2020). This deprives students, teachers, and communities of much-needed resources and perpetuates poverty, inequality, and underdevelopment (Otonko, 2021).

2.8.1.2: Poor Infrastructure and Service Delivery.

Corruption in education funding contributes to the decay of infrastructure, inadequate facilities, and poor service delivery in schools, colleges, and universities. It results in overcrowded classrooms, dilapidated buildings, lack of basic amenities, and substandard learning environments that hinder teaching and learning outcomes (Olaleye et al., 2020; Otonko, 2021).

2.8.1.3: Erosion of Public Trust and Confidence.

Corruption in Nigeria erodes public trust and confidence in the country's education system, government Institutions, and elected officials. It undermines the credibility and legitimacy of education policies, programs, and initiatives, leading to disillusionment, apathy, and social unrest (Otonko, 2021).

2.8.1.4: Impact on Quality and Equity.

Systemic challenges in education funding, particularly corruption, exacerbate inequalities in access to quality education, as resources are diverted away from marginalised and disadvantaged communities. Corruption perpetuates a cycle of poverty and exclusion, denying vulnerable populations the opportunity to fulfil their potential and participate fully in social and economic development (Otonko, 2021). Corruption in education funding is a significant challenge. It requires multifaceted strategies, including strengthening accountability mechanisms, promoting transparency and integrity, enhancing oversight and monitoring, and empowering civil society and anti-corruption agencies to hold perpetrators accountable. These strategies also require political will, ethical leadership, and collective action from government, educational Institutions, stakeholders, and the broader society to combat corruption and promote good governance in education (Olaleye et al., 2020; Otonko, 2021).

In addition to these challenges, the issue of brain drain adversely affects the quality and equity in Nigerian tertiary education.(Adeyemi et al., 2018) It involves the migration of experienced

academic staff from local institutions to other sectors or countries in pursuit of better working conditions, salaries, and professional growth. (Baridam and Don-Baridam, 2020) This phenomenon has been extensively discussed in research as a long-standing issue in many developing education systems. Studies indicate that the loss of skilled academic staff directly impacts teaching and learning. When experienced lecturers depart, institutions often face challenges in ensuring smooth course delivery, supervising students, and mentoring junior staff (Imam, 2012; Iwara, Kilonzo and Ishmail, 2024). This results in increased workload for the remaining staff, less personalised attention for students, and delays in academic progress. Moreover, the exit of senior academics hampers knowledge and experience transfer within the institution, which is vital for maintaining long-term academic standards. (Adebayo and Eze, 2022)

Brain drain increases inequality among institutions. Less-resourced universities and colleges are particularly affected, often lacking the capacity to attract or retain qualified staff. As a result, students at these institutions may experience reduced academic support and fewer research opportunities. Iwara, Ishmael, and Kilonzo (2024) point out that limited career growth options and inconsistent professional development can lead staff to leave, especially when long-term prospects seem uncertain.

Furthermore, Babatunde (2018) states that inadequate investment in staff development and research support reduces job satisfaction and institutional commitment among academics. When promotion procedures are unclear or delayed, and research funding is limited, motivation declines. Ultimately, these conditions raise the likelihood of staff leaving. While factors such as corruption and governance issues may play a role, brain drain highlights a more extensive problem related to funding, policy implementation, and human resource management in the education sector. (Adeyemi et al., 2018)

Overall, the literatures suggests that brain drain is more than just a staffing issue but also a matter of quality. Its effects include reduced teaching effectiveness, weakened institutional stability, and inconsistent educational experiences across institutions. Therefore, addressing this challenge requires attention not only to financial resources but also to working conditions, career structures, and the overall academic environment within tertiary institutions.

2.8.1.5: Limited Access and Inequality.

Corruption in education funding exacerbates inequalities in access to education, as resources are diverted away from marginalised and disadvantaged communities (Olaleye et al., 2020; Otonko, 2021). It deprives vulnerable populations, such as girls, rural children, and children from low-income families, of the opportunity to enrol and succeed in school, perpetuating a cycle of poverty and exclusion (Tikly, 2011).

2.8.1.6: Deteriorating Infrastructure.

Corruption contributes to the decay of educational infrastructure, including classrooms, laboratories, libraries, and sanitation facilities. Embezzlement, mismanagement, and diversion of funds deprive schools, colleges, and universities of much-needed resources for construction, renovation, and maintenance, resulting in overcrowded classrooms, dilapidated buildings, and substandard learning environments that hinder teaching and learning outcomes (Imam, 2012; Tikly, 2011).

2.8.1.7: Declining Quality of Education.

Corruption undermines the quality of education by compromising teaching and learning processes, academic standards, and institutional integrity. Nepotism, favouritism, and bribery in admissions, examinations, and promotions erode public trust and confidence in the education system, leading to academic dishonesty, unethical behaviour, and declining educational outcomes (Imam, 2012; Otonko, 2021).

2.8.1.8: Erosion of Public Trust.

Corruption erodes public trust and confidence in the education system, government Institutions, and elected officials. Embezzlement, misappropriation, and diversion of education funds undermine the credibility and legitimacy of education policies, programs, and initiatives, leading to disillusionment, apathy, and social unrest (Otonko, 2021).

2.8.1.9: Economic and Social Costs.

Corruption in education imposes significant economic and social costs on Nigerian society, perpetuating poverty, inequality, and underdevelopment. It hinders human capital

development, reduces productivity and competitiveness, and undermines efforts to achieve sustainable development goals such as poverty reduction, gender equality, and inclusive growth (Imam, 2012; Tikly, 2011).

2.8.2 Literature recommendations to combat challenges

The literature offers various recommendations to address governance and funding issues in education systems, particularly those related to corruption and poor accountability. Olaleye et al. (2020) view corruption as a systemic problem that hampers effective resource allocation and financial management, thereby intensifying funding difficulties faced by educational institutions. The literature suggested that resolving funding issues requires coordinated efforts among government agencies, educational institutions, and regulatory bodies, with a strong focus on transparency and accountability in financial management (Olaleye et al., 2020).

Different and many studies emphasise the vital importance of political commitment and ethical leadership in effectively implementing funding policies and anti-corruption measures. Kivisto (2005) argues that weak or inconsistent political will often prevents reforms aimed at improving financial accountability in education from achieving genuine institutional change. Similarly, Olaleye et al. (2020) note that politicised education governance can weaken oversight, leading to inefficient utilisation of funds and ongoing resource shortages in tertiary institutions. These findings imply that funding challenges are more closely related to the overall governance environment than to the availability of financial resources alone.

To address these issues, the literature generally suggests strengthening legal and institutional frameworks for education finance. Some of the suggested actions include enforcing anticorruption laws, establishing clear penalties for financial misconduct, and protecting whistleblowers who report misuse of educational funds (Kivisto, 2005; Olaleye et al., 2020). Additionally, researchers stress the importance of robust institutional mechanisms to prevent, detect, investigate, and prosecute corruption-related crimes, which can help to improve accountability and enhance the proper use of funds in educational settings (Kivisto, 2005). Overall, these suggestions highlight how better governance and accountability are key to resolving funding challenges in the Nigerian Tertiary education sector. Beyond the approaches highlighted, existing studies also propose a range of additional measures aimed at strengthening

transparency and accountability and specific corruption measures in education finance, as summarised in the following subsection.

2.8.2.1: Promote Transparency and Accountability.

Enhancing transparency and accountability in education governance and management through open budgeting, public procurement, financial reporting, and performance monitoring mechanisms can help prevent corruption and ensure the efficient and effective use of resources (Kivisto, 2005; Madani, 2019). Implementing systems for disclosure, oversight, and citizen engagement can empower stakeholders to demand transparency, report corruption, and hold authorities accountable for their actions (Olaleye et al., 2020).

2.8.2.2: Enhance Oversight and Monitoring.

Strengthening internal and external oversight and monitoring mechanisms, such as audit Institutions, anti-corruption agencies, civil society organisations, and independent watchdogs, can help detect, investigate, and sanction corrupt practices in education. Building capacity, independence, and professionalism in oversight bodies and promoting collaboration and information-sharing among stakeholders can enhance the effectiveness of anti-corruption efforts (Ng, 2015).

2.8.2.3: Foster Ethical Leadership and Integrity.

Promoting ethical leadership, integrity, and professionalism among education stakeholders, including policymakers, administrators, teachers, students, parents, and community members, is essential for creating a culture of integrity and accountability in education. Providing training, guidance, and support on ethical standards, values-based decision-making, and conflict-of-interest management can strengthen ethical behaviour and reduce opportunities for corruption (Ng, 2015).

2.8.2.4: Empower Civil Society and Stakeholders.

Engaging civil society organisations, professional associations, trade unions, media outlets, academia, and other stakeholders as partners in anti-corruption initiatives can mobilise public support, raise awareness, and advocate for reforms in education governance and management. Promoting civic education, social accountability, and citizen participation can empower

communities to demand transparency, accountability, and integrity in education (Imam, 2012; Olaleye et al., 2020).

2.8.2.5: Current State of Tertiary Education in Nigeria.

Recent studies reveal that Nigerian Tertiary education continues to face challenges, including funding insufficiencies, administrative problems, and a disconnect between policy formulation and implementation. For example, Olanrewaju-Smart (2023) highlights ongoing issues in financing public tertiary institutions, noting that inadequate and inconsistent funding adversely impacts infrastructure, staff development, and overall institutional effectiveness. Similarly, Yusuf et al. (2022) mention that weak governance structures and poor financial management are major obstacles to the efficient utilisation of resources in Nigerian universities. These findings show that, despite various reforms, funding and governance issues continue to significantly affect Nigeria's higher education system.

Earlier studies show similar concerns, suggesting that these issues are longstanding rather than recent. Ng (2015), for instance, identified funding shortages and policy implementation gaps as core issues within Nigeria's higher education system. Overall, the literature shows that although these challenges have endured over time, recent evidence continues to emphasise their importance in shaping Nigerian tertiary education today.

2.8.2.6: Underfunding and Budgetary Constraints.

One of the most pressing challenges facing Nigerian tertiary education pertains to underfunding (Ng, 2015). The importance of education in national development is often ignored, and funding for the education sector is sometimes erratic, particularly in tertiary Institutions (Imam, 2012; Ogbuofor, 2021). Government budgetary constraints often result in insufficient funding for proposed infrastructure development, faculty recruitment, scheduled research, and students' support-led services (Ogbuofor, 2021). Underfunding hampers universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education's ability to leverage and deliver quality education to meet the growing demand for tertiary education among Nigerian youth (Ng, 2015; Ogbuofor, 2021).

2.8.2.7: Impact on Infrastructure and Resources.

The lack of adequate funding for necessary infrastructure and resources in Nigerian tertiary education Institutions translates to a significant number of colleges of education, universities, and polytechnics all invariably suffering from dilapidated and worn-out facilities, overcrowded classrooms, inadequately stocked libraries, outdated laboratory equipment, limited access to technology, and poor internet connectivity and infrastructure (NG, 2015). This infrastructure deficit adversely affects the teaching and learning environment and impedes the growth of academic research and innovation, thereby undermining the quality of essential education (Nyewisura & Yusuf, 2018).

2.8.2.8: Staff Welfare and Academic Quality.

Funding constraints also affect the welfare of academic and non-academic staff in tertiary Institutions (Nyewisura & Yusuf, 2018). Delayed payment of salaries and allowances, inadequate training and professional development opportunities, and poor working conditions contribute to low morale among faculty and staff. This, in turn, affects the quality of teaching, research output, and institutional effectiveness. Furthermore, the inability to attract and retain qualified faculty members exacerbates the challenges facing Nigerian tertiary education (Ng, 2015; Nyewisura & Yusuf, 2018).

2.8.2.9: Policy Implementation and Governance.

Weak regulatory frameworks and governance structures contribute to issues such as corruption, favouritism, and academic malpractice, which undermine the integrity and credibility of the education system (Ogunode & Abubakar, 2020; Okoroma, 2006). Administrative policies and governance structures play a critical role in shaping the effectiveness and efficiency of tertiary education Institutions (Ogunode & Abubakar, 2020).

2.8.2.10: Inequality and Access.

The current state of tertiary education in Nigeria is characterised by significant disparities in access and quality across different regions, states, and Institutions (Ogunode & Abubakar, 2020; Okoroma, 2006). Educational Institutions in urban areas and federally run public universities tend to receive more funding and resources than those in rural areas and state-

owned Institutions, leading to unequal opportunities for students from marginalised communities (Ogunode & Abubakar, 2020). Limited access to tertiary education increases social inequalities and encourages disparities in socioeconomic status, gender, ethnicity, and disability (Imam, 2012).

2.8.2.11: Quality Assurance and Accreditation.

Ensuring compliance with quality assurance and accreditation standards is essential to maintaining the credibility and relevance of tertiary education in Nigeria. However, challenges related to funding, infrastructure, staff capacity, and regulatory oversight pose significant obstacles to the establishment and maintenance of quality assurance mechanisms. Inadequate monitoring and evaluation systems, insufficient data collection and analysis, and the proliferation of substandard Institutions and programs undermine efforts to uphold academic excellence and meet international benchmarks (Ig, 2015; Ogunode & Abubakar, 2020).

2.9 Literature Gap

This doctoral study aims to fill a gap in the existing literature on Nigerian higher education. While many existing studies offer broad system-wide explanations, they often lack detailed empirical data on how funding and policy implementation are experienced at the institutional level. Although the literature discusses issues such as underfunding, weak governance, and policy instability, much of this research depends on expert opinions, policy reviews, and document analysis (Ogunode and Abubakar, 2020). As a result, there is a shortage of research that captures the perspectives of key institutional stakeholders, particularly academic staff and students, whose experiences shape how educational quality is perceived and evaluated.

A key gap that emerged from the literature is understanding how funding is experienced within Nigerian higher education. Most studies emphasise ongoing underfunding and structural flaws in resource allocation, such as centralised budgeting, inconsistent financial flows, and lack of transparency in expenditures (Asiyai, 2015; Ogbogu, 2011; Amadi and Nwogu, 2023). While these insights shed light on financial challenges at the macro or administrative level, they often overlook how funding mechanisms are perceived at the institutional level and how these perceptions affect staff and students' views on educational quality. The limited empirical data focusing on stakeholder's limits understanding of how funding practices influence day-to-day

academic experiences, including teaching conditions, learning environments, and research capabilities.

Closely related to funding is another issue concerning governance and policy implementation. The literature commonly recognises that weaknesses in governance structures, leadership practices, and administrative capacity hamper the effective implementation of education policies in Nigeria (Olaleye et al., 2020). However, much of this research remains descriptive, emphasising policy goals or institutional frameworks rather than how policies are interpreted and put into practice within tertiary institutions. Notably, there is a limit of empirical studies examining how academic staff and students experience governance processes and how these experiences influence their perceptions of institutional quality. This gap restricts a detailed understanding of policy implementation as a lived experience affected by institutional context, resource availability, and stakeholder participation.

Another notable gap relates to quality assurance and accreditation processes. While the literature documents quality assurance frameworks and regulatory bodies, research primarily focuses on their formal structures and stated goals (Imam, 2012; Olaleye et al., 2020). There is still limited empirical research on how these mechanisms work in practice and how they are perceived by those directly affected within institutions. Specifically, few studies explore how staff and students view the credibility, fairness, and effectiveness of accreditation, or how these perceptions are influenced by funding issues and policy challenges. These limits understanding of quality assurance as an experiential, context-dependent process rather than just a regulatory function. It also provides limited empirical evidence on how staff and students perceive quality in Nigerian higher education, particularly regarding funding and policy implementation.

Overall, the literature shows a limited number of comprehensive studies that explore funding, policy execution, and educational quality within a unified framework. Many research efforts treat these aspects as separate, analysing funding independently from governance or quality assurance. This fragmented perspective limits insights into how these concepts jointly impact institutional performance and stakeholder perceptions of quality. Notably, there is a lack of research that concurrently examines how funding structures affect policy implementation and quality assurance, as well as how these dynamics are experienced by staff and students in Nigerian tertiary institutions.

Taken together, these gaps suggest that while the challenges facing Nigerian tertiary education are acknowledged in existing research, there is a lack of stakeholder-focused empirical evidence. Specifically, there's a limited understanding of stakeholder views and how funding, policy implementation, governance, and perceived quality interact. Filling these gaps necessitates research that goes beyond expert perspectives to offer context-aware, stakeholder centred insights. This study aims to provide empirical data on how staff and students view quality in Nigerian tertiary education, particularly concerning funding and policy implementation.

2.10 Conclusion

This chapter critically explores the literature on Nigeria's tertiary education sector, focusing on funding, policy implementation, governance, and quality assurance. The review shows that these themes are well-studied, especially regarding challenges such as underfunding, poor governance, and gaps between policy creation and implementation. However, it also highlights limitations in existing research, particularly concerning empirical data on stakeholder perspectives.

While existing research offers valuable insights at the system and policy levels, much of it focuses on expert analyses, document reviews, and macro assessments. As a result, there is a gap in empirical studies exploring how funding, governance, and policy implementation are experienced by those most impacted within higher education institutions. In particular, the perspectives of academic staff and students, who deal with institutional policies, funding limitations, and quality assurance on a daily basis, are underrepresented in existing research.

The review emphasises that funding, policy implementation, and educational quality are often examined separately in existing research. Many studies focus on funding sufficiency but do not thoroughly investigate how allocation methods and financial decisions shape institutional practices and stakeholder perceptions. Likewise, discussions of policy implementation and governance tend to be abstract or purely descriptive, with limited focus on how policies are actually put into practice and how institutional actors interpret and respond to them. Additionally, quality assurance and accreditation are mainly analysed through their formal

procedures, with little empirical insight into how staff and students perceive and experience these processes in resource-limited institutional settings.

The literature review highlights a gap in integrated research exploring how funding, policy implementation, governance, and perceived educational quality interact in Nigerian higher education. This fragmented focus hampers our understanding of how these elements together affect institutional performance and stakeholder perceptions of quality. While broader topics such as employability, technology use, equity, and sustainability are covered in the literature, they are typically discussed separately from funding and policy issues and are rarely studied through a stakeholder-focused empirical lens.

In summary, the gaps highlighted in this chapter emphasise the need for research that goes beyond expert-driven and system-focused perspectives to produce evidence that is sensitive to context and informed by stakeholders. These gaps shape the direction of this study, which explores how staff and students perceive quality in Nigerian tertiary education, with a focus on funding and policy implementation. By emphasising stakeholder experiences and analysing the links between funding, policy implementation, and quality, this research addresses shortcomings in existing studies and sets the stage for the methodological approach detailed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3: Methodology

This chapter examines methodological issues and lays the groundwork for the research design. It discusses the philosophical and research paradigms and the reasons for choosing a mixed methods approach. The chapter also covers the research instruments, including the questionnaire and semi-structured interview, and explains how data were collected and analysed. It addresses the validity and reliability of the research design, as well as the researcher's positionality and self-reflexivity. Additionally, the chapter reviews the research sample, suitable data collection tools, and the study's limitations and biases. The procedures for data analysis are then outlined.

3.1 Research Aims and Objectives

As posited by Chandra et al. (2018), the methodology adopted is essential for determining the quality of research outcomes. Therefore, it provides the necessary guidance and structure for the research process. This study aims to explore the perceptions of staff and students in tertiary institutions in Nigeria regarding funding and policy implementation as they affect the quality of education in the selected colleges. The specific objectives are:

- To examine the perceptions of staff and students on what constitutes quality tertiary education in Nigeria.
- To explore the perception of staff and students on the administrative policy practices as they affect the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria.
- To examine the perception of staff and students on the effects of funding on the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria.
- To assess the combined influence of funding and policy implementation on staff and students' perception of quality of tertiary education in Nigeria.

The research methodology employed is a mixed-methods approach, utilising both quantitative and qualitative instruments. Questionnaires have been used to collect the quantitative data, and semi-structured interviews have been used to obtain the qualitative data. This study emphasises that both the quantitative and qualitative components are equally essential and complementary

within a convergent mixed-methods approach. The survey provides a comprehensive overview of trends and patterns in staff and student perceptions, including variations within the sample. Meanwhile, the semi-structured interviews add depth by exploring the underlying meanings, explanations, and contextual factors behind those patterns. Although the statistical analysis is mainly descriptive rather than inferential, it remains valuable for identifying areas of convergence and divergence that can be further examined through qualitative insights. Neither method is secondary, rather, their combined strength enhances the overall analysis and results.

This balanced approach to both methods directly addresses the four research objectives. The survey gathers broad perceptions from staff and students through quantifiable responses, while the interviews provide detailed insights into how funding, administrative practices, and policy implementation influence these perceptions. Combining these data sources helps to support comprehensive, contextually relevant findings, providing a more detailed answer to the overall research goal.

3.2.0 Research Questions

The following six broad research questions guide the study, supporting its overall aim and specific objectives. They explore how funding mechanisms, policy implementation processes, and institutional practices work together to affect the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria, based on the perceptions of students and staff at the selected Colleges of Education.

- What are the perceptions of staff and students on the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria?
- What are the perceptions of staff and students on the influence of administrative practices when implementing policies relating to the quality of education within tertiary Institutions in Nigeria?
- What are the perceptions of staff and students on funding of education within tertiary Institutions in Nigeria?
- How do administrative policy practices influence staff and students' perception of quality tertiary education in Nigeria?
- How does funding influence staff and students' perception of quality of tertiary education in Nigeria?

- What is the combined influence of funding and policy implementation on staff and students' perception of the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria?

3.2.1 Theoretical Framework Guiding the Analysis

This study is analytically grounded in Principal-Agent Theory (PAT), as discussed in Chapter Two. The theory offers a framework for analysing the relationship between government authorities responsible for policy formulation and funding allocation (principals) and tertiary institutions responsible for policy implementation and service delivery (agents). In the Nigerian tertiary education context, this relationship is crucial for understanding how funding mechanisms, administrative practices, and institutional behaviours impact perceived educational quality. (Details have been explained in Chapter 2, Section 2.1-2.17)

This theoretical framework guides the interpretation of the research questions. It analyses funding and policy implementation by considering the alignment of policy goals with institutional practices, resource adequacy and management, and the accountability structures in place. PAT emphasises issues such as information asymmetry, monitoring challenges, and conflicting incentives between principals and agents, which can lead to discrepancies between official policy aims and real-world institutional outcomes.

This study views perceptions of quality not as isolated opinions but as reflections of how effectively principals' delegated policies and resources are put into practice by institutional agents. When staff and students identify strengths in teaching but weaknesses in infrastructure, these observations are examined within the broader principal-agent dynamic that shapes funding decisions, enforcement, and implementation capacity. Likewise, inquiries into the combined effects of funding and policy implementation are analysed based on the degree of alignment between principals and agents in goals, communication, and accountability.

By contextualising the research questions within Principal-Agent Theory, the study moves beyond descriptive analysis to explore the structural and governance factors shaping participants' perceptions. This theoretical positioning ensures that the findings, analysis, and

discussion presented are understood in accordance with the analytical framework outlined in the literature review.

3.3 Reflection on the Researcher's Positionality

As the researcher, I embraced reflexivity in this study by considering and acknowledging my subjectivity (Roulston, 2012). Subjectivity can be described as the researcher's perspectives on the subject under exploration, while reflexivity is an approach used by researchers to recognise and investigate subjectivity (Saukko, 2003; Bouke, 2014). By accepting subjectivity, the researcher creates an avenue for self-awareness and critical reflection (Saukko, 2003). When a qualitative researcher engages in reflexivity, the action facilitates an examination of how they have influenced a research topic (Dowling, 2008; Olmos-Vega et al., 2023). Reflexivity entails critical self-reflection by the researcher to understand how their social background, assumptions, stance, and conduct could impact the research process. Adopting reflexivity as a researcher plays an important role in enhancing both the quality and integrity of the research (David, 2020). This helps the researcher guide and monitor their bias, ensuring it does not compromise the objectivity of the research (Cohen et al., 2018).

Moreover, by acknowledging subjectivity in this research, the researcher can openly create space for self-awareness and critical reflection, which helps guard against any biases in the research process (Roulston, 2012). Taking the researcher's positionality into account can enhance the trustworthiness and reliability of the findings. As Saukko (2003) posited, this will also help shape the research process and improve transparency and accountability regarding the quality of outcomes.

My experience as an Assistant Chief Education Officer in one of the educational agencies under the Federal Ministry of Education in Nigeria (Chapter 2, Section 2.7.3), combined with my past professional background as a teacher with my undergraduate and postgraduate studies experience, provided me with valuable insights into the administrative processes of tertiary institutions in Nigeria. This positionality naturally influenced aspects of the research process, including selecting data collection methods, framing questions, and interpreting and presenting findings (Attiah & Edge, 2017; Davis, 2020). As an insider, I recognise that my professional knowledge and previous experiences could influence my interpretation of the data. However, I employed deliberate reflexivity throughout the study to acknowledge and manage this

influence. Researchers must critically examine their positionality, as their role is central to generating knowledge in qualitative research, and interpretations should remain grounded in the data rather than preconceptions (Creswell, 2015; 2018). To balance my interpretive role and minimise potential bias, the data analysis focused solely on participants' accounts and perceptions, using extensive direct quotations and paying close attention to their intended meanings. Interpretations were continually verified against the data to ensure that the findings genuinely reflected participants' perspectives rather than the researcher's expectations or institutional standing (Creswell, 2014; 2018). Results from this study were analysed objectively, regardless of whether they supported any stated goals or assumptions. To reduce the researcher's bias and prejudice, the current research relies heavily on direct quotes and participants' perceptions, with all data interpretations made through the participants' lens (Creswell, 2018).

In this study, I adopt a dual role as both an insider and an outsider. According to England (1994) and Njeri (2021), factors such as personal biography and attributes, including gender, race, social connections, and professional background, can influence the research process. Engaging in reflexivity allows the researcher to minimise bias, leading to a richer understanding and bolstering the research's credibility. For instance, reflecting on my professional background affects my selection of participants and the data collection methods. By interviewing a range of participants, including students and both teaching and non-teaching staff, I was able to compare their experiences and viewpoints, resulting in valuable insights. This process also prompted me to scrutinise my own position and biases, making my commitment to reflexivity particularly beneficial as it aids in mitigating my own biases.

As an insider, the researcher possesses in-depth knowledge of the Nigerian educational system, informed by my current role in educational administration, which involves formulating and implementing educational policies, as well as enforcing their implementation, and my previous experience as a classroom teacher in Nigeria. This background influenced my selection of the research problem to be addressed and facilitated access to participants, particularly staff members, during the data collection process. Additionally, my awareness of the country's political landscape played a significant role in selecting colleges in the Southwestern geopolitical zone.

The selection of federal colleges ensured accessibility while maintaining a standardised curriculum and a diverse student body in terms of ethnicity and gender, as federal Institutions operate under a quota system that ensures proportional representation from all geopolitical zones (see Chapter 1, 1.2.2 for further discussion on Nigeria's geopolitical structure). This insider perspective enabled the researcher to capture nuanced insights and contextual factors that an external observer might overlook. However, this familiarity did not compromise the integrity of the data collection or analysis. The findings are derived solely from participants' responses, ensuring authenticity while enabling a deeper, more comprehensive interpretation of their perspectives.

Furthermore, the insider perspective influenced the adoption of a mixed-methods approach, which provided a more holistic understanding of participants' perceptions. In particular, the qualitative interviews allowed for an in-depth exploration of their viewpoints. The interview section after the questionnaire session allowed the participants to express and clarify their in-depth perceptions of quality tertiary education in Nigeria.

Conversely, as an outsider, the researcher had no prior professional or personal affiliations with any of the colleges where data collection took place. I was presented as a PhD candidate from Staffordshire University, United Kingdom, conducting an independent research study. As a result, participants received me as an external person seeking their perspectives on an educational issue. To maintain ethical standards, participants were provided with consent forms outlining their voluntary participation, their right to participate in interviews, and their option to withdraw before publication of the findings. Throughout the research process, the researcher reflected to ensure that her personal opinions did not influence any aspect of the study, thereby upholding the research's credibility and objectivity.

3.4 Research Paradigms and Philosophical Assumptions

Due to the exploratory nature of this research, mixed methods were used to collect, integrate, and analyse data to better understand the research questions (Bosit, 2010; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2021). This study uses two research methodologies: qualitative and quantitative. Each methodology is determined by a specific paradigm and philosophy that shape the nature and characteristics of evidence used during the research. Based on Saunders' (Saunders, Lewis &

Thornhill 2009, 2012, 2019) research onion framework, research methods are chosen through layers, starting with the research philosophy or paradigm at the outermost layer and progressing inward toward specific data collection and analysis techniques. The research onion highlights that understanding one's research philosophy (paradigm) is essential, as it shapes the entire research process and subsequent decisions, including approach, methodology, and methods (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019). In this study, the pragmatic paradigm was selected due to the complex and multifaceted nature of quality higher education in Nigeria, as well as the need to triangulate quantitative and qualitative data from students and staff. Pragmatism as a research philosophy enables the researcher to draw on both objective and subjective sources of knowledge, valuing practical outcomes and offering flexibility in selecting strategies that best address the research questions (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2021). This approach is especially suitable for a mixed-methods study, where different data types are integrated to develop a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon.

According to Saunders (2009, 2012), a paradigm is a method of collecting and explaining knowledge about a phenomenon, while Cohen et al. (2018) describe a paradigm as an acceptable and appropriate scientific manner of researching a phenomenon. Lambert (2012) further explains that paradigms involve the conscious and subconscious beliefs that underlie the questions we ask and the ways we conduct research, which shape the kind of conclusions that emerge from our investigation. Ganiyu et al. (2022) compare the research paradigm to the structural elements of a building, which determine the integrity of the research activity.

This research adopts the pragmatism viewpoint, a philosophical stance that emphasises practical solutions to real-life problems and supports the use of various methodologies for a comprehensive understanding. Pragmatism encourages the integration of both qualitative and quantitative data, which can help triangulate findings and embrace the complexities present in social research (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2018). This approach is particularly useful in addressing issues such as determining educational quality in a developing nation context.

There are many research paradigms, including positivism, interpretivism, subjectivism, and critical realism. However, traditionally, two research paradigms are fundamentally opposed to each other: positivism and interpretivism (Ivankova & Clark, 2018). Positivism posits that reality exists and relies specifically on scientific evidence obtained through experiments and

statistics, while interpretivism holds that reality is a construct of our perception. This study is based on two paradigmatic positions, since there are no right or wrong approaches when they are aligned with appropriate philosophical assumptions regarding methodology, ontology, epistemology, etc. (Williams, 2018).

The adoption of a mixed method in this research, grounded in the pragmatism approach, aligns with the central aims of this study to explore the perceptions of staff and students regarding the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria, focusing on funding and quality implementation. This investigation examines how these two variables can influence perceptions of quality from the viewpoints of staff and students at the selected colleges. The complexities of these issues demand a nuanced understanding that may not be fully captured by a single methodological perspective.

Quantitative methods are used to gather measurable data from a large population, drawing inferences and identifying generalised trends and correlations regarding their experiences and perceptions of the funding structure and policy implementation outcomes. Meanwhile, qualitative methodology provides a platform for staff and students to express their personal experiences, opinions, perceptions, and frustrations, adding depth and context to the numerical data gathered. Adopting this dual methodological approach to solving this research problem helps bridge the gap between statistical patterns and real-life experiences and realities on the ground, ensuring that not only are their voices heard but also situated within the broader systemic policy framework. Adopting this interactive approach is crucial for informing policy recommendations aimed at enhancing the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria.

Philosophy is a discipline anchored in the study of the fundamental nature of knowledge, existence, and reality. Therefore, this research is based on the philosophy of critical realism. Critical realism, originally developed by Roy Bhaskar (1975, 1978). It posits that a reality exists independently of human perceptions. However, it also recognises that our understanding of that reality is influenced by social, cultural, and historical contexts. Critical realism therefore distinguishes between the reality itself and our knowledge of reality, acknowledging that social phenomena are often shaped by underlying structures and mechanisms that may not be directly observable. This position has also been applied within educational research. David Scott (2013) argues that critical realism offers a useful framework for understanding the relationships among

educational structures, policy processes and individual experiences, making it particularly suitable for investigating complex educational phenomena. This perspective is especially relevant to educational research, where issues such as funding, policy implementation, and perceptions of quality are driven by institutional and social processes that go beyond individual experiences. (Tashakkori and Teddie, 2011; 2021). In a mixed-methods design, this approach aligns with a pragmatic perspective, which values the practical application of various methods to generate the most meaningful answers to research questions. Critical realism provides the ontological and epistemological foundations, recognising that reality exists independently of our perceptions but is influenced by context. That is, it posits that there is a real-world phenomenon to study, but that we can better understand it through the participants' perceptions of it. At the same time, pragmatism supports the flexible use of both quantitative and qualitative methods. For this research, combining a questionnaire and an interview enables the exploration of perceptions, offering a practical and straightforward understanding of the real world. In this study, critical realism provides the underlying philosophical worldview, while pragmatism informs the methodological choices associated with the mixed methods design. Together, they create a foundation, with one providing the core principles and the other offering the flexibility to employ a mixed method approach to examine it practically.

By adopting this perspective in this study, the researcher aims to gain deeper insights into the factors and mechanisms that may affect perceptions of quality tertiary education in Nigeria, rather than to establish direct cause and effect relationships. This approach recognises that qualitative research is ideal for exploring meanings, perspectives, and motivations, helping to identify potential factors and the underlying contexts behind observed phenomena. While qualitative methods can suggest explanations and relationships, they do not provide definitive proof. In the quantitative analysis of the data in this study, descriptive statistics such as means and medians summarise patterns in responses from students, teaching staff, and managerial personnel. These analyses focus on describing and comparing perceptions rather than establishing causal relationships. Conversely, the interview section enables the study to gain a deeper understanding and explanations of participants' perceptions, including students and staff at the selected tertiary Institutions.

The importance of philosophical assumptions lies in their ability to clarify the researcher's beliefs and understanding of the world and how they interpret it. As Saunders (2009, 2012)

highlights, philosophical assumptions, or paradigms, form the outermost layer of the research onion, guiding the selection of research approach and methods throughout the study. The researcher's ability to clearly articulate their beliefs about the research concepts and issues will help them choose the most appropriate method to answer the research questions, while also remaining open to alternative methods where suitable. This critical reflection ensures that the research design aligns with the research objectives and the types of evidence that can realistically be generated. As Creswell (2014) notes, such reflection is essential for maintaining methodological rigour and justifying the decisions made during the research process.

Ontology, as a philosophical perspective, explains the nature of truth and reality, while epistemology explains the nature and form of knowledge (Saunders et al., 2009). Therefore, methodology becomes the strategy or design that informs the researcher's choice of a particular method, which will lead them to arrive at the truth, reality, or knowledge about the world or the issues around them. Methods are the procedures researchers take to gather and analyse data or information that will lead to providing answers to research questions or hypotheses.

Figure 3.1 below illustrates how these concepts are interconnected. Ontology, epistemology, and methodology are not isolated ideas but form a continuous framework. Ontology establishes the foundation by reflecting the researcher's beliefs about the nature of reality. These ontological assumptions influence epistemology, which describes how knowledge about that reality is acquired and understood. Subsequently, epistemology guides methodology by shaping the selection of research methods, strategies, and tools. The diagram reflects this logical flow, highlighting how each component depends on the previous one and contributes to a unified research philosophy.

Interconnectedness of Ontology, Epistemology and Methodology in the Research Process

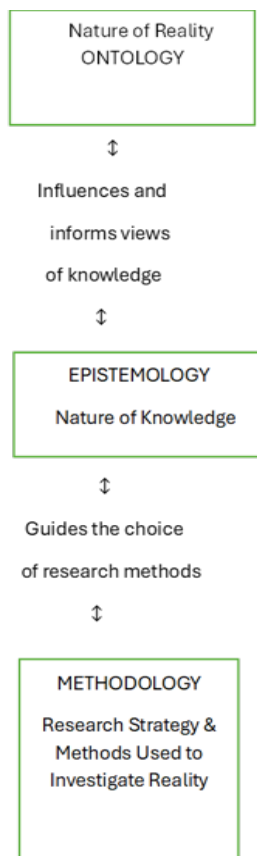


Figure 3.1: Interconnectedness of Ontology, Epistemology and Methodology in the Research Process.

Positivism views the world as stable, presenting a logical reality that can be determined and measured through investigation (Lambert, 2012). Positivism seeks explanations, predictions, and control, aiming to describe relationships among variables. Its ontological position emphasises finding a single reality. At the same time, its epistemological value lies in objectivism, which involves detaching the researcher from the participants, maintaining emotional neutrality, and using random sampling to avoid bias (Curtis, Murphy, and Shields, 2014). Positivism also employs deductive methodology and uses experiments to conduct research. A positivist is positioned to achieve the research goal as a neutral individual who formulates research questions and seeks answers to those questions objectively. The opposing position is put forth by interpretivists, who argue that reality is not stable; rather, it depends on individual experiences, background, and other factors that shape opinions (Lambert, 2012). The ontological foundation of interpretivists is foundationalism (Barbour, 2014). The epistemological stance of interpretivists is based on the premise that the researcher is situated

in a social environment and should be able to construct meanings from occurrences within that environment scientifically; thus, they utilise qualitative research methodology.

The differences in ontological and epistemological assumptions between positivism and interpretivism informed the choice of mixed methods. According to Bryman (2014), critical realism integrates the features of interpretivism and positivism. Critical realism holds that the two approaches should not operate from two extremes, as some complex phenomena cannot be dealt with objectively, while others can only be understood through objective means. Thus, the essence of critical realism is not merely to report and interpret a phenomenon but to change it (Basit, 2010). Additionally, Wiltshire and Ronkainen (2021) posit that combining positivist epistemology with interpretivist ontology presents a promising possibility that will yield highly desirable outcomes. Critical realism combines qualitative and quantitative methods that are best suited to provide answers to research questions and hypotheses. Therefore, the research framework of this study is built on the philosophy of critical realism.

3.5 Research Design

The research aim determines the type of methodology that will be adopted for the study. Research design is the formal framework that outlines the process of data collection, measurement, and analysis (Basit, 2010; MacQueen & Knussen, 2002). According to Kumar (2014), research design is a roadmap that a researcher follows to find answers to research questions. The researcher's own experience, the research issues to be explored, and the study's sample selection can influence the choice of research approach (Creswell, 2014, 2018).

Therefore, in this study, the chosen research design is intended to guide the researcher in ensuring that the process of obtaining valid, objective, and accurate answers to research questions is followed.

3.5.1 Mixed Method

For this study, a mixed-methods approach has been implemented. A mixed methods approach uses a combination of quantitative and qualitative instruments to gather a comprehensive understanding of the research questions. According to Brazely (2018), to facilitate a detailed, far-reaching, and thorough level of analysis. A mixed-methods approach is important because

using both quantitative and qualitative instruments can provide complementary strengths, as each of the instruments has both strengths and limitations. For example, quantitative research is suitable for delivering measurable objectives and data, while qualitative research offers a detailed perspective on subjective experiences. (Charlie et al., 2022). A mixed-methods approach can provide a robust method for data collection and analysis of the results.

According to Hitchcock and Onwuegbuzie (2022), by combining quantitative and qualitative instrument approaches, researchers can obtain a more comprehensive and neutral picture of the research topics. As posited by Cohen, Lawrence, and Morrison (2018), the use of mixed research methods enables the process of triangulation that allows the use of data from multiple sources to cross-verify findings and promotes the reliability and validity of the research.

Creswell and Creswell, (2018), explain that collecting two forms of data and integrating them should yield additional insight beyond the one provided by each of the instruments alone which will help to create a more robust approach to understand the research questions and help provide a comprehensive and relevant picture of the topic of research and allow the participant to express and give a clearer information.

For example, after administering the questionnaire, the interview will allow participants to express themselves in a way that the questionnaire may not capture, thereby providing a clearer picture of the participants' perceptions. Hence, the mixed-methods approach will help answer the different questions posed by this current research. Creswell and Creswell (2015; 2018) illustrate three different ways to integrate data using the mixed method designs as follows:

- Explanatory design
- Exploratory design

- Convergent parallel design.

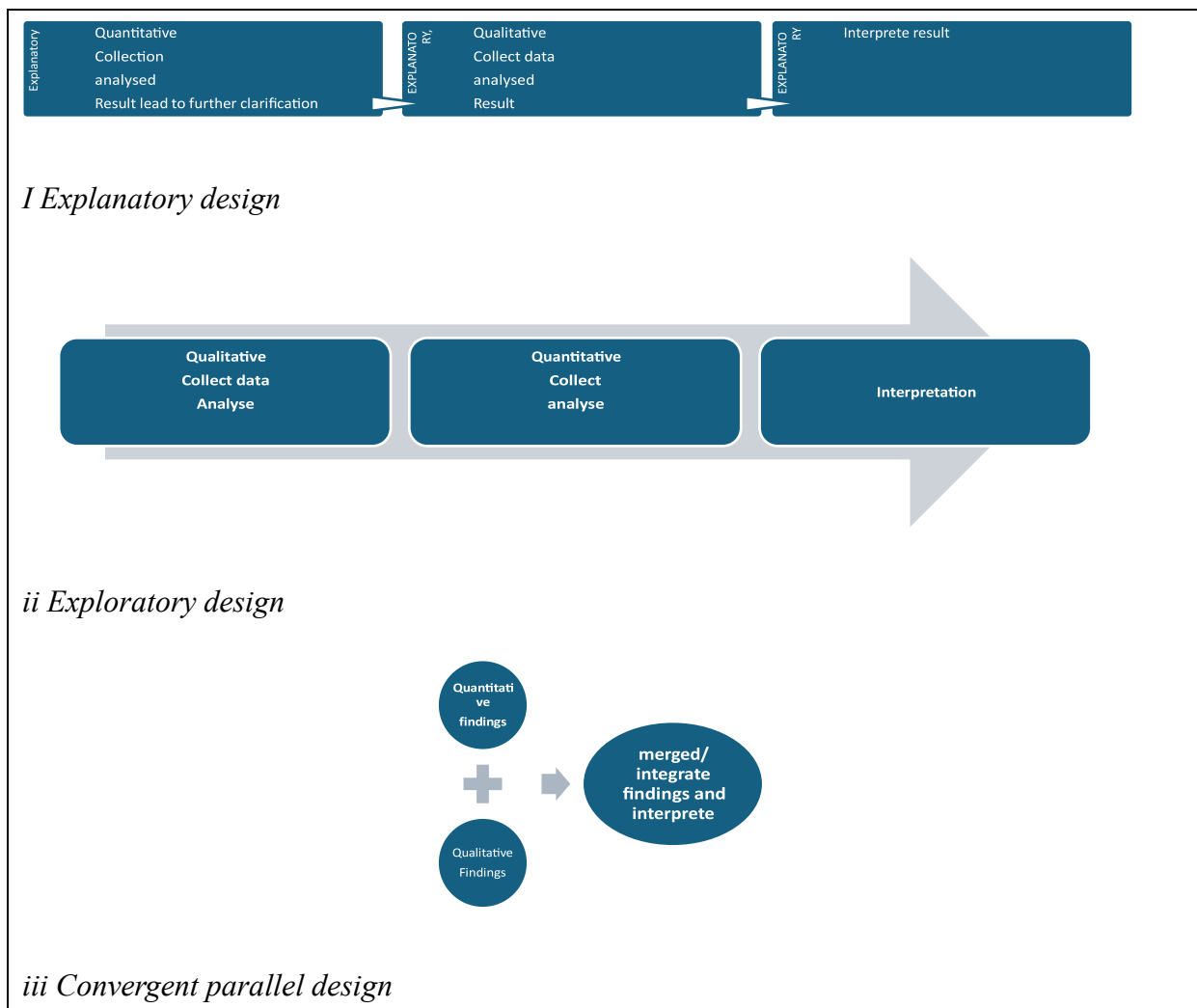


Fig 3.2. Conceptual representation of mixed-method design and data integration adapted used in this study (Based on Creswell, 2015).

- The explanatory sequential design. This process requires the collection and analysis of quantitative data to get a general knowledge of the research, before collecting and analysing qualitative data to get a deeper understanding.
- Exploratory sequential design. This process involves collecting qualitative data such as interviews, analysing it, then using it to collect quantitative data to validate the result.
- Convergent parallel design. This study adopted the convergent parallel design method. A convergent parallel design involves collecting both quantitative and qualitative data within the

same study phase, treating them as complementary methods that address the same research question (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Although the questionnaire data were gathered slightly earlier than the interviews for practical and logistical reasons, both sets were collected during the same fieldwork period, and neither depended on the other's results. Each data strand was analysed separately and given equal importance before being combined during interpretation to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the research issues. This involves collecting quantitative and qualitative data separately, placing equal emphasis on both, and then merging and analysing them to provide a detailed picture of the research question. (Cresswell, 2014) The aim is to confirm the convergence of both data sets through methodological triangulation. The results obtained from the questionnaire and interview were therefore, analysed independently and subsequently integrated during interpretation to provide a deeper and more robust understanding of the research problem. This approach also helps to enhance the validity and reliability of the study by allowing the strengths of one method to compensate for the limitation of the other.

The Findings from the quantitative and qualitative datasets were compared and integrated during the interpretation to identify areas of convergence, complementarity and divergence, thereby, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the participants perception of funding, policy implementation and the quality of tertiary education. For example, capturing different insights from three stakeholders, both quantitatively and qualitatively, helped to obtain balanced and holistic perspectives from the participants. The convergent design offered a robust approach to capturing both the statistical trends and the contextual nuances and experiences of the participants in this study. (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2021)

The mixed-method approach is adopted for this study because it has the capacity to gather diverse opinions from various stakeholders in education, including students, staff, and higher education officials, regarding their perceptions of funding, policy implementation, and its impact on the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria. The researcher uses a quantitative instrument (questionnaires) to collect information from 186 students and 122 staff, as it supports generalisation. As Creswell and Creswell (2018) note, when collected through questionnaires, descriptive statistics can summarise large amounts of data by identifying broad patterns or trends. By employing these statistics, researchers can more easily analyse and convey important findings by organising the data into tables and visualising it with charts or graphical representations.

However, the use of a questionnaire may not fully capture a participant's in-depth experience and opinions (Cohen et al., 2018). Therefore, the choice of a qualitative instrument, which can provide in-depth perspectives from staff and students, is necessary (Basit, 2010; Braun and Clarke, 2022). Combining both quantitative and qualitative research instruments in a single study allows the researcher to examine the same issue using both methods, enabling triangulation of the findings. Flick (2018) notes that triangulation involves incorporating multiple techniques for gathering or analysing data within a single study. It entails using more than one tool to investigate and resolve an issue. It was originally implemented to enhance the validity of research and ensure accurate interpretation of results (Flick, 2018). By integrating both methodologies, the researcher can examine the study holistically, leading to a clearer and better understanding of the investigation.

Similarly, Johnson and Turner (2003, as cited in Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2021) explained in detail the significance and importance of the mixed methods approach, which provides a complementary and enhanced understanding of research problems. This helps researchers gain a better and deeper understanding of the study and can be used to control or minimise weaknesses. The strength of one instrument can compensate for the limitations of the other, leading to more holistic findings. Integrating mixed data further empowers researchers to comprehend underlying processes, causal mechanisms, and contextual elements more thoroughly. Quantitative data provides the big picture, while qualitative data fills in the details and context of the subject (Tashakkori et al., 2020). Using a questionnaire to gather quantitative data while employing a semi-structured interview for qualitative data provides a robust and adaptable framework that enhances the research process. This approach addresses the limitations and biases of relying on a single instrument for data collection, leading to a deeper and more significant understanding of the issue under study (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2021).

3.5.2 Research Procedure

Figure 3.4 describes the research procedure used in the collection and analysis of data, the validity of the research, and the accurate interpretation of results (Flick, 2018). By integrating both methodologies, the researcher can examine the study holistically, leading to a more precise and better understanding of the investigation. By incorporating both methods, the researcher can examine the study holistically, leading to a more accurate and better knowledge of the investigation.

Similarly, Johnson and Turner (2003, as cited in Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2021) explained that the mixed methods approach provides a complementary and enhanced understanding of research problems and helps researchers gain a deeper, more nuanced understanding of the study. The strength of one instrument can compensate for the limitations of the other, leading to more holistic findings. Integrating mixed data further empowers researchers to comprehend underlying processes, causal mechanisms, and contextual elements more thoroughly. Quantitative data provides the big picture, while qualitative data fills in the details and context of the subject. (Abaas Tashakkori, Burke Johnson and Charles Teddlie, 2020)

Using a questionnaire to gather quantitative data while employing a semi-structured interview for qualitative data provides a robust and adaptable framework that enhances the research process. This approach addresses the limitations and biases of relying on a single instrument for data collection, leading to a deeper and more significant understanding of the issue under study. (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2021).

Correspondingly, Johnson and Turner (2003, as cited in Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2021) explained in detail the utmost importance of the mixed methods approach, which provides a complementary and enhanced understanding of research problems. This helps researchers gain a deeper, more comprehensive understanding of the study and can be used to control or minimise weaknesses. The strength of one instrument can compensate for the limitations of the other, leading to more holistic findings. Integrating mixed data further empowers researchers to comprehend underlying processes, causal mechanisms, and contextual elements more thoroughly. Quantitative data provides the big picture, while qualitative data fills in the details and context of the subject. (Abaas Tashakkori, Burke Johnson and Charles Teddlie, 2020)

In this study, the adoption of a questionnaire to collect quantitative data and a semi-structured interview to gather qualitative data provides a robust and adaptable framework that enhances the research process. This approach addresses the limitations and biases inherent in relying on a single instrument for data collection, yielding a deeper, more significant understanding of the issue under study. (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2021). The following figure 3.4 describes the research procedure used in the collection and analysis of data;

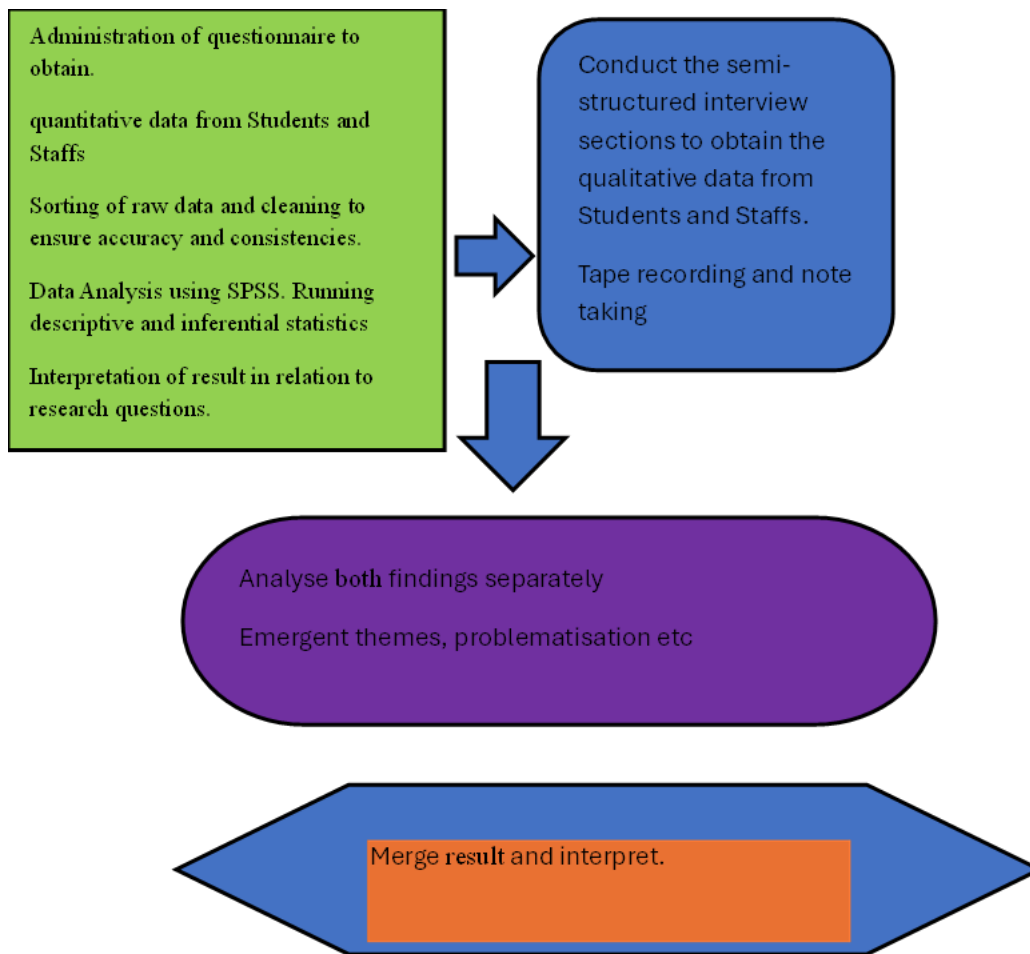


Figure 3.4: Data Collection Procedure

3.5.3 Research Participants

Knechel (2019) described a sample as a representation of a larger population. It is a subset of the population selected to represent the broader group. It is used in research to draw insights and conclusions about the research population. The Nigerian tertiary education sector comprises universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education (See details in Chapter 2, Section 2). The industry is centrally monitored by the Ministry of Education and guided by the National Policy on Education (NPE).

Selecting samples in quantitative and qualitative research methodologies is guided by two opposing beliefs and philosophies. The purpose of quantitative research sampling is to draw inferences about the population, while qualitative research sampling aims to provide a deep understanding of the study. (Kumar, 2014). Selecting a sample in qualitative research involves

choosing an unbiased sample that accurately represents the intended population. Selecting participants for this study considers factors such as availability, maturity, and subject matter expertise (Chandra and Hareendra, 2018).

The general population of this study comprises two public colleges of education out of the twenty-two public colleges of education in the southwestern part of Nigeria, representing both state- and federal-government-owned public colleges of education. This number excludes private colleges, as they are not the focus of this study. At the time of data collection in 2022, these institutions functioned as colleges of education, although they have since been upgraded to universities of Education. There is a total of thirteen federal colleges of education in the south-west region, and the two selected for this study were purposively chosen. Practical considerations, such as accessible roads and safety during data collection, facilitated the process. Additionally, the choice reflected the need for institutional diversity; the selected institutions are federal government-owned colleges that admit students from across Nigeria, offering a culturally and linguistically diverse participant base with varied perspectives. This strategy ensures the study captures both regional and national characteristics of the Nigerian teacher education system.

The study involved a total of three hundred and eight (308) participants, including 186 students and 122 staff members. The students, who are pre-service teachers in their third year or higher, were purposefully selected to ensure they are mature (over 18 years old) and possess knowledge relevant to the research questions (Cohen and Lawrence, 2018). A broader discussion of the structure of Nigerian tertiary education, including the federal character of colleges of education and the distribution of institutions across the geopolitical zones, is provided in Chapter 1, Section 2, and Chapter 2, Section 2. This section extends the existing context by explaining the specific rationale for choosing these two institutions in the southwestern part of the country.

Moreover, academic staff at the two Institutions who have worked at the College for at least five years were asked to participate, given their experience and professional capability to understand the research concept and provide well-informed perspectives. Their deep understanding of the College of Education system and its mechanisms can offer valuable insights into the research questions. Additionally, they may have better historical context and knowledge of events at the Institutions, which can help enrich the data analysis. Their diversity

in roles, backgrounds, and length of service can be beneficial for providing varied nuances and perspectives in understanding the research.

In addition, high-level stakeholders were purposefully selected from the top managerial level because they are in a better-informed position to comment specifically on funding and policy implementation. This group is familiar with the resources available in the system and is responsible for the supervision and implementation of policies within the selected Institutions, ensuring an informed response. Gathering data from multiple samples, such as students, teachers, non-teaching staff, and top managerial staff, enables the research to collect diverse opinions that provide a clearer picture of their perspectives and views. Studies have shown that gathering data from multiple sources yields more reliable results than relying on a single source. (Bans-Akutey, and Tiimub, 2021) The staff at the managerial level can provide unique insights as they are directly involved in decision-making, policy execution, and resource allocation within the college. Their experiences can illuminate the challenges and impacts on educational quality and the implementation of policies.

Conversely, students can share their views and insights on the direct effects of policies and funding on their overall academic experience, while teaching and non-teaching staff may offer broader perspectives on institutional challenges, resource management, and how it impacts the educational experience at the colleges. Involving all these stakeholders could lead to more effective policy recommendations and resource management, ensuring that the approach is practical, balanced, and effective for everyone involved in education, thereby improving the quality of Nigerian tertiary education. Table 3.5.1 below shows the participants' profiles.

3.5.1 Participants' Profile/ Roles and Positions at the Colleges

Participant	Position/Role	Gender	Years of Experience/Level
SL 1	Managerial Staff	Male	18 years
SL 2	Managerial Staff	Female	17 years
SL 3	Managerial Staff	Male	16 years
SL 4	Managerial Staff	Female	15 years
SL 5	Chief Lecturer	Male	15 years

SL 6	Chief Lecturer	Female	14 years
SL 7	Senior Lecturer	Male	12 years
SL 8	Senior Lecturer	Male	8 years
SL 9	Lecturer 1	Male	7 years
SL 10	Lecturer 1	Female	7 years
SL 11	Lecturer 1	Female	6 years
SL 12	Lecturer 1	Female	5 years
ST i	Student / Primary Education	Female	4th Year
ST ii	Student / Voc/Tech	Male	4th Year
ST iii	Student / Science	Male	4th Year
ST iv	Student / Voc/Tech Studies	Male	4th Year
ST v	Student / Social Sciences	Male	4th Year
ST vi	Student / Art	Male	4th Year
ST vii	Student / Special Education	Female	4th Year
ST viii	Student / Art & Social Sciences	Female	3rd Year
ST ix	Student / Voc/Tech Studies	Female	3rd Year
ST x	Student / Sciences	Male	3rd Year

Table 3.5.1. Participants' profile

To clarify, this study uses "tertiary institutions" to describe the broader Nigerian higher education system, encompassing universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education. Nonetheless, the empirical part of the research concentrates on two Federal Colleges of Education. Consequently, whenever "College" appears in the findings chapters, it refers to the specific case-study institutions chosen for this research.

3.5.5 Methodological Instrument

The two main research instruments employed in this educational research is the questionnaire and the semi-structured interview to gather data. Briggs et al. (2012) emphasise the importance

of choosing research instruments that align with the study's objectives and questions while also considering the researchers' skills and experience in using these tools.

3.5.6 Questionnaire

A questionnaire contains a set of questions, also called items, meant to generate responses from respondents for the purpose of solving a specified research problem (Aitha and Aitha, 2020). The purpose of the items is to collect relevant information (data) most reliably and validly from the respondents in a tangible scale or form. The type of information that the researcher requires will determine the questionnaire's design. Structured and unstructured questionnaires are the two types of questionnaires. A structured questionnaire is used to collect specific information related to the research problem in a quantitative format. The questions are usually close-ended and are intended to start an inquiry, validate previous data or give information that may be used to test hypotheses or answer research questions (Aitha and Aitha, 2020; Cohen and Lawrence, 2018).

Research often involves gathering closed-ended information using tools like rating scales, checklists, and performance tests. As explained by Mertler (2021), quantitative research focuses on the use of structured instruments to collect data, which is then counted and analysed to interpret the results. While not all data starts off as numerical, it can be converted into a numerical form for analysis. For instance, perception is not actually numerical, but it can be measured and quantified through questionnaires, making it suitable for quantitative analysis.

A Likert scale helps to rate the level of agreement, disagreement, or perception for each question or statement. A four (4) point Likert scale with numerical values of 1 to 4 (strongly agree - strongly disagree) was used to elicit responses from the participants. This assigns a numerical value to each response option, allowing the researcher to quantify the responses statistically in a meaningful way (See Appendix 1 for questionnaires).

In research, once the research gap is identified, the research agenda is on course, thereby enabling the selection of a suitable methodology for the study (Aitha and Aitha, 2020; Hamed, 2016). In this study, the issues of funding, policy implementation, quality and perception were the determining issues. Thus, they are the issues on which the research focuses in resolving the research problems. Then, the researcher decided on the format of the questionnaire and chose

the structured format with closed-ended questions. A Likert-type scale was used, and the items were scaled to generate variances covering age, level of education, level of experience and demographics among the participants. To ensure that the questionnaire fulfils the purpose for which it was developed, it must be tested by piloting the developed questionnaire on the study population (Basit, 2010). In this research, the questionnaire was piloted at Aniky College (pseudonym) to ensure it measured what it was meant to measure. However, the respondents differed from those used in the main study.

The questionnaire was conducted with 308 respondents in the main study and was divided into four sections. It covers (A) the demographic data of the respondents, (B) staff perceptions of the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria, (C) administrative practices in tertiary Institutions in Nigeria, and (D) their perceptions of funding as predictors of quality tertiary education in Nigeria (See Appendix 1). The questionnaire contained 7 to 11 questions in each section, using a 4-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly agree (1) to disagree strongly, to indicate the degrees of response, as illustrated by Cohen and Lawrence (2018). Winwood and Lambert (2019) suggest that to gather credible data, the anonymity and confidentiality of participants must be maintained.

Therefore, the questionnaire was accompanied by an information and consent letter that explained the purpose of the questionnaire and sought respondents' responses. Before meeting the participants and before distributing the questionnaire, the researcher informed them of their right to withdraw from the research at any time and assured them of the confidentiality and anonymity of their identities. The questionnaire was administered by the researcher and supported by one research assistant. However, the filled-out questionnaire was personally collected by the researcher to maintain the anonymity and confidentiality of the respondents.

The four sections of the questionnaire cover the respondents' perceptions of the quality of Tertiary education in Nigeria, the administrative practices and their impact on the quality of education, and their perceptions of the funding of tertiary education in Nigeria. The questions were developed based on the research questions of the study and relevant literature reviews. The research followed the guide for questionnaire construction, and all ethical of research were maintained throughout the piloting and primary data collection process, as illustrated by Cohen et al. (2018). The participants were purposefully selected to represent experienced, mature

respondents who were familiar with the topics. This guided the selection of students in their third or final year of study, and staff with at least five years' experience within the College. The Nigerian National Policy on Education (NPE, 2013) and the funding of educational institutions are among the compulsory courses in the education curriculum taken by all students of education in Nigeria. The lecturers are also well familiar with the concept. Coupled with the number of years they have spent in the Colleges and their roles as academic staff/administrative staff, or executives, this familiarity with the concept of funding and administrative policy makes them suitable respondents.

3.5.7. Validity of the Quantitative Instrument (Questionnaire)

Kelley (1972) and Fitzpatrick (2019) described validity as the state in which a test measures what it is expected to measure. When an instrument of survey is valid and reliable, it ensures the integrity and quality of the measurement it is intended to make. There are different types of validity, such as face validity, criterion validity, content validity, and construct validity (Hamed, 2016). This study employed face validity, which involves linguistically and analytically reviewing the questionnaire items to determine if they accurately measure what is intended, given the participants' ability to understand the items. In this study, the researcher conducted a meeting with the pilot participants before the questions were distributed, to discuss some of the concept of the research to ask them if they understand the questions, which aligned with the requirement of face validation being applied to ensure that the questionnaire and the questions can measure what the researcher intended to measure and that the questions are simple, clear, and unambiguous to the respondents (Hammed, 2016).

According to Devore and Wauters (2019), validity can be viewed from internal and external perspectives. In experimental research, internal validity refers to the extent to which the observed outcomes can be attributed to the variables being studied, rather than to other factors. (Morden et al., 2023; Devore and Wauters, 2019). However, this study employed a nonexperimental, descriptive design with Likert-scale responses analysed through measures such as mean and median, without aiming to establish causal relationships. Instead, the goal was to ensure the questionnaire reliably measured participants' perceptions consistently and credibly. A study of this nature primarily focuses on controlling factors that might bias responses, rather than exploring cause-and-effect relationships. Threats to internal validity,

such as history, instrumentation, mortality, statistical regression, maturation, and selection bias (Bhandari, 2022), were considered during the design and administration of the instrument. The credibility and trustworthiness of the research depend partly on how effectively these threats are anticipated and minimised. For example, historical bias could stem from participants' previous experiences, especially since some of the staff respondents, depending on the longevity of their employment, may have experienced the instability of Nigerian government education policies and fiscal conditions. Another example is the experience of participants who worked during Nigeria's military era, which may further shape their views on education policy and governance. While such biases may not be entirely eliminated, recognising their possibility is essential when interpreting the findings and formulating recommendations. (Morden et al., 2023)

The threat of instrumentation occurs when different instruments are used for different participants, while the testing threat arises when administering one test or instrument influences subsequent responses (Bhandari, 2022). In this study, all participants completed the same questionnaire, thereby reducing the likelihood of instrumentation or testing threats. Statistical regression, where extreme scores tend to move towards the mean upon retesting, was not relevant in this study, as it employed a single data collection point. Data analysis was based on descriptive statistics, including mean and median, with chi-square used descriptively to explore associations between administrative policy practices, funding, and perceived quality of higher education. This approach, detailed in Section 3.9, was chosen to describe patterns and relationships without implying causality.

The possibility of these threats creating any issues in the study has been reduced in this study by standardising the conditions where the research takes place and by the random selection of participants, counter-selection bias and statistical regression has been analysed using descriptive statistics to obtain patterns. Moreover, the participants are all comparable, for example, all participants are stakeholders or major participants in a tertiary institution environment. They all belong to the academic environment (students and staff) who have some level of experiences, e.g. staff from five years and students who have at least spent three years at the Institution to ensure understanding of the research concepts. In this study, the threat to maturation and contamination was eliminated by ensuring that the completion of the questionnaire was done in a meeting room where there were divider desks. This was done to

preserve the confidentiality of the answers/responses of each of the participants. It was completed within the set time frame of 40 to 50 minutes. Therefore, there was no need to adjust the time set in the main data Instrument. To reduce mortality, as described by Creswell and Creswell (2018), for example, if any of the respondents decide to withdraw, many participants were chosen, i.e., three hundred and eight (308).

External validity explains the extent to which research findings can be generalised and the degree to which the study's setting can be replicated elsewhere (Findley, Kikuta, and Denly, 2021; Morden et al., 2023). For results to be externally valid, the phenomena or issues examined should be like those in real-world conditions, so they are applicable to broader societal and organisational contexts. External validity can also be threatened by several factors. Fabregues and Molina (2017) identified threats such as the Hawthorne effect, carryover effects, treatment interaction effects, and demand characteristics, which may lead participants to respond in ways they think are expected rather than honestly. This is a phenomenon also called the placebo effect. The Hawthorne effect, first observed during studies at the Hawthorne Works, describes behaviour changes caused by participants knowing they are being observed (Mayo, 1933; Roethlisberger and Dickson, 1939). In this study, the potential influence of the Hawthorne effect was minimised by having research assistants, who were college lecturers, administer questionnaires, while the researcher remained in the background and was unobtrusive, reducing participants' awareness of being directly observed. The carryover effect refers to the sequence in which the research instrument is administered to participants. This can be reduced by following the instrument administration plan and avoiding multiple administrations.

The treatment-interaction threat is possible due to the interaction of participants sharing their experiences and other characteristics that may affect their responses to the questions. This was minimised because the participants have lived in the same environments for some years, minimum of three years for students and 5 years for staff, this will bring some level of homogeneity to their characteristics. In this study, the external validity of the study was enhanced using random method to select the respondents and the participants come from diverse background being federal Institutions where students and staff come from all the thirty-six (36) states of the federation. For the study to be generalisable a precise and operational description of the variables were done. Moreover, a pilot study feedback questionnaire was sent

to the respondents in the pilot study to ascertain the credibility of the questionnaire used during the data gathering (See appendix 4.) The result shows that the respondents understood the questions asked and the duration taken was appropriate for them. The researcher assured the participants of the anonymity and confidentiality of their data by repeatedly telling the respondents that they are free to withdraw from the research at any point in time if they wish and assuring them their data would be treated confidentially. It took an average of 40 to 50 minutes to complete each session.

3.5.8 Reliability of the Instrument

The reliability of the instrument is determined by its internal consistency, which can be assessed through test-retest, inter-rater, parallel form, or split-half reliability tests (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018). To determine the internal consistency of the questionnaire items, Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was used for the calculation. Cronbach's Alpha value is from 0 – 1 and may be in the negative in some questionnaires, if this happens the reverse scale items should be checked for correction, if after this, the negative value still exists, then the questionnaire design should be checked for possible contamination by the format. If the value is zero, it means no items (questions) in the questionnaire are correlated with one another. As the values increase from 0 upward, it is an indication that the items are associated with one another. Research experts have suggested that for a questionnaire to have adequate and reliable consistency, the Cronbach's Alpha value should be 0.70, and any value below this is regarded as indicating poor internal consistency (Aitha and Aitha, 2020). In this study, the Cronbach's Alpha was used to determine the reliability coefficient, and a value of 0.763 was obtained, which can be considered a satisfactory level of reliability (Cohen et al., 2018).

Cronbach's Alpha was used because it is a measure of internal consistency for Likert scale items or non-dichotomous items. Also, a detailed power analysis of the sample size has been done. Power analysis involves statistical methods to ensure the accurate sample size is selected or used in research. (Cohen et al., 2018) (see Appendix 3). The reliability of a questionnaire refers to the consistency and stability of the measurements obtained from the questionnaire items. The reliability of a questionnaire or scale measures the extent to which the items in a questionnaire or scale are interrelated and consistently measure the same underlying construct. (Creswell and Creswell, 2018)

There were two questionnaires for this study: one for staff and one for students. The staff questionnaire comprised 33 items aimed at exploring staff perceptions of funding and policy implementation on the quality of tertiary education. The students' questionnaire consisted of 28 items, all with the same purpose: to explore the impact of funding and policy implementation on students' perceptions of quality tertiary education. In all cases, participants responded to questions on demographics as well as a 4-point Likert scale (measuring quality of tertiary education, administrative practices, and funding), ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree).

The choice of a 4-point Likert scale was made to provide clear differentiation of responses from the participants, given the exploratory nature of this research; it allows for capturing the diversity of viewpoints and identifying patterns in respondents' opinions. The researcher administered the questionnaires manually, and participants completed them in 40 to 50 minutes. The two questionnaires were merged, and the internal consistency reliability of the questionnaires was evaluated. Construct reliability, which measures internal consistency, was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. The results yielded a Cronbach's Alpha (α) of 0.763. The Cronbach's alpha exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.7 (Hair et al., 2013).

The subscales demonstrated the following reliability coefficients: quality of tertiary education, with nine items ($\alpha = .667$), and policy implementation practices, with seven items ($\alpha = .608$), were found to be reliable. Similarly, the funding scale with five items was also found to be reliable ($\alpha = .706$). However, seven items within the subscales exhibited correlation coefficients below the acceptable level of 0.3. Despite this, these items were not considered for removal because the analysis results for 'Cronbach's alpha if item deleted' indicated that eliminating them would not lead to a significant improvement in the overall Cronbach's alpha (Table 3.5.2). This suggests that the questionnaire demonstrates good internal consistency and that most items within the subscales measure a similar construct. (See table 3.5.2, 3.5.3) Table 3.5.2. Reliability Statistics of the Construct Subscales.

Constructs	No. of Items	Alpha(α)
Quality of tertiary education	9	0.667

Policy Implementation Practices	7	0.608
Funding	5	0.706

Table 3.5.3 Item - Total Statistics Showing the Cronbach's Alpha of Items if Deleted

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Q8. Reports from the Universities where the ex-students of the College have gone for their further studies	58.2750	65.128	-.174	.786
(Master, PhD) indicate the high academic performance				

A1. The College's teaching curriculum is aligned with the National Curriculum Framework for Quality Teacher Education as stated in the National Policy on Education	57.4500	60.356	.231	.760
A2. Lecturers use the student-centered teaching method as stipulated in the National Policy of Education	57.9750	61.820	.112	.765
A4. The facilities in the College are well maintained	57.6750	58.584	.237	.761
A5. The College democratizes students' Union activities and governance, allowing students to freely choose their leaders and	58.3750	59.471	.198	.763
give feedback to the Management on issues that affect the students				

A7. The admission of students follows merit and other conditions stipulated by the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB)	58.0250	61.102	.077	.773
A9. Poor Policy implementation is one of the factors that are responsible for the poor global ranking of Nigeria's tertiary Institutions.				

3.6 Qualitative Instrument (Interviews)

Interviews are a widely used tool in qualitative research for gaining deeper insights into human experiences, perceptions, and behaviours. (Coleman, 2009) An interview can be defined as a purposeful conversation between a researcher and a participant, aimed at exploring the participant's perspectives on a specific complex issue (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Interviews enable researchers to go beyond surface-level responses by probing for meaning, clarifying ambiguities and unclear words, and accessing personal and social contexts that influence participants' views (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018). Conducting interviews in research facilitates one-on-one conversations with participants, allowing for the collection of detailed and personalised insights into their opinions, experiences, and beliefs. This approach provides a rich source of data. As Winwood (2019) pointed out, participants can also ask questions to clarify their responses.

This study employed interviews in conjunction with a questionnaire as part of a mixed-methods approach. While questionnaires provided broad insights by allowing the researcher to identify

patterns from a larger sample, interviews offered a detailed understanding by enabling participants to elaborate on their experiences and views regarding funding and policy implementation in Nigerian tertiary education. This combination improved and complemented the methodology, aligning with mixed methods recommendations (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The researcher first obtained permission from the institution's gatekeepers, who in this study included the college authorities such as the Provost, Registrar, and Heads of relevant academic units, as well as officials from the Colleges of Education Academic Staff Union (COAESU), which were the key administrative and union bodies responsible for granting access to staff and students. Permission was granted. Subsequently, the researcher travelled to Nigeria to conduct face-to-face interviews, facilitating closer contact and collecting firsthand insights into participants' perceptions of how funding and policy impact the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria. The interactive nature of the interview sessions enables the researcher to address any questions participants may have about the research questions and the study's purpose. This impacted and enhanced the trustworthiness and authenticity of the research (Coleman, 2009).

The interviews used a semi-structured format, which is particularly effective for exploring complex social issues. (Coleman, 2009) Semi-structured interviews follow a balance between structure and flexibility, as they follow a prepared schedule of key questions while also allowing the researcher to adapt, probe, and explore new directions as they arise (Bryman, 2016). This method was suitable because participants held different roles and experiences, including those of students, teaching staff, and managers, necessitating consideration of different perspectives on the topic. It also allowed participants to ask questions for clarification, encouraging more dialogue and collaborative interaction, while enabling the researcher to gauge their sincerity and insight (Winwood, 2019).

A total of 22 participants (14 students and 8 staff) were interviewed across two selected Colleges of Education. Each interview lasted approximately 50 minutes (see Appendix 4).

During the process, clarification was provided where necessary, and participants were encouraged to articulate their own understandings of key terms such as the National Policy on Education. This was crucial to ensure responses that reflected genuine perspectives rather than assumptions of shared meanings.

The interviews were conducted in private rooms within the student union building. This decision was guided by observations during the pilot phase (see pilot study section below), where some participants' body language suggested discomfort in open spaces. Privacy and confidentiality were prioritised to ensure a safe environment for open discussion. In line with ethical research standards, participants were reminded of their privacy, anonymity, and their right to withdraw at any time.

The interviews provided a detailed and context-rich exploration of staff and students' perceptions, resulting in a valuable and subtle dataset that complemented the questionnaire data. The insights gained from this qualitative approach were essential for understanding how funding and policy implementation are experienced in Nigerian tertiary education and how these experiences connect to issues of quality within the tertiary education sector.

3.6.1 Trustworthiness/Credibility of the qualitative instrument (semi-structured Interview)

In this study, the concept of trustworthiness was used to establish the credibility and dependability of the research instrument. As explained by Rose and Johnson (2020), trustworthiness depicts the overall degree or level of trust and confidence regarding the quality of the research. Based on the notion posited by Rose and Johnson (2020 pp 432-451), "the validity of qualitative data could be addressed by honesty, depth and richness, and scope of the data." To obtain the trustworthiness of the instrument, the researcher ensured that the scope, purpose, and significance of the research were explained to the interviewee. The one-on-one interview session was conducted directly by the researcher to provide an optimal environment for the participants to speak freely and share their views. This may be disrupted if the interviews were conducted by research assistants who are staff members at the Institutions.

The confidentiality of the data collected was duly maintained, and clear and accurate information was provided. Trustworthiness at the level of the researcher was achieved as the students were selected purposefully to ensure they had a deep understanding of the topics relating to the questions being asked. In line with the British Education Research Association's ethical guidelines (BERA, 2018; 2024), various strategies were implemented to help ensure honesty in participants during the interview. For example, an assurance of anonymity, the right to withdraw from the study at any stage, and the independent status of the interviewer. The

2018 guidelines used when collecting the data have been similarly addressed when referring to the later publication of the BERA (2024) guidelines.

3.7 Piloting the Research Instrument

To ensure the credibility, reliability, and feasibility of the research tools and gather credible data for the research, a pilot study was conducted to validate the quality and efficiency of the data collection (Mikuska, 2018). A pilot study can be described as a small-scale feasibility study or investigation used to test the different components of a procedure envisioned for more thorough research (Charli et al., 2022). The primary goal of a pilot study is not to provide answers to specific research questions, but rather to prevent the researcher from beginning a large-scale study without sufficient knowledge of the method suggested (Lowe, 2019). Conducting a pilot study can help identify any limitations or problems with the research design, providing opportunities to refine the questions. According to Mikuska (2018), conducting a pilot study helps to check if the study can be conducted successfully, including practical, ethical, and logistical issues. Piloting the instruments will help assess the required time needed to perform the main study and provide feedback on the questions to improve both the format used and the mode of instruction. (Creswell and Creswell, 2018).

Additionally, conducting a pilot study provides the opportunity to fine-tune the data collection processes. This can increase the chances of obtaining a reliable result and enhance confidence in the study. The purpose of conducting this pilot study was to see if the instruments (questionnaires and interviews), were sufficient to test the perception of staff and students on funding and policy implementation as they affect the quality tertiary education in Nigeria and offer their perceptions in depth, something which was beyond the scope of a questionnaire which can help to increase the credibility of the research.

The schedule was piloted at Aniky College of Education (pseudonyms) with 22 participants, which was not one of the tertiary Institutions' colleges for the main research. The pilot study participants were purposefully selected to represent the main sample participants in terms of their level of experience. This comprises 14 students and 8 staff. The essence of piloting the schedule in a different college was to determine the realistic nature of the questions, the intelligibility of the questions, the average time required to administer the test instruments to

each participant, gain insight into the interpretations given to the questions by the participants, understand if there were questions that the majority were reluctant to answer, assess if the interviewer's approach was appropriate, and establish an appropriate coding system for the transcription (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018). Additionally, the researcher did not want the participants in the main study, who were not from this college, to become aware beforehand of the questions to be asked (Mikuska, 2018). Moreover, the researcher was also able to confirm that the respondents would understand some of the terminologies used in the test instrument. This helps confirm that the questions effectively addressed the research questions (Leavy, 2022). This was done by asking each of them about their understanding of basic variables and terminologies, such as national policy documents, their understanding of funding structures and procedures, etc., which they affirmed.

Changes were made based on the results and outcomes observed during the pilot study, as the pilot had three main goals for this study. First, it assessed the clarity, relevance, and understanding of the questions, such as whether terms like “funding structures” or “National Policy on Education” were clear to participants. For instance, the interviewer observed that one of the student participants from the four did not fully understand the meaning of the national education policy. The researcher (interviewer) noticed the participant had with her a copy of the National Policy on Education. The researcher asked the respondent (Interviewee) if she would like to go through the copy together. She agreed, and they both read, analysed, and reviewed the document in detail together before proceeding with the interview section. This was done to ensure that the participant understood the concept and not to influence the participant's opinion. During the main data collection, this was taken into consideration by asking participants to explain or state their understanding of the national education policy before proceeding. This ensured that each participant clearly understood the term before any further questions were asked. As a result, data collection involved an additional step in which participants explained their understanding of key concepts before proceeding. This was done in the form of a focus group by asking general questions about their knowledge of the National policy on education, and everyone seemed to have a clear understanding of the document, except for the one mentioned above during the pilot study. It is noteworthy that all participants in the main/primary research demonstrate an in-depth knowledge of the National Policy on Education (NPE, 2013).

Secondly, the pilot examined the logistics of data collection, finding, for example, that some participants preferred private rooms over open halls. During the interview session, while conducting the pilot study, the researcher noted that the body language of three of the participants e.g., looking at me and staring to the back of the open hall, suggested they would prefer to be in a private room with the interviewer when answering the question, hence the interview was conducted in a private room in the student union building. The researcher assured the participants of the confidentiality of the data, and the anonymity of the participants was repeated before the interview section. This led to conducting all future interviews in private spaces, improving response quality and participant comfort.

Thirdly, the pilot showed that each questionnaire and interview took approximately 50 minutes, which helped refine the interviewer's technique and confirmed the suitability of the coding framework for transcription and analysis.

Overall, the pilot study demonstrated that the chosen research instruments were able to capture reliable data on staff and students' perceptions of the effect of funding and policy implementation on tertiary education quality in Nigeria. Additionally, it enhanced the researcher's confidence in the research design by identifying areas for improvement and confirming that ethical, practical, and methodological issues were thoroughly addressed (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Leavy, 2022). Necessary changes were made to the main data collection process due to the pilot study, including adjustments to the duration. Specifically, the questionnaire and interview sections were each reduced to 50 minutes. Additionally, private rooms were used for the interview sections to ensure the respondents' privacy. Also, the researcher ensured to confirm that the respondents were familiar with the research topic before proceeding to ask further questions.

3.8 Research Activities

The researcher's activities were conducted using the following procedures.

- (i) The researcher contacted the authorities at the selected colleges to seek permission to use the students and staff as research participants for the study. The research purpose, scope, significance, and ethical considerations were communicated. Approval was granted within four

weeks by the Colleges of Education authorities. This was conveyed to the ethical committee at Staffordshire University for ethical approval.

(ii) Permission was sought from the College of Education Academic Staff Union of Nigeria, known as (COASU), to identify voluntary participants and request a few staff members to assist as research assistants in administering the questionnaires to the participants during the data collection stage. The scope of their involvement was discussed, and their permission was obtained.

(iii) Arrangements were made with the College of Education authority to seek suitable venues, such as lecture halls and meeting rooms for data collection. Authority was sought since the research participants are students and staff of the selected colleges. Discussions were held to determine appropriate times to visit the college when staff and students would be available to participate in data collection activities, including distributing questionnaires and conducting interview sessions.

(iv) A pilot study was conducted to test the data collection methods, using questionnaire and interview sessions at a different college from the one in the main study.

(v) Reviewing the Questionnaire and interview processes reviewed based on the result from the pilot study, such as preparing for a private room for the interview session with the authority of the selected colleges

(vi.) Quantitative data collection using questionnaire. Arrived at the first college for data collection. Ensured ethical considerations, by seeking informed consent from the participants and confidentiality of data.

(vii) Conducted interview at the selected Colleges.

Table 3.8. Research activities timeline

Activities	Duration
Preliminary activities, contacting the Authorities of the Institution and making arrangements for the venue, etc.	Five weeks
Pilot Study/ Validation of Instruments.	Two Weeks
Data Collection/Questionnaire and Interviews.	Two weeks
Total	11 weeks

3.9 Data Analysis

3.9.1 Quantitative Analysis

The quantitative data collected through the questionnaire were analysed using Statistical Analysis for Social Sciences software (SPSS). The data collected through the Likert scale ranged from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The process involves using descriptive statistics. A descriptive statistical analysis is the summary description of the coefficients that characterise the data in the study based on what has been found (Cohen et al., 2018). That is the actual report of what is discovered in different ways.

Research questions 1-3 were addressed using basic descriptive statistics, such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. The quantitative dataset contained both

categorical and ordinal variables. Demographic characteristics, such as gender, role, faculty, and qualification, were treated as categorical variables and summarised using frequencies and percentages. Responses obtained through the four-point Likert scale represented ordinal variables because they reflected ordered levels of agreement ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. These variables were analysed descriptively to identify patterns in participants' perceptions of quality, funding, and policy implementation. The level of perception regarding policy implementation, funding, and the quality of tertiary education was determined using a weighted average. Any means value exceeding the weighted average indicated high perception, while those below were considered low perception.

A chi-square test was also employed to examine the association between administrative policy practices, funding, and the quality of tertiary education in order to identify observable patterns in staff and students' perceptions. The categorical variables of administration, funding, and quality of tertiary education were analysed using chi-square tests, with the first two categorised as low and high perception and the latter as SA, A, D, and SD for research questions 4 and 5. Research question 6, a 2-2-level categorisation of agree and disagree, was adopted because expected counts were less than 5 in three cells during the initial analysis with a 4-level categorisation.

3.9.2 Qualitative Analysis (Analytical Method: Thematic Analysis)

A thematic analysis approach was adopted to analyse the data gathered from the interview sessions. Thematic analysis enables the classification of data into themes to provide insightful meaning (Braun and Clarke, 2006; 2018). As posited by Braun and Clarke (2018), thematic analysis is a method used to identify, analyse, and interpret patterns and meanings (themes) in collected qualitative data (Braun Clarke and 2017, p.297). In this study, the systematic steps of thematic analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006; 2018) are adopted, which include familiarisation, generating the initial codes, identifying themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, analysing the themes, and producing the report (See Figure 3.5).

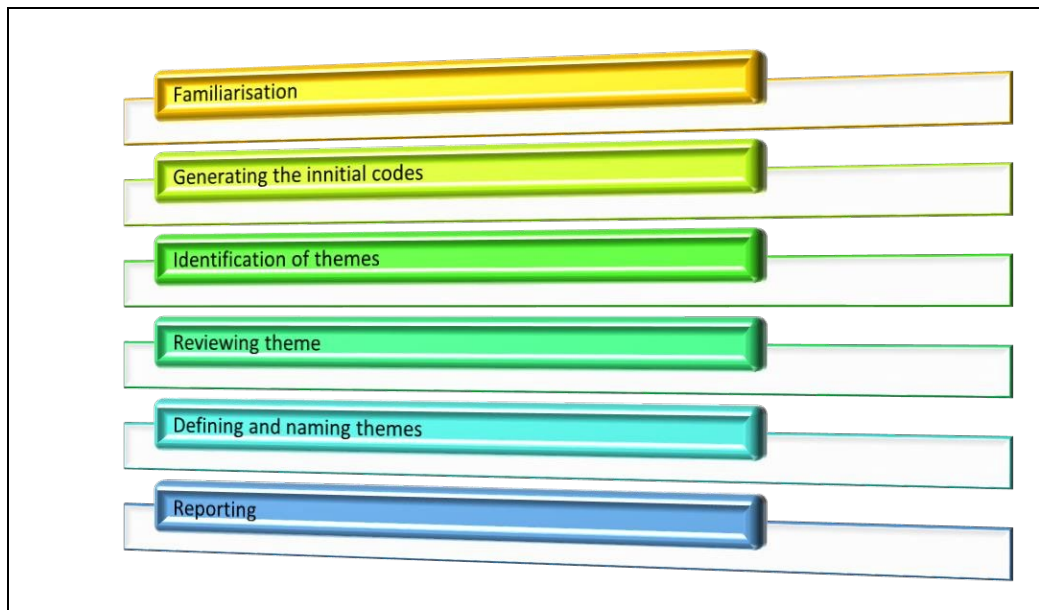


Figure 3.5. Thematic analysis process informed by Braun and Clarke (2006; 2022)

In this study, the researcher, familiarise with the data by transcribing the voice notes in the recorded interview into readable English language words. Though the participants speak English language, the Microsoft word transcription app used, could not capture some of the spoken words correctly due to the Nigerian local accent. The researcher listened to the recorded interview carefully several times and translate the words appropriately by editing and translating into the right word formats. The notes taking during the interview sessions was also merged to each participant, by reading, listening, and going through these data many times, the researcher get more familiarised with the collected data. Also, each participant is labelled by given a pseudonym name, using the names of states and cities in Nigeria, to differentiate and put a name to each participant.

Secondly, the initial codes were generated from the data, by identifying information from the data that is relevant to the research questions, grouped into patterns and summarised into codes. These were labelled, based on the number of times that the information appears. Some extracts labelled into codes were generated more than once before being grouped and regrouped to be placed appropriately. The labelling of the patterns into codes was done based on the interview questions as they relate and are relevant to the research questions. From there, similar codes were generated and organised, and all this was done manually by highlighting and annotating the extracts/transcripts using margin notes, numbering, and sticky notes of different colours. At

this stage, the researcher found the process engaging, and enjoys the process, and it helps to get closer, feel the data and makes it more familiar. Also extract from the notes taken during the interview session were also read through and merged with the responses from each participant to generate patterns and establish codes. From these, the data were organised and labelled appropriately. (See Appendix 6 for examples code generated into themes)

Going forward, the researcher, captured codes that have the same pattern into themes, at times, some new codes were generated while some previous ones were modified under the same headings. Themes were generated and captured based on the relevance of the codes based on its significance. The themes captured was also reviewed to check if they are meaningful or relevant to the research questions. The data was checked for coherence and where there is need, subthemes and more categorisation was done, ensuring its relevance to the research questions.

After reviewing the theme, the researcher re-examined the data to assess the relevance of each theme's findings and determine if the subthemes are related and interact with the main theme in a meaningful way, as suggested by Maguire & Delahunt (2017, p. 3351). Once this was completed, the researcher is set to write the findings. Based on the above processes, the following four themes were generated to answer the research questions;

Theme 1: The Quality of Tertiary Education in Nigeria

- Quality of tertiary education rating
- Identification of indicators of quality education
- Challenges of quality tertiary education
- Recommendations on overcoming challenges.

Theme 2: Policy implementation impact on the quality of Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria

- Awareness/definition of terms.
- Implementation of the national policy on education
- Implication of implementation of the national policy on education and its impact on the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria

Theme 3: The impact of adequate Funding on the quality of Tertiary Education in Nigeria

- The significance of adequate funding on the quality of tertiary education in

Nigeria

- Identification of major sources of funding.
- Impact of funding in promoting quality tertiary education

Theme 4: Combined effect of policy implementation on the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria.

The findings from the questionnaire and semi-structured interview were presented separately in each chapter to provide a clear view of the different perceptions of the participants. Chapter 6 is dedicated to analysing and discussing the findings by triangulating results from the various sources.

3.9.3 Triangulation

To validate the authenticity and reliability of this study, the utilisation of triangulation is adopted. This term, according to Bryman (2016), involves the use of multiple methods or sources of data to validate the accuracy and integrity of research. The utilisation of triangulation in research helps in having a robust understanding of the investigation which can support the credibility and deep understanding of the investigation. Triangulation is utilised in this research by the participation of different samples that cut across the staff the students and the management staff at the selected tertiary institution. Also, the use of mixed method of inquiry, i.e. questionnaires and interview to obtain data to have a robust and deep understating of the investigation. As illustrated by Creswell (2017) The combination of quantitative and qualitative instruments in research can help reduce the weaknesses of each approach which will invariably, strengthen the quality of the research.

This research triangulated the findings from both the questionnaire and the semi- structured reports by comparing and cross validating the obtained data, by looking for patterns, themes or trends in the responses. Convergences and discrepancies between the questionnaires and interview reports were identified to consider diverse perspectives and acknowledge the diversity of the participants. This will help to strengthen the research outcomes and support the collection of different viewpoints as discussed in Chapter 6 when analysing the findings.

3.9.4 Ethical Consideration

The ethical review policy applies to everyone who undertakes research at Staffordshire University. The policy is based on the principles of autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence, confidentiality, and integrity (Staffordshire University, 2018; 2024). BERA serves as the main ethical framework for research in the UK, and the ethical guidelines of AERA (American Educational Research Association, 2024) were also considered. AERA provides additional guidance that complements international best practices in educational research and aids work across diverse cultural and institutional settings. Using both frameworks enhances the ethical foundation of the study, especially since the fieldwork took place in Nigeria while the research was approved and overseen by a UK university. Securing ethical approval from the university is necessary before starting any research involving human or animal subject participants. To fulfil these ethical considerations, ethical approval from the Staffordshire University Ethical Committee was sought and obtained. The researcher also reached out to relevant authorities, such as the administrative heads of each participating college and the President of the Staff unions at the Colleges, seeking their approval and providing them with a comprehensive overview of the research. (See Appendix 7 for the gatekeepers' letters and approval from the university ethics committee)

This study prioritised safeguarding the rights, dignity, and well-being of all participants. Before participation, each person received a detailed information sheet and a verbal explanation to clarify the research's purpose, scope, and details. This ensured participants fully understood what their involvement involved, including possible benefits and minimal risks. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before data collection. The consent process stressed that participation was entirely voluntary, and individuals could withdraw at any time without facing negative consequences or needing to justify their decision. This approach upheld participants' autonomy and helped establish a trusting relationship between researchers and participants. (see Appendix 8 for sampled consent form and information sheet)

By adopting the principle of autonomy, pseudonyms were used for all participants mentioned in the study. This helped to protect their identities and maintain confidentiality. No original names of people, places, or educational Institutions were disclosed to safeguard anonymity.

The researcher made sure that the participants and Institutions involved would not be identified based on the information provided in the report.

3.9.4.1: Power and Privileges Considerations.

Adherence to ethical standards was ensured at every stage of this research, primarily because of my dual role as a researcher and Chief Education Officer with the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) in Nigeria. The researcher's professional position at the time granted easy access to participants, who are part of the key stakeholders in tertiary institutions, namely staff and students, as they are familiar with TETFund's activities and responsibilities in providing educational development interventions through funding. While this aids in openness and engagement, it also introduces potential ethical issues that need to be considered.

Being familiar with the participants through professional affiliation could affect how they interact with the researcher or respond to certain specific questions, especially when criticisms of funding mechanisms or policy outcomes are raised. I was aware of the risk that the participants may see the researcher as a government staff member on assignment rather than a neutral researcher from a UK University. To guide against this, I made every effort to clearly let them know by communicating the academic and independent nature of this research, by clearly assuring participants of strict confidentiality and their right to withdraw at any time before publication of the findings without explanation or consequence.

At every stage of this research process, I remained reflexive and continuously checked for self-awareness by evaluating how my background, experiences, and institutional ties could influence or impact participants and the interpretation of data. In addition to personal reflexivity, I discussed my work with supervisors and professional colleagues (without sharing confidential details) to gather various perspectives and reduce bias. Peer debriefing is a common method for improving credibility and minimising researcher bias (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). I also kept a reflexive journal recording insights from supervisory meetings, informal chats with colleagues, and my own reflections during data collection and analysis. This journal helped me track how my assumptions evolved, recognise moments where my interpretations might have been influenced by previous experiences, and remain aware of how power dynamics influenced the research. Instead of seeing my professional position as a disadvantage, being

reflexive helped me approach it as a responsibility, one that required careful navigation of power relations, transparency in communication, and a commitment to representing participants' views respectfully and accurately (Berger, 2015).

3.10 Summary

This chapter has explained the methodological procedures that were adopted in this study. The philosophical assumptions were described in section 3.4. The mixed method design used questionnaires and semi-structured interviews to gather data. The study targeted 308 staff and students at the two selected Colleges of Education in the southwestern part of Nigeria. The chapter discusses the research objectives, research questions, and data analysis procedures. The validity and reliability of the research instrument and procedures were carefully discussed, as were the ethical issues. This chapter also clarifies that, while the study is situated within the broader Nigerian tertiary education system, the empirical research component focuses on only two Federal Colleges of Education. Chapter 4 focuses on quantitative research findings.

CHAPTER 4: Quantitative Data Analysis and Findings

4.0 Introduction

The objective of this study is to explore the perceptions of staff and students regarding the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria, with a focus on funding and policy implementation. This includes examining the perceptions of teaching, non-teaching, and managerial staff, as well as students, at the selected Institutions. A mixed-method approach was used to gather data for the study. The use of questionnaires and interviews enabled the study to investigate the influence of funding and policy implementation on participants' perceptions and how these variables can affect the quality of education at the selected tertiary Institutions in Nigeria. This chapter presents the findings of the quantitative data, which were obtained through questionnaires administered to participants. The analysis was conducted using Statistics Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), employing descriptive statistics and Chi-square tests to identify associations and reveal patterns in the responses. This analysis is purely descriptive, not inferential, and is intended to provide an overview of trends and relationships in the data before combining it with qualitative findings in the triangulation stage.

4.1. Questionnaire

The questionnaire, which contains a variety of questions focused on funding and policy implementation, was used to gather information about the participants' perception of quality tertiary education in Nigeria. A total of 308 participants, comprising 122 staff members and 186 students, took part in the research. The questionnaire was divided into four sections (Sections A-D), covering background/demographic information about the participants, and the other three sections (B-D) exploring their perceptions of the influence of funding, policy implementation, and administrative policies practices on their perception of quality tertiary education in Nigeria. The findings were divided into six sections, with each section addressing the research questions.

The questionnaire helps to explore the similarities and differences in participants' opinions about funding, policy implementation, and administrative policies, and as well as how these factors affect the perception of quality tertiary education in the country.

The research questions for this study were formulated with the understanding that staff and students would be analysed within the same broad framework of Principal Agent Theory (PAT), since both are key stakeholders in tertiary education quality and in this research. In this findings chapter, the datasets are analysed and presented separately to maintain group-specific contexts while addressing the same questions. Each group's data was analysed in the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, along with visual summaries such as bar charts to illustrate response patterns across the four-point Likert scale. When appropriate, Chi-square tests were used descriptively to examine response distributions across categories and identify associations between variables. These results are interpreted as associations rather than causal effects, providing insight into the patterns observed in the descriptive summaries. Later, during triangulation, integration was performed across staff and student data, as well as between quantitative and qualitative components. Minor differences in demographics, the number of items, and wording were harmonised by focusing analysis on comparable concepts measured across both datasets. The same four-point Likert scale was used, and results were reported at the level of overall patterns rather than a direct item-by-item comparison, to ensure that findings across staff and student groups could be discussed meaningfully together.

Research questions 1-3 were addressed using basic descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. The level of perception regarding policy implementation, funding and quality of tertiary education variables was determined using a weighted average. Any mean value exceeding the weighted average was considered to indicate high perception, while those below were considered to have low perception.

The Chi-square test was employed to descriptively examine the relationship between administrative policy practices, funding, and the quality of tertiary education. The categorical variables of administration, funding, and quality of tertiary education were analysed using the chi-square test. Administration and funding were categorised as low and high perception, while quality was classified as Strongly Agreed, Agreed, Disagreed, and Strongly Disagreed (SA, A,

D, and SD) for research questions 4 and 5. For research question 6, a simplified two-level categorisation of 'agree' and 'disagree' was adopted due to expected counts of less than 5 in three cells when using the four-level categorisation in the initial analysis. Cramér's V was utilised to measure the strength of the associations between these variables. (See Chapter, section 3.5 for more details)

4.2 Staff Perception of Quality Tertiary Education in Nigeria

Demographic Characteristics of Staff

This section presents the gender, age, and years of experience of the respondents. It aims to confirm that suitable participants were selected to address the research questions. All respondents were at least over 18 years of age and classified as adults, in accordance with the criteria in Chapter 3. In this study, maturity refers only to adult status and does not imply experience. Instead, experience is defined by participants' sustained involvement in tertiary education: staff respondents had spent a minimum of five years at their institution, while student respondents were from third- or final-year cohorts, presumed to have some levels of exposure to institutional processes and learning environments, and thus capable of providing informed insights. Collecting age ranges remains useful for context, as it helps interpret years of experience without assuming a direct correlation between age and expertise. Gender was also considered, given Nigeria's social and cultural norms, where gender roles can influence career trajectories, institutional experiences, and perceptions of policy and educational quality. Including gender allows the study to capture a wider range of perspectives and supports a more informed and balanced interpretation of the analysis.

4.2.1 Gender

As can be seen in Table 4.1, the results show the gender distribution of staff respondents across the selected institutions. Of the 122 individuals surveyed, 66 were male, and 56 were female, accounting for 54.1% and 45.9%, respectively. This suggests a slightly higher number of male participants in total. Within individual institutions, the respondent breakdown (see Figure 4.1) shows that at College ACE, there were 29 males and 27 females, representing 51.8% and 48.2%, respectively. At College OVE, there were 37 males and 29 females, or 56.1% and

43.9%. These figures illustrate the gender makeup of participants in this study. Considering the Nigerian socio-cultural context, where historical and structural factors often influence gender roles in higher education, the slight male majority is not unexpected. Nevertheless, the close distribution between genders indicates a more balanced gender representation than often assumed. Although these data do not represent the entire staff, the results suggest a relatively balanced distribution of participants across institutions, they also indicate that diverse perspectives from both male and female participants have been captured, supporting gender-informed analysis, as discussed further in later sections.

Table 4.1- Staff Gender

	Frequency	Percent
Male	66	54.1
Female	56	45.9
Total	122	100.0

This table shows the gender distribution of all 122 respondents across both institutions. Male participants comprised 54.1% (n = 66), and female participants 45.9% (n = 56), reflecting a slightly higher number of males but an overall balanced representation.

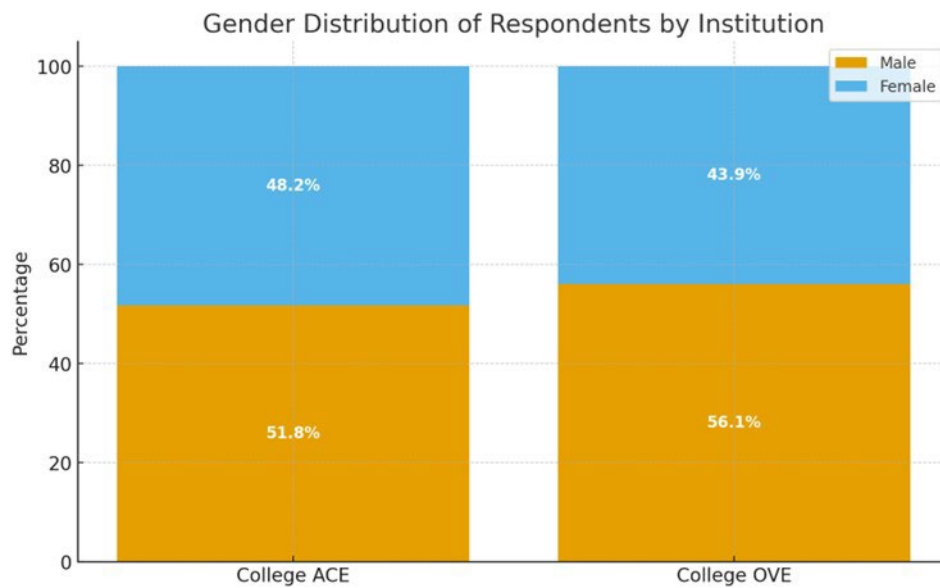


Fig 4.1: This figure shows the proportion of male and female respondents across the two institutions. In both College ACE and College OVE, the distribution is quite balanced, with males comprising 51.8% and 56.1%, respectively, and females comprising 48.2% and 43.9%, respectively. The chart indicates that both male and female perspectives were fairly represented in the study.

4.2.2 Age of Respondents

The age demographics of the respondents are presented in Table 4.2. The results showed that the age categories of 21-30 years and 31-40 years each had 15 respondents, representing 12.3 percent of the total of 122 respondents. The 41-50 age category was the largest, comprising 63 respondents (51.6 per cent), followed by the 51- 60 age category, which had 21 respondents (17.2 per cent). The smallest age group was 61-65 years, comprising 8 respondents (6.6%).

The age distribution reflects the composition of the study respondents and provides a clear picture and contextual information about the participants involved in this research. The pattern indicates that most respondents were in mid-career stages, with an average age of 39.1 years (SD = 7.9). This age profile is presented to describe the respondent group and to support contextual understanding of the sample, rather than to infer professional experience or capability. In this study, age and experience are treated as distinct demographic characteristics. Accordingly, issues related to institutional knowledge and professional exposure are examined separately in the subsequent section on years of experience to avoid conflicting age with expertise or experience. This demographic profile provides background context for the

respondent group and is considered alongside the subsequent analysis of years of experience.

Table 4.2- Age distribution of staff respondents

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
21–30 yrs	15	12.3
31–40 yrs	15	12.3
41–50 yrs	63	51.6
51–60 yrs	21	17.2
61–65 yrs	8	6.6
Total	122	100.0

Mean (M) = 39.14

Standard Deviation (SD) = 7.87

Table 4.2. This table shows the age distribution of the 122 staff respondents who took part in the study. The results indicate that the majority of respondents (51.6%) were between 41 and 50 years old. This information is presented to describe the respondents' demographic profile and to provide contextual background for the study.

4.2.3 Area of Discipline.

Table 4.3 presents the respondents' areas of disciplines. The study results indicate that the majority, 52 (42.6%), were from the Faculty of Education. The data also show that 30 respondents (24.6%) were from the Social Sciences, making it the second-largest group among the sampled colleges of education. Additionally, 18 respondents (14.8%) were from Languages, including French, English, and the three major indigenous languages (Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba), ranking as the third most common discipline. The analysis further reveals that respondents from Science, Technology, and Arts comprised 8 (6.6%), 7 (5.7%), and 6 (4.9%) respectively. Lastly, only 2 respondents (3.5%) came from other fields such as Art and Crafts and vocational studies.

Figure 4.3 shows that staff members from the Faculty of Education were highest in College OVE (33), while College ACE also recorded Education as its largest disciplinary group, with 18 staff members. In the social sciences, both institutions had 15 staff members each.

Languages were represented by 15 staff in College OVE and 10 in College ACE. Science staff numbers were slightly higher in College OVE (8) compared to College ACE (7). The disciplines of Technology, Arts, and other areas recorded lower staff numbers across both institutions. Overall, this distribution highlights differences in disciplinary representation across the two colleges and provides contextual background to the staff sample included in the study. This representation captures a heterogeneous group of staff with diverse educational backgrounds and varied opinions who participated in the study.

Although the data relate only to those who participated in the study, the distribution across key areas such as Education, Social Sciences, Languages, and STEM fields indicates that individuals from diverse professional and academic backgrounds are represented. This diversity enhances the value of this research by offering multiple perspectives on how funding and policy implementation are experienced across various knowledge areas or disciplines. Therefore, the sample can be regarded as broadly representative of the population of participants for this study.

Table 4. 3 Area of discipline

Area of Discipline	Frequency	Percent
Education	52	42.6
Social Science	30	24.6
Language	18	14.8
Science	8	6.6
Technology	7	5.7
Art	6	4.9
Others	1	0.8
Total	122	100.0

Table 4.3 shows the distribution of respondents by area of discipline in the two Colleges of Education. The table presents the areas of specialisation of staff who participated in the study, indicating that respondents were drawn

from different academic fields. This reflects a mix of disciplines that contribute to varied viewpoints within the research.

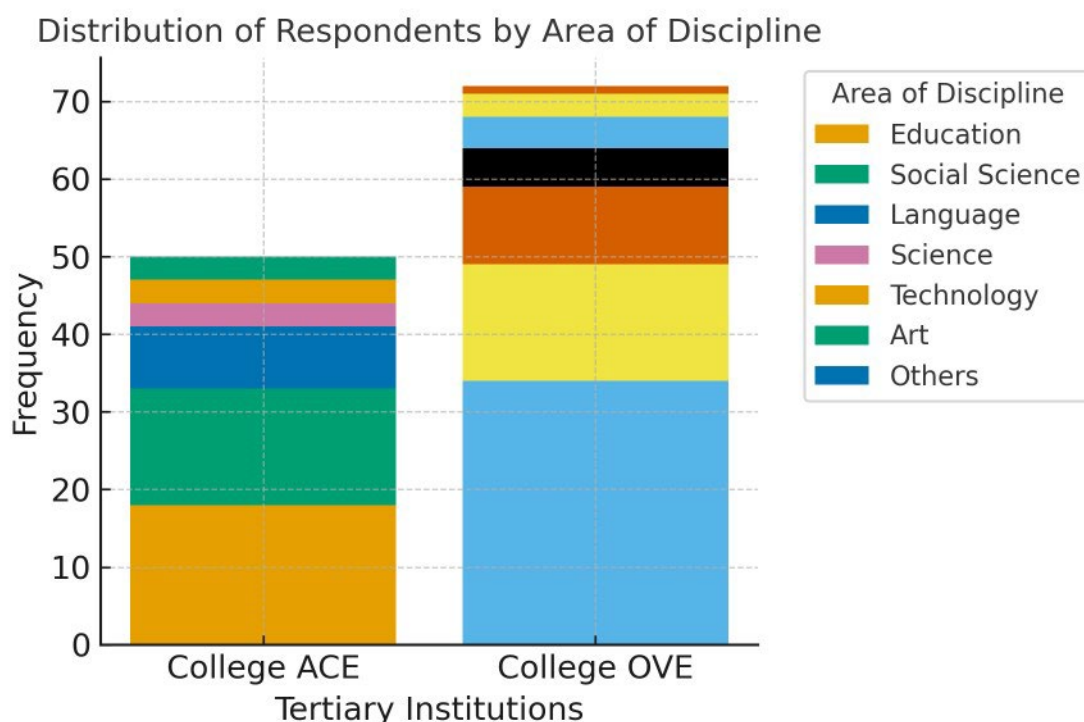


Fig 4.3. Distribution of respondents by area of discipline

Figure 4.3 illustrates the distribution of respondents across various disciplines within the two Colleges of Education. The chart indicates that staff from the Faculty of Education constituted the largest proportion of respondents in both colleges, followed by those from the Social Sciences and Languages. Disciplines such as Science, Technology, Art, and Others had smaller representations, reflecting the diverse academic backgrounds of respondents.

4.2.4 Rank of Respondents.

The analysis of data in Table 4.4 showed that one-third, 38 (31.1 percent), of the respondents were at the managerial level, while slightly more than two-thirds, 84 (68.9 percent), were at the senior level. This distribution highlights the composition of the study respondents, indicating that most were senior staff with substantial experience and knowledge of institutional procedures. Their background enhances the credibility and depth of their knowledge regarding topics such as funding, policy implementation, and quality. The smaller group of managerial

staff offers additional insights from those involved in administrative decisions, capturing both operational and managerial perspectives within the institutions.

Table 4.4: Rank of respondents

Rank	Frequency	Percentage
Managerial Staff	38	31.1
Senior Level Staff	84	68.9
Total	122	100.0

Table 4.4 displays the distribution of respondents by staff level in the two Colleges of Education. The table indicates that respondents included both senior and managerial staff, reflecting the presence of individuals with diverse roles and responsibilities within the institutions.

4.2.5 Educational Qualification of Respondents

The distribution of educational qualifications of the respondents is as shown in Table 4.5. The results indicated that less than one-third, 33(27.0 percent) of the respondents were first degree holders, while those who had earned their second degree (Masters) were about two-fifths, 50 (41.0 percent). The data also revealed that about one-third, 39 (32.0 percent) of the respondents had completed their doctorate degree. As illustrated (*figure 4.5*), the educational qualifications of the respondents according to their respective Institutions is as shown. It can be observed that 18 staff had either B.Sc./B. Ed in College ACE, as opposed to 15 in College OVE. On the master's degree, respondents with this educational qualification were higher in College OVE (29) than in College ACE (21). In terms of respondents with Ph.D. degree, College OVE (21) appears to be slightly higher in number compared to that of College ACE (17).

This distribution reflects the educational qualifications of the study respondents rather than the entire staff population. It indicates that the sample consisted of well-educated participants with

substantial academic training, demonstrating they possess the knowledge and analytical skills to provide credible opinions on the issues under investigation. The variety of qualifications also improves the quality of responses by incorporating insights from individuals with diverse academic backgrounds and varied levels of professional experience.

Table 4.5: Educational qualification

Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
B. ED/B.A.B.SC	33	27.0
M.Sc./M. ED/M. A	50	41.0
Ph.D.	39	32.0
Total	122	100.0

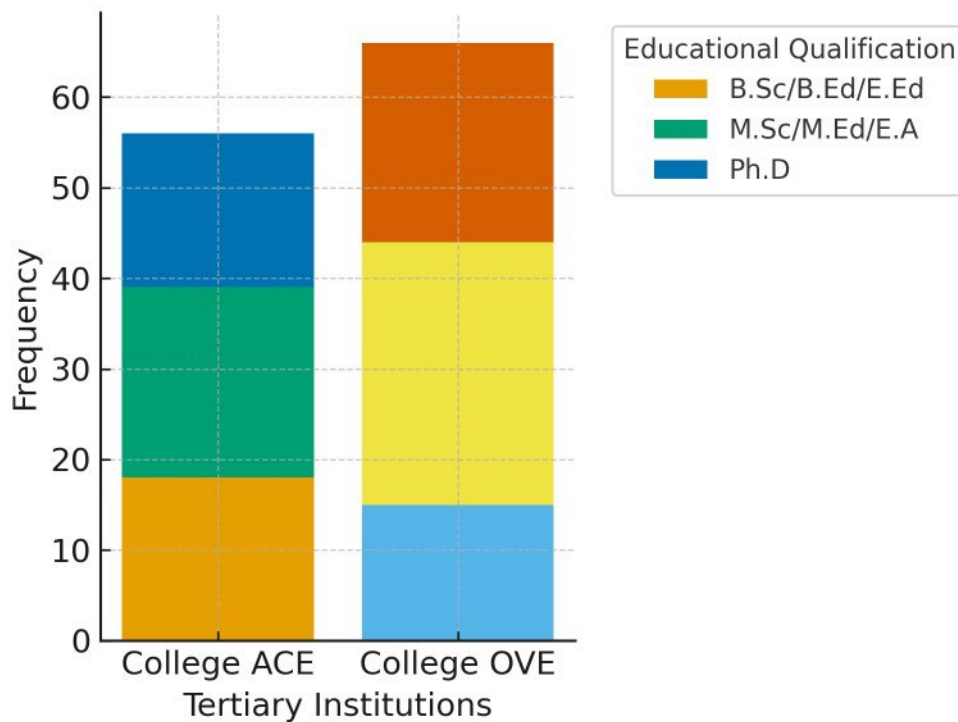


Fig 4.5. Distribution of respondents based on educational qualifications

4.2.6 Working experience of Respondents

The number of years respondents have been doing the job is as shown in Table 4.6. The results indicate that about one-half, 58 (47.5 percent) of the respondents have between 5- 8-years working experience. The results of the data also revealed that more than one-quarter, 35 (28.7 percent) of the respondents had between 9- 12 years working experience, and was one-fifth, 25(20.5 percent) of the respondents whose work experience falls between 13 and 15 years.

However, only 4 (3.3 percent) of the respondents were shown to have put in more than 15 years of working experience. The distribution of years of experience of staff in the two Institutions is as visually depicted (*Figure 4.6*). Staff members in College OVE appear to have more respondents in the 5-8 years and 9-12 years' experience categories. On the other hand, staff in College ACE appear to be higher in number of respondents in the 13-15 years of working experience category.

Moreover, the number of respondents in the two institutions with more than 15 years of experience is relatively small. Further analysis indicates that staff members in the two

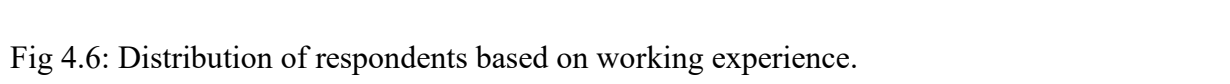


Table 4.6. Years of experience

Number of years	Frequency	Percentage
5-8 yrs	58	47.5
9-12 yrs	35	28.7
13-15 yrs	25	20.5
Above 15 yrs	4	3.3
Total	122	100.0

4.3. Research Questions

4.3.1. Research Question One

What are the perceptions of staff on the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria?

Table 4.2a. Perception of Staff on the Quality of Tertiary Education in Nigeria (N = 122)

S/N	Perception of Staff on the Quality of Tertiary Education	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	M	σ	DCS
1	The curriculum being implemented in my college can lead to the achievement of the Nigeria National Development goals	59 (48.4)	56 (45.9)	3 (2.5)	4 (3.3)	3.39	0.61	A

2	Most of the lecturers teaching in the College are qualified and competent	55 (45.1)	60 (49.2)	4 (3.3)	3 (2.5)	3.37	0.67	A
3	My college has quality classrooms, laboratory, and library facilities	35 (28.7)	48 (39.3)	29 (23.8)	10 (8.2)	2.89	0.92	D
4	The College makes provision for students' feedback on issues that affect them	37 (30.3)	62 (50.8)	16 (13.1)	7 (5.7)	3.06	0.82	D
5	Students in the college receive quality and standard instruction	33 (27.0)	73 (59.8)	12 (9.8)	4 (3.3)	3.11	0.7	A
6	Students' activities are democratized as students are allowed to lead themselves and participate in the decision-making process in the College	29 (23.8)	60 (49.2)	26 (21.3)	7 (5.7)	2.91	0.82	D
7	Reports from employers indicate that ex-students of the College perform well in their jobs	38 (31.1)	59 (48.4)	20 (16.4)	5 (4.1)	3.07	0.8	D
8	Reports from the Universities where the ex-students of the College have gone for their further studies (Master, PhD) indicate high academic performance.	39 (32.0)	62 (50.8)	20 (16.4)	1 (.8)	3.14	0.71	A

9	The global ranking of Nigeria's Tertiary Institutions by Webometrics and other reputable international organisations is a true reflection of the state of Nigeria's tertiary Institutions.	35 (28.7)	63 (51.6)	16 (13.1)	8 (6.6)	3.03	0.83	D
						3.11	0.77	

Key: SA = Strongly Agreed; A = Agreed; D = Disagreed; SD = Strongly Disagreed. M = Mean; σ = Standard Deviation; DCS = Decision; Weighted average = $27.97/9 = 3.11$.

The perceptions of staff on the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria were as presented (Table 4.2a). The descriptive analysis indicated that a substantial portion of the respondents either strongly agreed (48.4 %) or agreed (45.9%) with the statement that "the curriculum implemented in their college can contribute to the attainment of Nigeria's National Development goals." These statistical measures ($M = 3.39$, $SD = 0.61$) further substantiate this positive outlook, categorising the decision as agree (A). The results underscored a prevailing confidence in the effectiveness of the current curriculum in aligning with and advancing Nigeria's National Development goals. The results also revealed that "most of the lecturers teaching in the college are qualified and competent". The majority (94.3%) of respondents consented to this, and the statistical values ($M = 3.39$, $SD = 0.61$) supported this, culminating in an overall conclusion of agreement. Regarding the statement "my college has quality classrooms, laboratory, and library facilities," responses from respondents varied considerably. About one-third (32.0%) disagreed with this assessment, while slightly more than two-thirds (68.0%) agreed. On the contrary, a poor perception was indicated by the weighted average perception of 2.89. This suggested that the respondents' assessments of the college's facilities were generally less favourable. Responses to the assertion that "the college provided for students' feedback on issues that affected them" varied. A little more than three-quarters (81.1%) agreed with this evaluation, while approximately one-fifth (18.9%) had a differing opinion. The perception was considered moderately favourable, with statistical values of ($M = 3.39$, $SD = 0.61$). Although the average was close to the overall weighted average of 3.11, the perception was categorised as disagree.

A majority (59.8%) of respondents agreed that “students in the college receive quality and standard instruction”, contributing to a high perception. The respondents' perception, as indicated by the mean value ($M = 3.11$, $SD = 0.70$), was classified as agree, perfectly aligning with the weighted average of 3.11. The responses to the question about "students' activities being democratised as students are allowed to lead themselves and participate in the decision-making process in the sampled College" revealed a diversity of opinions. With a mean of $M = 2.91$ ($SD = 0.82$), which was lower than the weighted average of 3.11, the overall decision was categorised as disagree, suggesting a less positive perception among respondents. The mean ($M = 3.07$, $SD = 0.80$) perception of respondents on the item “reports from employers indicate that ex-students of the college perform well in their jobs” was much less than the weighted average. This perception was considered low, even though it is closely aligned with the weighted average of 3.11.

More than three-quarters (82.8%) of the respondents agreed that "reports from the universities where the ex-students of the sampled college of education for their further studies (Master's, PhD programmes) indicate high academic performance at those receiving institutions. This perception was supported by a mean of $M = 3.14$ ($SD = 0.71$), which was slightly above the weighted average, leading to the decision to classify it as high perception. However, the global rankings of Nigeria's tertiary Institutions by Webometrics and other international organisations are mixed opinions, with a weighted average of 3.03, indicating a less positive view of the global ranking accuracy.

Summary of Findings

To simplify interpretation, the response categories were combined into two broader groups: ‘Agree’ (including Strongly Agree and Agree) and ‘Disagree’ (covering Disagree and Strongly Disagree). The table below shows the overall response distribution across the nine items.

Table 4.2b: Summary of Decision Classification Across 9 Quality Perception Items

Decision	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agree	4	44.4
Disagree	5	55.6
Total	9	100

Table 4.2b: Merged Summary of Staff Perceptions on the Quality of Tertiary Education

An analysis of the decision classifications across the nine items showed a mixed patterns in perception among staff. Four items were rated as “Agree” based on the weighted average cutoff, while five were rated as “Disagree”. This indicates that sampled staff at the college generally viewed the relevance of the curriculum, lecturer competence, instructional quality, and students’ academic progress positively. However, concerns were raised regarding institutional facilities, participatory governance, employer feedback, and the overall evaluation of Nigeria’s tertiary institutions. The results reveal that staff perceptions of quality are varied, highlighting both strengths and areas needing improvement.

4.3.2 Research question Two

Perceptions of staff regarding the influence of administrative policy practices when implementing policies relating to quality of education within tertiary Institutions in Nigeria?

Table4.3a.

Staff Perceptions of Administrative Policy Practices in Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria.

S/N	Staff Perceptions of Administrative Policy Practices	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	M	σ	DCS
1	The College has a Governing Council that formulates policies for the good governance of the College	50 (41.0)	65 (53.3)	6 (4.9)	1 (.8)	3.34	0.61	A
2	The College implements the National Curriculum framework on quality Teacher Education as stipulated in the National Policy on Education	37 (30.3)	64 (52.5)	18 (14.8)	3 (2.5)	3.11	0.74	A
3	The College implements the student-centred teaching method as stipulated in the National Policy on Education	37 (30.3)	57 (46.7)	23 (18.9)	5 (4.1)	3.03	0.81	A
4	The College abides by its carrying capacity policy as stipulated by the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) by having a proportionate student-teacher ratio	37 (30.3)	55 (45.1)	22 (18.0)	8 (6.6)	2.99	0.87	D
5	The College has adequate procurement and maintenance policies as stipulated in the Procurement Act on the maintenance of facilities in the College	28 (23.0)	52 (42.6)	39 (32.0)	3 (2.5)	2.86	0.8	D
6	The College democratises students' Union activities and governance, allowing students to freely choose their leaders and provide feedback to the Management on issues that affect students.	33 (27.0)	59 (48.4)	23 (18.9)	7 (5.7)	2.97	0.83	D
7	The College's promotion and disciplinary procedures follow the National policy as enshrined in the Conditions of Service for Colleges of Education	34 (27.9)	65 (53.3)	21 (17.2)	2 (1.6)	3.07	0.72	A

8	Staff recruitment follows the National recruitment policies as stipulated in the Conditions of Service for Colleges of Education and Federal Character Commission.	33 (27.0)	59 (48.4)	24 (19.7)	6 (4.9)	2.98	0.82	D
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Key: SA = Strongly Agreed; A = Agreed; D = Disagreed; SD = Strongly Disagreed. M = Mean; σ = Standard Deviation; DCS = Decision; Weighted average = $39.2/13 = 3.02$.

The staff perceptions of administrative policy practices in tertiary Institutions in Nigeria are depicted in Table 4.3a. The results revealed that, except for 5.7% of respondents who disagreed with the statement asserting that "the College has a Governing Council that formulates policies for the good governance of the College," the vast majority, totalling over nine-tenths (94.3%) of respondents, expressed agreement with the assertion. This leads to a decision of agree (A), with a mean of ($M = 3.34$, $SD = 0.61$), well above the weighted average of 3.02. In a similar vein, the results showed a notably positive perception ($M = 3.11$, $SD = 0.74$) among respondents concerning the statement "the College implements the National Curriculum framework on quality Teacher Education as stipulated in the National Policy on Education." The widespread consensus of a substantial majority (82.8%) reinforced this high perception decision. In terms of teaching methodology, the results indicated agreement ($M = 3.03$, $SD = 0.81$), as a substantial proportion of respondents agreed with the statement that "the College implements the student-centred teaching method as stipulated in the National Policy on Education".

The results showed contrasting views on the student-teacher ratio policy, as 75.4% of respondents agreed while 24.6% disagreed. The decision reflects a somewhat negative perception ($M = 2.99$, $SD = 0.87$), suggesting room for improvement. Concerning procurement and maintenance policies, there is a generally unfavourable disagreement ($M = 2.86$, $SD = 0.80$). About two-thirds (65.6%) of respondents expressed agreement with the statement that "the College has adequate procurement and maintenance policies as stipulated in the Nigerian National Procurement Act on the maintenance of facilities in the College", while slightly above one-third (34.4%) differed.

The perception of staff on the item "the College democratises students' Union activities and governance that allows students to freely choose their leaders and give feedback to the Management on issues that affect the students" is mixed, with three-quarters (75.4%) agreeing and about one-quarter (24.6%) disagreeing, resulting in a low perception score ($M = 3.07$, SD

= 0.72). This shows room for improvement in this area of the institution. The statement that “the college's promotion and disciplinary procedures follow the National Policy on Education, 2014, as enshrined in the conditions of service for colleges of education” received a high level of perception, with more than three-quarters (81.2%) of respondents agreeing. Only about one-fifth (18.8%) of the respondents dissented. Staff recruitment policies, as stipulated in the conditions of service, are perceived with mixed views ($M = 2.98$, $SD = 0.82$). This indicates a need for clarity or improvement in the existing policies.

The results further reveal that, regarding democratisation and inclusiveness, respondents from the two sampled Colleges of Education reported high levels of perception ($M = 3.16$, $SD = 0.75$). A large majority of respondents (86.9%) agreed that their college encourages democratisation and inclusiveness through its committee system. Compliance with national admission policies was also viewed positively ($M = 3.08$, $SD = 0.82$), with 82.0% of respondents agreeing. Perceptions of financial policy practices were somewhat lower ($M = 2.93$, $SD = 0.78$). While 73.0% agreed with the statement, 27.0% disagreed, indicating some variation between the two Colleges. Respondents also indicated their level of agreement with the statement that “some policies being implemented in the College are retrogressive and not aligned with global best practices.” This item, which reflects perception of policy alignment with global standards, had an average response of 2.65 ($SD = 0.83$), with 59.8% agreeing and 40.1% disagreeing. Lastly, respondents moderately agreed ($M = 3.03$) that poor policy implementation in the College contributes to its low global ranking.

Table 4.3b provides a summary of the decision concerning staff perceptions of administrative policy procedures in tertiary education.

Table 4.3b: Summary of Decision Classification Across 13 Administrative Policy Practice Items

Decision	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agree	7	53.8
Disagree	6	46.2
Total	13	100

Table 4.3b summarises the decision classifications for the thirteen administrative policy practice items. Out of these, seven items (53.8%) were classified as Agree based on the weighted average cutoff of 3.02, while six items (46.2%) were categorised as Disagree. This distribution indicates that, among the sampled Colleges of Education, a little over 50% of the administrative policy practice items were viewed positively by respondents, whereas just under 50% were viewed less positively. Overall, the results show a mixed pattern of perceptions towards administrative policy practices within the sampled Colleges.

4.3.3. Research Question Three

Perceptions of staff on funding of education within tertiary Institutions in Nigeria

S/N	Perception of Funding of Tertiary Education	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	<i>M</i>	σ	DCS	
1	The College budget is made open, and stakeholders have the opportunity to contribute to its preparation	25 (20.5)	64 (52.5)	21 (17.2)	12 (9.8)	2.84	0.87	D	
2	The College is being run effectively because there are enough financial resources to run the College	24 (19.7)	54 (44.3)	34 (27.9)	10 (8.2)	2.75	0.87	D	
3	The major source of revenue for the College is mainly from the government's yearly allocation.	43 (35.2)	48 (39.3)	22 (18.0)	9 (7.4)	3.02	0.91	A	
4	The majority of facilities in the College in the last 10 years are financed by Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND)	34 (27.9)	65 (53.3)	17 (13.9)	6 (4.9)	3.04	0.79	A	

Table 4.4a: *Perception of Staff on Funding of Tertiary Education in Nigeria*

5	Lecturers in the College have access to research grants and staff development training financed by TETFund	37 (30.3)	68 (55.7)	14 (11.5)	3 (2.5)	3.14	0.71	A	
6	Facilities in the College are well maintained because there are enough resources	18 (14.8)	59 (48.4)	37 (30.3)	8 (6.6)	2.71	0.80	D	
7	The College generates funds through Internally Generated sources (tuition, donation and business activities) to fund its activities	34 (27.9)	57 (46.7)	29 (23.8)	2 (1.6)	3.01	0.77	A	
8	Nigeria's Government should grant Colleges the financial autonomy to generate funds and manage the fund how they deem fit	45 (36.9)	51 (41.8)	18 (14.8)	8 (6.6)	3.09	0.88	A	
9	Nigeria's Government has the financial power to solely finance education at the tertiary education level without allowing Colleges to charge tuition.	42 (34.4)	54 (44.3)	16 (13.1)	10 (8.2)	3.05	0.90	A	
10	Students should be made to pay tuition if they must receive quality tertiary education	33 (27.0)	55 (45.1)	21 (17.2)	13 (10.7)	2.89	0.93	D	
11	Inadequate funding is one of the factors that are responsible for the poor global ranking of Nigeria's tertiary Institutions.	51 (41.8)	46 (37.7)	17 (13.9)	8 (6.6)	3.15	0.90	A	

							2.97	0.85		
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Key: SA = Strongly Agreed; A = Agreed; D = Disagreed; SD = Strongly Disagreed. M = Mean; σ = Standard Deviation; DCS = Decision; Weighted average = $32.69/11 = 2.97$.

Table 4.4a reveals the way staff members at Nigerian tertiary Institutions perceived funding. The perception of the respondents regarding the statement “the College budget is made open, and stakeholders have the opportunity to contribute to its preparation” is low ($M = 2.84$, $SD = 0.87$), with about three-quarters (73.0%) agreeing and more than one-quarter (27.0 %) disagreeing. This indicates a need for improvement in transparency and stakeholder involvement. The perception regarding the statement “the College being run effectively because there are enough financial resources to run the College” was also relatively low ($M = 2.75$, $SD = 0.87$). Approximately two-thirds (64.0%) of respondents expressed agreement, while more than one-third (36.0%) disagreed.

However, in relation to “the major source of revenue for the College being mainly from the government’s yearly allocation”, the respondents’ perception was high ($M = 3.02$, $SD = 0.91$), with approximately three-quarters (74.5%) agreeing. This indicates a high level of confidence in the government's financial support for the college. The Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) played a significant role in funding college facilities, as more than three-quarters of the staff (81.2%) consented to the statement that “the majority of facilities in the College in the last 10 years are financed by Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND)”. This indicated its pivotal contribution to infrastructure development and the high confidence of staff in government funding support. The perception of “lecturers' access to research grants and staff development training funded by TETFUND” is positive ($M = 3.14$, $SD = 0.71$), with well over three-quarters (86%) agreeing. However, there is a low perception ($M = 2.71$, $SD = 0.80$) in “facilities in the College are well maintained because there are enough resources”. This suggests concerns about the adequacy of resources allocated for facility maintenance, which could be crucial for ensuring the longevity and functionality of the college's infrastructure.

The statement "the College generates funds through internally generated sources (tuition, donation, and business activities) to fund its activities" was highly perceived by the respondents ($M = 3.01$, $SD = 0.77$). The agreement of approximately three quarters (74.6%) of the respondents confirmed this opinion. This highlighted the significant role of internal funds in

the institution's sustainability. Furthermore, there was a high perception ($M = 3.09$, $SD = 0.88$) regarding the statement that "granting Colleges financial autonomy by Nigeria's Government to generate funds and manage them as deemed fit", with more than three-quarters (78.7%) confirming. The perception that "Nigeria's Government has the financial power to solely finance education at the tertiary education level without allowing Colleges to charge tuition" was high ($M = 3.05$, $SD = 0.90$).

The results also indicated a relatively low perception ($M = 2.89$, $SD = 0.93$) regarding the statement that "students should be made to pay tuition if they must receive quality tertiary education." Approximately 72.1% of the respondents supported these findings. Likewise, more than three-quarters (79.5%) of the respondents agreed with the statement asserting that "inadequate funding is one of the factors responsible for the poor global ranking of Nigeria's tertiary Institutions." This represented a high perception among the respondents ($M = 3.15$, $SD = 0.90$). This emphasises the importance of the potential impact of funding on global ranking and suggests that tuition payments by students could be required in order to ensure the acquisition of an outstanding tertiary education.

Staff perception of funding of tertiary Institutions in Nigeria stratified by gender is as presented (*Figure 5*). The results indicate that male respondents in College ACE (2.84) perceive it as lower than their female counterparts (3.02). Similarly, male respondents (2.99) in College OVE are lower than female respondents (3.04). On the other hand, female respondents in both Institutions reported higher mean perception scores. The observed difference in gender may be a result of the broad social and cultural factors that characterise gender roles and expectations in Nigerian society.

Table 4.4b provides an insightful overview of staff decisions regarding their perceptions of funding in tertiary education.

Table 4.4b: Summary of Decision Classification Across 11 Funding-Related Items

Decision	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agree	7	63.6
Disagree	4	36.4
Total	11	100

The summary report on decision classifications across the eleven funding-related items reveals a generally positive view of funding practices among staff. Seven items received an Agree classification based on the weighted average cutoff of 2.97, while four items were labelled Disagree. This pattern indicates that staff acknowledge the significance of government allocation, TETFund support, and financial autonomy, but express concerns about budget transparency, financial adequacy, facility maintenance, and tuition-related issues in the sampled Colleges of Education.

4.3.4. Research Question Four.

How do administrative policy practices influence staff perceptions of quality tertiary education in Nigeria?

Table 4 5a. Chi-Square Analysis Investigating the Association between Staff Perceptions of Administrative Policies and the Quality of Tertiary Education.

			Quality of Tertiary Education		Total
			A	D	
Perception of Administrative Policy Practices	A	Count	49	9	58
		Expected Count	43.3	14.7	58.0
		% within Perception of Administrative Policy Practices	84.5	15.5	100.0
	D	Count	42	22	64
		Expected Count	47.7	16.3	64.0

		% within Perception of Administrative Policy Practices	65.6	34.4	100.0
Total	Count		91	31	122
	Expected Count		91.0	31.0	122.0
	% within Perception of Administrative Policy Practices		74.6	25.4	100.0

Key: A = Agreed; D = Disagreed.

Table 4.6 presents the results of the cross-tabulation analysis of the association between staff perceptions of administrative policy practices and their perceptions of the quality of tertiary education within the sampled Colleges of Education. The table includes observed counts, expected counts, and row percentages for the two variables. The aim of this analysis was to investigate whether a pattern exists in how staff who perceive administrative policy practices positively or negatively also view the overall quality of tertiary education.

The distribution of responses indicates that among respondents who agreed with administrative policy practices (n = 58), a large majority also expressed agreement that the quality of tertiary education was good. Specifically, 49 respondents in this group agreed both with administrative policy practices and the quality of tertiary education. When calculated within this subgroup, this amounts to 84.5 percent (49 out of 58). This percentage is based on the row total for respondents who agreed with administrative policy practices and therefore reflects the proportion within that specific group, rather than the entire sample of 122 respondents.

Among respondents who disagreed with administrative policy practices ($n = 64$), perceptions of quality were quite varied. In this group, 42 believed the quality of tertiary education was good, while 22 disagreed. When looking at row percentages, 65.6% (42 out of 64) supported the quality, and 34.4% (22 out of 64) did not. This suggests that favourable views of educational quality are less common among those who have negative views of administrative policies.

A comparison of row percentages (84.5% versus 65.6%) clarifies these observed patterns. Staff with a positive view of administrative policies were more likely in their subgroup to also perceive tertiary education quality positively. In contrast, those who viewed administrative policies negatively showed a lower proportion of positive quality perceptions and a higher proportion of disagreement.

A Chi-square test of independence was conducted to determine whether the observed pattern reflects a genuine association rather than a random chance of occurrence. The results suggest a statistically significant association between staff perceptions of administrative policy practices and their perceptions of the quality of tertiary education, $\chi^2(1, N = 122) = 5.71, p < .05$. This indicates that the distribution of responses across categories is unlikely to be due to chance.

However, this association strength was modest, Cramer's V ($\phi = .216$) indicates a small association between the two variables. Suggestively, this means perceptions of administrative policy practices are connected to perceptions of educational quality, but the link is weak. Many other factors beyond administrative policies could probably influence perceptions of educational quality.

Overall, the findings indicate a measurable association between staff perceptions of administrative policy practices and their perceptions of the quality of tertiary education at the sampled colleges of education. Nevertheless, the modest or little strength of the association suggests that administrative policy practices are just one of several factors that may influence staff's view of quality tertiary education.

4.3.5. Research Question Five

How does funding influence staff perceptions of quality tertiary education in Nigeria?

Table 4.6a. Chi-Square Analysis of the Association between Staff Perceptions of Funding and the Quality of Tertiary Education.

			Quality of Tertiary Education		Total
			A	D	
Perception of Funding	Agree	Count	65	11	76
		Expected Count	58.6	17.4	76.0
		% within Perception of Funding	85.5%	14.5%	100.0%
	Disagree	Count	29	17	46
		Expected Count	35.4	10.6	46.0
		% within Perception of Funding	63.0%	37.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	94	28	122

	Expected Count	94.0	28.0	122.0
	% within Perception of Funding	77.0%	23.0%	100.0%

Key: A = Agreed; D = Disagreed.

Table 4.7 presents the results of a cross-tabulation examining the links between staff perceptions of funding and their views on the quality of tertiary education at the sampled Colleges of Education in Nigeria. The table displays observed counts, expected counts, and row percentages for the two categorical variables. This analysis seeks to identify whether a pattern exists in how staff who perceive funding as positive or negative also perceive the quality of tertiary education.

The response distribution indicates that among respondents who agreed with the funding situation ($n = 76$), a significant majority also believed that the quality of tertiary education was positive. Specifically, 65 respondents in this group agreed with both funding and quality. When analysed within this subgroup, this amounts to 85.5 percent (65 out of 76). This percentage is derived from the row total of respondents who agreed with funding and reflects the proportion within that specific group rather than the entire sample.

Among respondents who disagreed with the funding situation ($n = 46$), perceptions of quality varied more widely. In this group, 29 respondents agreed that the quality of tertiary education was good, while 17 disagreed. As a percentage, 63.0 percent (29 out of 46) viewed the quality positively, whereas 37.0 percent (17 out of 46) did not. This suggests that favourable perceptions of quality are less common among those with negative views on funding.

A comparison of the row percentages (85.5 percent versus 63.0 percent) provides a clearer understanding of the observed pattern. Staff who believed that funding was adequate were more likely, within their subgroup, to also report positive perceptions of tertiary education quality. Conversely, those who disagreed with the funding situation had a lower proportion of positive perceptions of educational quality and higher levels of dissatisfaction.

The Chi-square test of independence was performed to determine whether this pattern indicates a meaningful relationship between the two variables. The results revealed a statistically significant association between perceptions of funding and perceptions of the quality of tertiary education, $\chi^2(1, N = 122) = 8.92, p < .05$. This suggests that the distribution of responses across categories is unlikely to be due to chance.

To further assess this relationship, Cramer's V was calculated. The resulting value ($\phi = .259$) shows a small but noticeable association between perceptions of funding and quality. This suggests that while staff views on funding are connected to their perceptions of tertiary education, the relationship is not strong, and other factors likely influence these assessments. Overall, the results indicate an association between perceptions of funding and perceptions of quality in the sampled institutions. Nonetheless, the moderate strength of this association suggests that funding is just one of many factors that could influence staff perception of educational quality.

4.3.6. Research Question Six

What is the combined influence of administrative policy implementation and funding on staff perception of the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria?

Table 4.7. Analysis of the combined effect of administrative policy and funding on quality of tertiary education

Perception of Administrative Policy Practices and Funding	Tertiary Quality of Education		
	A	D	Total

Agree	Funding	Disagree	Count	32	18	50
			Expected Count	36.0	14.0	50.0

		Agree	% within Funding	64.0	36.0	100.0
			Count	22	3	25
			Expected Count	18.0	7.0	25.0
			% within Funding	88.0	12.0	100.0
	Funding	Disagree	Count	13	22	35
			Expected Count	16.4	18.6	35.0
			% within Funding	37.1	62.9	100.0

Disagree		Agree	Count	9	3	12
			Expected Count	5.6	6.4	12.0
			% within Funding	75.0	25.0	100.0
	Total		Count	76	46	122
			Expected Count	76.0	46.0	122.0
			% within Funding	62.3	37.7	100.0

Key: A = Agreed; D = Disagreed.

The results of a chi-square analysis conducted to investigate the association between the combined effects of administrative policy practices and funding on the quality of tertiary education are as presented (Table 4.7). Within the category of respondents who disagreed with administrative policy practices and funding, 13 respondents were observed to express agreement, while 22 disagreed with the quality of tertiary education. In the group of

administrative policy (disagree) and funding (agree), 9 respondents agreed while only 3 disagreed. The observed percentages showed that when respondents disagreed to the implementation of administrative policy practices, there was a higher percentage of disagreement with the quality of tertiary education, especially when the level of funding is disagreed (62.9%). Conversely, under the administrative policy practices (agreed) and funding (agreed) scenario, there was a higher percentage of agreement with the quality of tertiary education (88.0%).

To identify patterns and relationships within the data, the expected counts were compared with the observed. Inside the administrative policy practices (disagreed) and funding (disagreed) group, the results revealed less agreement and more disagreement with the quality of tertiary education, with the expected counts being 16.4 and 18.6, respectively. There was more agreement in this category when respondents agreed on the level of funding. A similar trend was observed in the administrative policy practices (agreed) scenario.

The results of the chi-square analysis showed a significant association between the funding and administrative policy practices' combined effects on quality of tertiary education ($\chi^2 (1, N = 122) = 10.44, p < .05$). In practical terms, this means that the observed association is very unlikely to be the result of chance, hence supporting the notion that there was a real and meaningful association between these variables. The Cramer's V value ($\phi_c = .331$) suggests a moderate level of association between administrative policy practices and funding (combined) and the quality of tertiary association.

4.4 Students' Perception of Quality Tertiary Education in Nigeria

Demographic Characteristics of Staff in Tertiary Institutions

4.4.1. Students' Gender

Table 4.4 shows that the number of male respondents was 76 and the number of female respondents was 110, representing 40.9 percent and 59.1 percent, respectively. The result indicates that the majority of the respondents who participated in the study were female. The distribution of male and female students in the two tertiary Institutions is as shown (*Figure 4.4*). The results indicate that College ACE had 40 male students and 36 female students. In

College OVE, there were 44 male students and 66 female students. This suggests that females scored higher in both tertiary Institutions, especially in the College OVE.

The gender distribution matters because it ensures that the study reflects the perspectives of both male and female respondents, showcasing the diversity of opinions within the student population. Including both genders provides a more balanced understanding of how students perceive issues related to funding, policy implementation, and quality within their institutions. Table 4.4. Students' Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	76	40.9
Female	110	59.1
Total	186	100.0

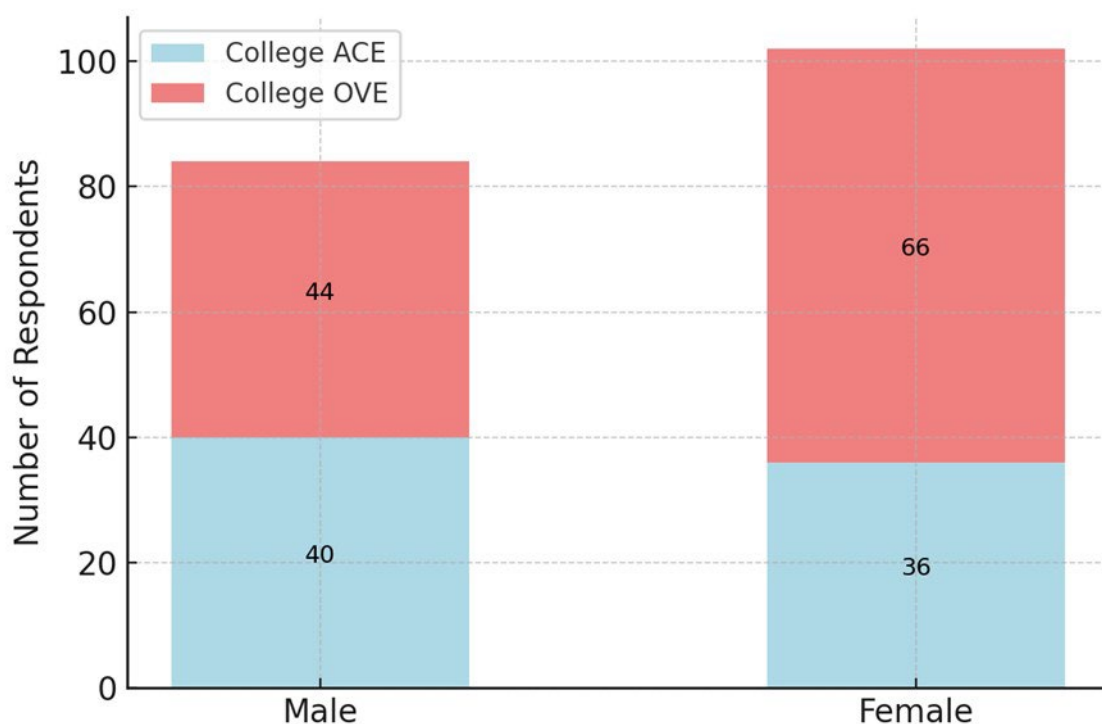


Fig 4.4. Bar chart showing the distribution of respondents' gender by institution.

4.5 Ages' of Respondents

The demographic information on the age distribution of respondents is as presented (Table 4.5.2). The results reveal that the age categories of 18-22 years and 23-27 years each had 170 respondents, representing 91.4 percent of the total number of 186. Moreover, respondents in the age categories of 28-32 years and 33-40 years were less than one-tenth, 16 (8.6 percent) of the total number of respondents. This implies that the participants in the study were mostly young adults, specifically respondents in the early stages of their adulthood. This age distribution is significant to the findings because it reflects the perspectives of students who are likely to be in the active phase of their academic journey and directly affected by institutional policies, funding conditions, and quality of teaching and learning. Their responses, therefore, provide a current and experience-based understanding of the issues examined in this study.

Table 4.5 Age

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
18-22 yrs	58	31.2
23-27 yrs	112	60.2
28-32 yrs	14	7.5
33-40 yrs	2	1.1
Total	186	100.0

Key: M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation

Mean (M) = 23.6

Standard Deviation (SD) = 3.3

4.6. Faculty of Respondents.

The results (Table 4.6.3) indicate that the Education faculty has the largest number of students, with a total of 124, representing 66.7 percent of the students who participated in the study. This was distantly followed by faculty of Languages, 22 (11.8 percent) and Science, 20(10.8 percent) of the total number of respondents. Also observed were those 10 (5.4 percent) students, each from the faculties of Vocational and Technical Education and Arts and Social Science, who participated in the study. The results of the number of students from each faculty across the two Institutions are as depicted (*Figure 7*). Results reveal that the faculty of Education was highest in both Institutions, with 47(25.3 percent)and 77(41.3 percent) students in College ACE, and College OVE, respectively. In contrast, faculties of Science, Vocational and Technical Education, Languages, as well as Arts and Social Science had the following in College ACE, 16(8.6 percent), 4(2.2 percent), 13(6.9 percent), 4(2.2 percent) and 4(2.2 percent), 6(3.2 percent), 9(4.8 percent) and 6(3.2 percent) of respondents respectively. The results suggest that the Education faculty is the most popular across both Institutions, with College OVE having a higher number of respondents than College ACE.

The distribution of faculty members is important because it reflects the diverse disciplinary backgrounds that shape students' perceptions of quality and institutional performance. Including students from different faculties provides a broader understanding of how funding, policy implementation, and academic conditions are perceived and experienced across various fields of study.

Table 4.6 1 Student's faculty

Faculty	Frequency	Percent
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Education	124	66.7
Science	20	10.8
Voc & Tech	10	5.4
Languages	22	11.8
Arts & Social Sciences	10	5.4
Total	186	100.0

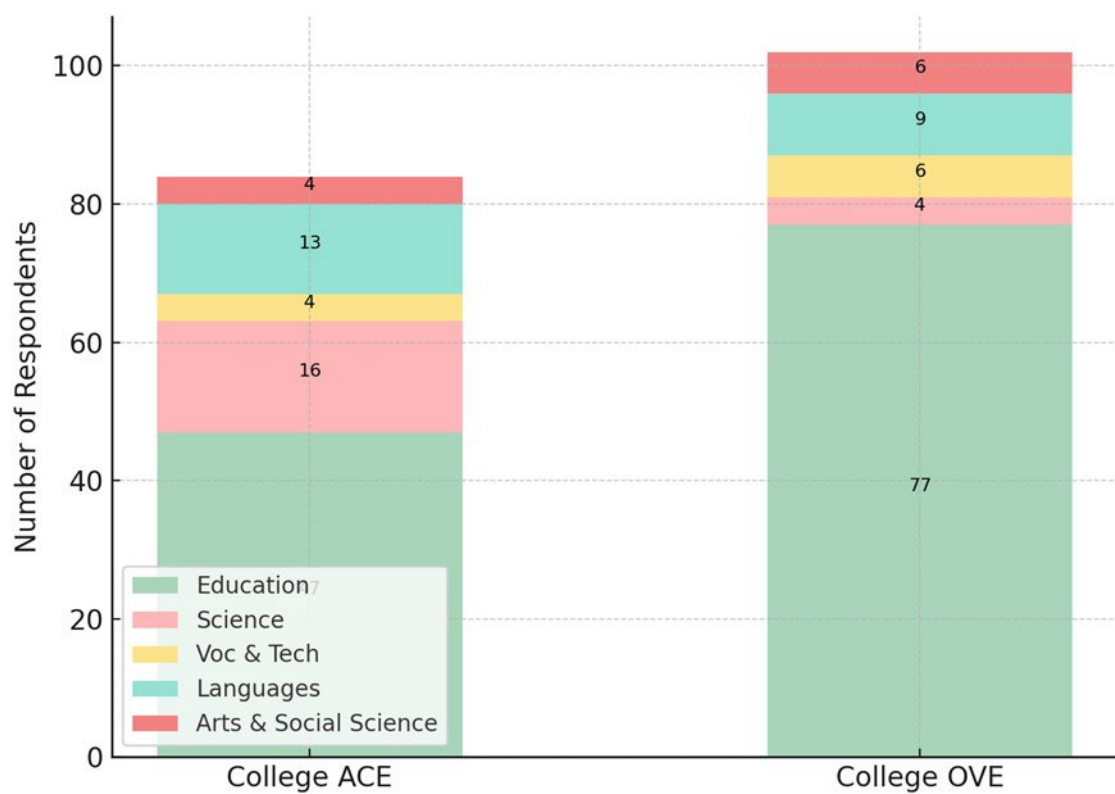


Figure 4.7.4: Bar chart showing the distribution of respondents' faculty by tertiary institution

4.7. Levels of Respondents.

The analysis on students' years or level of education in the two Institutions is as displayed (Table 4.7.4). The results indicate that more than two-thirds of the students that participated in the study were in their third year or level, 123(66.1 percent), while about one-third, 63(33.9 percent) of the students was in their final year. Respondents' distribution according to level of tertiary education by institution is as displayed (*figure 4.8*). Among College ACE students, 56and 28were in their 300- and 400 levels respectively. In contrast, 67 and 35 students in College OVE were in their 300- and 400 levels respectively.

This distribution is relevant to this study because students at various stages of their studies may encounter institutional policies, funding support, and academic conditions differently. Including both third year and final-year students, enabled to gain a more comprehensive understanding of students' perceptions, incorporating insights from those still progressing as well as those nearing completion.

Table 4.7.4. Levels of respondents

Level	Frequency	Percentage
300 level (3 rd year)	123	66.1
400 level (4 th year)	63	33.9
Total	186	100.0

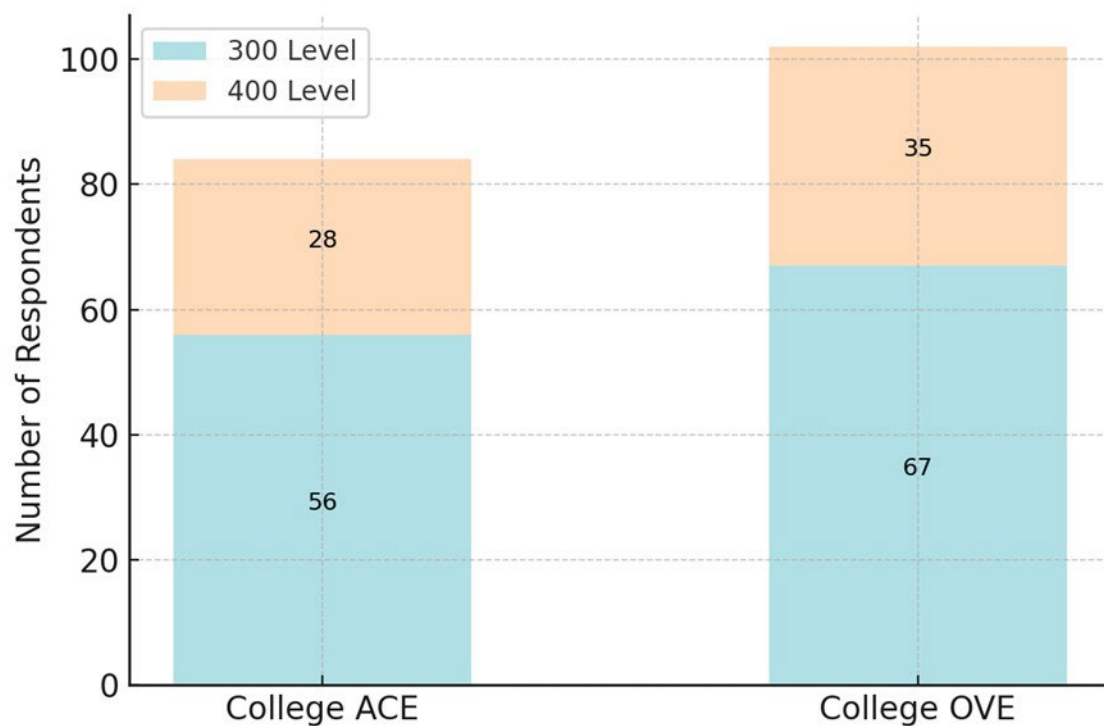


Figure 4.8: Bar chart showing the distribution of respondent's level by tertiary institution

4.3.2. Research Questions

4.3.2.1. Research Question One

What are the perceptions of students' on the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria?

Table 4.9a. Students' Perception of the Quality of Tertiary Education in Nigeria

S/N		SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	<i>M</i>	σ
1	The curriculum implemented in my college can lead to the achievement of the Nigeria National Development goals.	88 (47.3)	86 (46.2)	8 (4.3)	4 (2.2)	3.39	0.67

2	Most of the lecturers teaching me in the College are qualified and competent	72 (38.7)	86 (46.2)	25 (13.4)	3 (1.6)	3.22	0.74	
3	My college has adequate classrooms, laboratory, and library facilities	36 (19.4)	69 (37.1)	59 (31.7)	22 (11.8)	2.64	0.93	
4	The College makes provision for students' feedback on issues that affect them	37 (19.9)	68 (36.6)	58 (31.2)	23 (12.4)	2.64	0.94	
5	Students in the college receive quality and standard instruction	37 (19.9)	108 (58.1)	30 (16.1)	11 (5.9)	2.92	0.77	
6	Students' activities are democratized as students are allowed to lead themselves and	44 (23.7)	72 (38.7)	50 (26.9)	20 (10.8)	2.75	0.94	
	participate in the decision-making process in the College							
7	I am happy to see that a report from companies shows that former students of the College do a good job in their careers.	45 (24.2)	102 (54.8)	29 (15.6)	10 (5.4)	2.98	0.79	A

8	Reports from the Universities where the ex-students of the College have gone for their further studies (Master, PhD) indicate the high academic performance.	71 (38.2)	92 (49.5)	19 (10.2)	4 (2.2)	3.24	0.72	A
9	There are foreign students in the College because of the quality of instruction and facilities	28 (15.1)	54 (29.0)	53 (28.5)	51 (27.4)	2.32	1.04	D
10	The quality of instruction and facilities in the College attracts me to choose the College for my tertiary education	38 (20.4)	80 (43.0)	42 (22.6)	26 (14.0)	2.70	0.95	D
11	The quality of lecturers in the College leads to quality instruction in the classroom	50 (26.9)	92 (49.5)	33 (17.7)	11 (5.9)	2.97	0.83	A
12	The present global ranking of Nigeria's Tertiary Institutions by Webometrics and other reputable international organizations is a true	44 (23.7)	83 (44.6)	48 (25.8)	11 (5.9)	2.86	0.85	D
	reflection of the state of Nigeria's tertiary Institutions							
						2.89	0.85	

Key: SA = Strongly Agreed; A = Agreed; D = Disagreed; SD = Strongly Disagreed. M = Mean; σ = Standard Deviation; DCS = Decision; Weighted average = $34.62/12 = 2.89$.

Table 4.9a displays the students' perceptions of the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria. The results from the descriptive analysis indicate that a considerable percentage of the respondents (93.5%) endorsed the statement that the curriculum implemented in their college can contribute to the attainment of Nigeria's National Development goals. (Q1). This was attested to by the high weighted average of respondents' perceptions ($M = 3.39$, $SD = 0.67$). In addition, results for the statement "Most of the lecturers teaching in the college are qualified and competent" showed a high level of agreement ($M = 3.22$, $SD = 0.74$). (Q2) This was affirmed by the majority of respondents (84.9%). On the contrary, results on respondents' perceptions on "my college has adequate classrooms, laboratory, and library facilities"(Q3) showed that over half (56.5%) expressed disagreements, while more than two-fifths (43.5%) concurred. The perception was considered low ($M = 2.64$, $SD = 0.93$). This indicates room for improvement in addressing concerns about educational resource sufficiency. The data on "the College makes provision for students' feedback on issues that affect them" (Q4) showed a mixed perception: over half (56.5%) of respondents agreed, while over two-fifths (43.6%) disagreed. The perception was labelled as in disagreement ($M = 2.64$, $SD = 0.94$).

The data on students in the college receiving quality and standard instruction (Q5) show a positive outlook, with more than three-quarters (78.0%) of respondents strongly agreeing or agreeing. This is affirmed by an agreement (A) decision ($M = 2.92$, $SD = 0.77$). However, the perception that "students' activities being democratised, allowing students to lead themselves and participate in the decision-making process in the College" (Q6) was low ($M = 2.75$, $SD = 0.94$). This was reflected in the results, with approximately 62.4% in agreement and more than one-third (37.6%) holding a contrary viewpoint.

In relation to the statement, "I am happy to see that a report from companies shows that former students of the College do a good job in their careers", the perception was notably positive ($M = 2.98$, $SD = 0.79$), with a majority (79.0%) expressing agreement. The results further indicated high perception ($M = 3.24$, $SD = 0.72$) of respondents with respect to the statement "reports from the Universities where the ex-students of the College have gone for their further studies (Master, PhD) indicate high academic performance". A substantial percentage of the respondents (87.7%) agreed with this statement. The analysis concerning the statement "there are foreign students in the College because of the quality of instruction and facilities," depicted low perception ($M = 2.32$, $SD = 1.04$). This was supported with 55.9% disagreement and 44.1%

agreement. Furthermore, on “the quality of instruction and facilities in the College attracts me to choose the College for my tertiary education,” the perception was deemed low ($M = 2.70$, $SD = 0.95$). This suggests that a considerable portion of the respondents (36. 6%) disagreed with the notion.

However, on “the quality of lecturers in the College leads to quality instruction in the classroom“, more than three-quarters (76.4%) of respondents consented while 23.6% disagreed. Furthermore, more than two-thirds (69.4%) expressed agreement, with a low perception ($M = 2.86$, $SD = 0.85$) regarding the statement "the present global ranking of Nigeria’s Tertiary Institutions by Webometrics and other reputable international organizations is a true reflection of the state of Nigeria’s tertiary Institutions". This implies that the respondents lack confidence in the worldwide ranking system's accuracy and dependability when assessing the quality of Nigeria's tertiary education.

The summary of the decision regarding the perception of students on quality of tertiary education is presented in Table 4.9b.

Table 4.9b: Summary of Decision on Perception of Students on Quality of Tertiary Education (RQ1)

Decision	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agree	6	50%
Disagree	6	50%
Total	12	100%

To simplify interpretation, the response categories were grouped into two broad categories: Agree (including Strongly Agree and Agree) and Disagree (including Disagree and Strongly Disagree). An analysis of the decision classifications revealed a balanced distribution pattern across the twelve quality perceptions. Six dimensions were categorised as ‘Agree’ based on the

weighted average, while six were categorised as ‘Disagree’. This suggests that sampled students had positive perceptions regarding curriculum relevance, lecturer competence, instructional quality, and graduate performance. However, less favourable patterns emerged concerning infrastructure adequacy, students’ participation in governance, institutional visibility, and global ranking. Overall, the findings indicate a mixed but organised pattern of perceptions across the different quality dimensions.

4.3.2.2. Research Question Two

What are the perceptions of students on the influence of administrative policy practices when implementing policies relating to the quality of education within tertiary Institutions in Nigeria?

Table 4.10. Students' Perception of the Administrative Policy Practices in Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria.

S/N		SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	M	σ	DCS
1	The College's teaching curriculum is aligned with the National Curriculum Framework for Quality Teacher Education as stated in the National Policy on Education	56 (30.1)	108 (58.1)	19 (10.2)	3 (1.6)	3.17	0.67	A
2	Lecturers use the student-centred teaching method as stipulated in the National Policy of Education	35 (18.8)	100 (53.8)	45 (24.2)	6 (3.2)	2.88	0.74	D

3	The student-teacher ratio is suitable and promotes effective instruction in the classroom	30 (16.1)	107 (57.5)	43 (23.1)	6 (3.2)	2.87	0.71	D
4	The facilities in the College are well maintained	31 (16.7)	62 (33.3)	59 (31.7)	34 (18.3)	2.48	0.98	D
5	The College democratizes students' Union activities and governance allowing students to freely choose their leaders and give feedback to the	43 (23.1)	76 (40.9)	41 (22.0)	26 (14.0)	2.73	0.97	D
	Management on issues that affect the students.							
6	The College's students' disciplinary procedures follow due process with students' representatives in the panel	48 (25.8)	97 (52.2)	34 (18.3)	7 (3.8)	3.00	0.77	A
7	The admission of students follows merit and other conditions stipulated by the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB)	80 (43.0)	76 (40.9)	25 (13.4)	5 (2.7)	3.24	0.79	A

8	I am aware that some good policies will impact positively on the students that the College refuses to implement	53 (28.5)	93 (50.0)	33 (17.7)	7 (3.8)	3.03	0.78	A
9	Poor Policy implementation is one of the factors that are responsible for the poor global ranking of Nigeria's tertiary Institutions.	71 (38.2)	81 (43.5)	25 (13.4)	9 (4.8)	3.15	0.83	A
						2.95	0.80	

Key: SA = Strongly Agreed; A = Agreed; D = Disagreed; SD = Strongly Disagreed. M = Mean; σ = Standard Deviation; DCS = Decision; Weighted average = $26.56/9 = 2.95$.

The results of students' perceptions of administrative policy practices in tertiary institutions are presented in Table 4.10. The findings generally indicate positive perceptions regarding several administrative policy practices, particularly concerning curriculum alignment, disciplinary procedures, admission processes, and perceived connections between policy implementation and institutional ranking. The results indicated a high level of perception ($M = 3.17$, $SD = 0.67$) concerning the alignment of the College's teaching curriculum with the National Curriculum Framework for Quality Teacher Education, as outlined in the National Policy on Education. This was supported by more than three-quarters (82.2%) of respondents who agreed with the statement.

Similarly, a majority (78.0%) of respondents agreed that the College's disciplinary procedures follow due process, with student representation on panels ($M = 3.00$, $SD = 0.77$), indicating a positive view of procedural fairness in disciplinary matters. The admission process was also perceived positively ($M = 3.24$, $SD = 0.79$), with 83.9% of respondents agreeing that admission is based on merit and other conditions stipulated by the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board. This suggests that students perceive admission practices as aligned with established regulatory standards. Also, 78.5% of students agreed that there are policies that could positively

impact students but are not yet being implemented ($M = 3.03$, $SD = 0.78$). This suggests that students perceive some potentially helpful policies as still unimplemented within the College.

In addition, 81.7% of respondents agreed that poor policy implementation contributes to Nigeria's low ranking among global tertiary institutions ($M = 3.15$, $SD = 0.83$). This suggests a widespread belief among students that how policies are executed directly impacts institutional performance and international standing. However, the results showed that students' perceptions of several college-related factors consistently indicated low levels. First, there was a low perception in terms of "lecturers use the student-centred teaching method as stipulated in the National Policy of Education" ($M = 2.88$, $SD = 0.74$), with nearly three-quarters (72.6%) agreement and just above one-quarter (27.0%) disagreement. This suggests that there are differences in the students' perceptions of the statement. In a similar vein, only a small percentage of respondents ($M = 2.87$, $SD = 0.71$) concur that the student-teacher ratio is suitable, with 73.6 % of them in agreement. This highlights the discontent among students and suggests a potential area for development to improve education that is more effective.

Furthermore, the low perception extends to facility maintenance ($M = 2.48$, $SD = 0.98$), with 50% of respondents agreeing and 50% opposing. These express discontent with the condition of facility maintenance and highlight the need for change. Finally, the low perception ($M = 2.73$, $SD = 0.97$) of the democratisation of students' union activities is shown in more than one-third (36.0%) disagreeing and two-thirds (64.0%) supporting. This suggests there is room for development to support more student's participation and representation in decision-making procedures.

Table 4.10b shows a summary of the decision about students' perceptions of administrative policy practices in tertiary education.

Table 4.10b: Summary of Students' Perceptions on Administrative Policy Practices in Tertiary Education.

Decision	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agree	5	55.6

Disagree	4	44.4
Total	9	100

In Table 4.10b, for simple interpretation, the response categories were merged into two broader groups: Agree (including Strongly Agree and Agree) and Disagree (including Disagree and Strongly Disagree). An analysis of decision classifications across the nine perception items on policy implementation showed that five items (55.6%) were classified as Agree and four (44.4%) as Disagree. This pattern indicates a mixed but moderately positive perception of the influence of administrative policy practices on the quality of education at the sampled colleges. While students expressed positive views on curriculum alignment, disciplinary procedures, merit-based admissions, and some policy effects, less favourable patterns appeared regarding student-centred teaching practices, student-teacher ratios, facility maintenance, and certain aspects of student governance.

4.3.2.3. Research Question Three

S/N	Perceptions of Students on Funding	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	<i>M</i>	σ	DCS	
1	The College budget is made open, and students have the opportunity to contribute to its preparation	41 (22.0)	53 (28.5)	47 (25.3)	45 (24.2)	2.48	0.87	D	
2	The majority of facilities in the College in the last 10 years are built by the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND)	63 (33.9)	94 (50.5)	21 (11.3)	8 (4.3)	3.14	0.78	A	
3	The facilities in the college are well-maintained	19 (10.2)	88 (47.3)	56 (30.1)	23 (12.4)	2.45	0.84	D	
4	If properly managed, student fees are sufficient to keep the College's facilities in good condition and to run it efficiently.	72 (38.7)	68 (36.6)	36 (19.4)	10 (5.4)	3.09	0.89	A	

5	Government should solely finance education without students paying tuition	93 (50.0)	63 (33.9)	22 (11.8)	8 (4.3)	3.30	0.84	A	
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What are the perceptions of students on funding of education within tertiary Institutions in Nigeria?

Table 4.11a. Perceptions of Students on Funding of Tertiary Education in Nigeria.

6	Students should be made to pay tuition if they must receive quality tertiary education	32 (17.2)	73 (39.2)	51 (27.4)	30 (16.1)	2.58	0.96	D	
7	Inadequate funding is one of the factors that are responsible for the poor global ranking of Nigeria's tertiary Institutions	86 (46.2)	66 (35.5)	23 (12.4)	11 (5.9)	3.22	0.88	A	
						2.91	0.90		

Key: SA = Strongly Agreed; A = Agreed; D = Disagreed; SD = Strongly Disagreed. M = Mean; σ = Standard Deviation; DCS = Decision; Weighted average = $20.26/7 = 2.89$.

The students' perceptions of tertiary education funding in Nigeria are presented in Table 4.11a. The analysis of students' opinions on various funding aspects, such as sources of infrastructure funding, facility maintenance, the sufficiency of tuition fees, government financing and support, and the impact of funding on global rankings, revealed a variety of patterns that were diverse and insightful.

A large number of respondents, 157 (84.4%) believe that over the past decade, most facilities at the College were constructed by the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund), as indicated by a high mean score ($M = 3.14$, $SD = 0.78$). This shows that students strongly perceive TETFund as a key contributor to infrastructure development at their institution. Although this perception matches the broader national funding framework, it primarily reflects students' awareness rather than confirmed knowledge of actual funding sources.

Students also agreed that, when properly managed, student fees can be enough to maintain facilities and operate the College effectively, with 140 respondents (75.3%) supporting this view. ($SA = 72$; $A = 68$), with a mean score of $M = 3.09$ and $SD = 0.89$. This finding reflects students' perceptions of the potential adequacy of internally generated revenue under effective management conditions. However, this perception does not necessarily indicate detailed

knowledge of the actual financial requirements of institutional operations but rather suggests a belief that improved financial management could enhance institutional performance.

An additional high perception was observed regarding the government's role in funding education. Over 83.9% of respondents ($M = 3.30$, $SD = 0.84$) agreed that "the government should exclusively finance education, with no tuition fees from students." This reflects a complex view among students. They believe that student fees can be adequate if managed properly, yet they still prefer a tuition-free system funded entirely by the government. This inconsistency might arise from broader views on the government's social responsibility, concerns about rising household costs, or the belief that government funding ensures more stable and equitable access to education across socio-economic backgrounds. Although further analysed in the next chapter, these results suggest that recognising fee adequacy does not necessarily mean supporting fee-based funding models.

Additionally, 156 respondents (83.9%) agreed ($SA = 93$; $A = 63$) that the government should solely finance education, with no tuition fees from students ($M = 3.30$, $SD = 0.84$). This reflects a complex view among students. They believe that student fees could be sufficient if managed properly, yet they still prefer a tuition-free system funded entirely by the government. This apparent contradiction may arise from broader views on the government's social responsibilities, concerns about rising household expenses, or the belief that government funding offers more stable and equitable access to education across socio-economic groups. It may also reflect a strong normative preference for government responsibility in funding tertiary education. This pattern further suggests that students may differentiate between perceived financial feasibility and preferred funding responsibilities, potentially mirroring wider social expectations about the government's role in ensuring accessible education. Although discussed further in the next chapter, these findings imply that recognising fee adequacy does not necessarily mean supporting fee-based funding models.

Additionally, 152 of the sampled student respondents (81.7%) ($SA = 86$; $A = 66$) agreed that inadequate funding contributes to Nigeria's low global ranking of tertiary institutions ($M = 3.22$, $SD = 0.88$). This suggests a common opinion that adequate financial resources are linked to an institution's competitiveness and international reputation.

Despite generally positive perceptions in some areas, lower mean scores indicate concerns about the sampled college's institutional practices. A total of 94 respondents (50.5%) agreed (SA = 41; A = 53), while 92 respondents (49.5%) disagreed (D = 47; SD = 45), with a mean score of $M = 2.48$ ($SD = 0.87$). Responses to the item on budget transparency were nearly evenly divided. This near balance suggests uncertainty or varied awareness among students regarding budget openness and participatory processes.

Although 57.5% of respondents (SA = 19; A = 88) agreed that the College's facilities are well maintained, 42.5% (D = 56; SD = 23) disagreed, indicating dissatisfaction with the infrastructure conditions. Despite the majority agreement, the mean score ($M = 2.45$, $SD = 0.84$) was below the weighted average threshold used for decision classification, leading to a 'Disagree' classification. The disconnect between perceived fee sufficiency and reported dissatisfaction with maintenance suggests a mismatch between perceived funding capacity and the actual experience of the institutional conditions. This also emphasises the influence of response intensity within the weighted scoring system, rather than relying solely on simple majority frequency.

Finally, 105 respondents (56.4%) agreed (SA = 32; A = 73) that students should pay tuition to ensure access to quality tertiary education, while 81 respondents (43.6%) disagreed (D = 51; $SD = 30$). The average score ($M = 2.58$, $SD = 0.96$) was below the positive-perception threshold, indicating generally low perception. This aligns with the earlier trend in which students recognise potential funding options but remain hesitant to support tuition fees as a way to improve quality. Although a numerical majority supports the idea, the overall response indicates moderate level of agreement, which influences the final outcome.

Overall, the findings show a nuanced pattern in how students perceive funding for tertiary education in Nigeria. Although students recognise various funding sources and their influence on institutional quality and rankings, concerns remain about transparency, facility maintenance, and preferred models of funding responsibility. These patterns offer an empirical foundation for further analysis in the next chapter.

The summary of the decision regarding students' perceptions of tertiary education funding is presented in Table 4.11b.

Table 4.11b: Summary table of Decision on Perception of Students on Funding of Tertiary Education

Decision	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agree	4	57.1
Disagree	3	42.9
Total	7	100

Table 4.11b simplifies interpretation: the response categories were combined into two broader groups: Agree (including Strongly Agree and Agree) and Disagree (including Disagree and Strongly Disagree). An analysis of the decision classifications across the seven funding perception items showed that four items (57.1%) were classified as Agree, while three items (42.9%) were classified as Disagree. This distribution suggests a moderately positive perception among students regarding funding issues at the College. Although there were positive trends related to external funding support, government financing, and the perceived connection between funding adequacy and institutional ranking, less positive patterns were observed concerning budget transparency, facility maintenance, and student tuition contributions.

4.3.2.4. Research Question Four

How do administrative policy practices influence staff and students' perceptions of quality tertiary education in Nigeria?

Table 4.12. Chi-Square Analysis Investigating the Association between Perceptions of Administrative Policies and the Quality of Tertiary Education.

Perception of Administrative Policy Practices	Quality of Tertiary Education	Total

			A	D	
Perception	A	Count	86	11	97
		Expected Count	72.5	24.5	97.0
		% within Perception of Administrative Policy Practices	88.7	11.3	100.0
	D	Count	53	36	89
		Expected Count	66.5	22.5	89.0
		% within Perception of Administrative Policy Practices	59.6	40.4	100.0
Total		Count	139	47	186
		Expected Count	139.0	47.0	186.0
		% within Perception of Administrative Policy Practices	74.7	25.3	100.0

Key: A = Agreed; D = Disagreed

Table 4.12 displayed the results of the relationship between perceived administrative policy practices and the quality of tertiary education. The results revealed that within the category of respondents that agreed with the implementation of administrative policy, a substantial 86

respondents (88.7% within perception of administrative policy) agreed with the belief that tertiary education was of high quality. However, the number of respondents that disagreed, 11(11.3%) were less than the expected 24.5. This further demonstrated that respondents who had high perceptions of administrative policy practices were less likely than expected to disagree with the quality of tertiary education. This highlights a positive association between high perception of administrative policies and favourable opinion of the quality of tertiary education. Conversely, within the category of respondents that disagreed with the implementation of administrative policy, a fairly substantial number 53(59.6% within the perception of administrative practices) agreed with the quality of tertiary education. The results revealed there were more respondents observed (36) than expected (22.5) that disagreed.

The statistical analysis showed a significant relationship between perceptions of administrative policy practices and the quality of tertiary education, $\chi^2(1, N = 186) = 20.83, p < .05$. The association was of moderate strength as indicated by the Cramer's V value ($\phi_c = .335$). This suggests that administrative policy practices have a meaningful impact on how respondents perceive the quality of tertiary education.

4.3.2.5. Research Question Five

Does funding have an influence on students' perception of quality of tertiary education in Nigeria?

Table 4.13. Chi-Square Analysis Investigating the Association between Students' Perceptions of Funding and the Quality of Tertiary Education.

			Quality of Tertiary Education		Total
			A	D	
Perception of Funding					
Perception	A	Count	75	17	92

		Expected Count	65.3	26.7	92.0
		% within Perception of Funding	81.5	18.5	100.0
	D	Count	57	37	94
		Expected Count	66.7	27.3	94.0
		% within Perception of Funding	60.6	39.4	100.0
	Total	Count	132	54	186
		Expected Count	132.0	54.0	186.0
		% within Perception of Funding	71.0	29.0	100.0

Key: A = Agreed; D = Disagreed

The results of chi-square analysis examining the association between students' perceptions of funding and the quality of tertiary education are as shown in Table 4.13. The results indicate that within the group of respondents who agreed with the current funding strategy in tertiary education, 75 individuals, representing 81.5%, perceived the quality of tertiary education as good. Nevertheless, the 17 respondents (18.5%) who disagreed were below the expected 26.7, underscoring the trend that students with favourable views on the funding model were less prone to disagree with the quality of tertiary education. This underlines the positive link between favourable perceptions of tertiary education quality and a favourable assessment of funding. In contrast, among the respondents who expressed disagreement with the level of funding, a considerable proportion, 57 (66.7% within the perception of funding) actually

concurred with the quality of tertiary education. When compared to the predicted count of 27.3, the observed count of 37 showed a higher-than-expected prevalence of dissident opinions, suggesting that respondents in this group were more likely to express unhappiness with the quality of tertiary education.

The statistical analysis showed a significant relationship between perceptions of funding and the quality of tertiary education, $\chi^2 (1, N = 186) = 9.84, p < .05$. This supported the claim that there was a genuine substantial association between these variables by suggesting that it was nearly impossible to explain the observed association as the result of chance. The results of the study showed that funding and the quality of tertiary association have a low strength of association, as demonstrated by the Cramer's V value ($\phi_c = .230$).

4.3.6 Research Question Six:

What is the combined influence of policy implementation and funding on students' perception of quality of tertiary education in Nigeria?

Table 4.14. Analysis of the association between students' perceptions of administrative policy and funding (combined) and quality of tertiary education.

Perception of Administrative Policy Practices				Quality of Tertiary Education		
				A	D	Total
Agree	Funding	Agree	Count	31	9	40
			Expected Count	26.2	13.8	40

			% within Funding	77.5	22.5	100
		Disagree	Count	41	29	70
			Expected Count	45.8	24.2	70
			% within Funding	58.6	41.4	100
Disagree	Funding	Agree	Count	16	8	24
			Expected Count	11.4	12.6	24
			% within Funding	66.7	33.3	100
		Disagree	Count	20	32	52
			Expected Count	24.6	27.4	52
			% within Funding	38.5	61.5	100

	Total	Count	108	78	186
		Expected Count	108	78	186
		% within Funding	58.1	41.9	100

Key: A = Agreed; D = Disagreed

Table 4.14 shows the results of a chi-square analysis performed to investigate the relationship between the combined influence of administrative policy practices and funding on the quality of tertiary education. The results revealed that 31 respondents agreed with the quality of tertiary education, whereas 9 disagreed within the category of respondents that both agreed to the administrative policy practices and funding strategy. Further analysis revealed that within the group that agreed with the administrative policies and disagreed with funding, 41 agreed, while 29 disagreed with quality of tertiary education. The observed percentages demonstrated that there was a greater percentage of agreement with the quality of tertiary education when respondents both agreed with administrative policy practices and funding level (77.5%). See table 4.14. The results suggest that there is a notable association between the combined influence of administrative policy practices and funding on the perceived quality of tertiary education. On the other hand, there was a greater percentage of disagreement with the quality of tertiary education within the group where respondents disagreed with administrative policy practices, particularly when they also disagreed with funding model (61.5%).

Conversely, within the group where respondents disagreed with administrative policy practices, especially when combined with agreement with the funding model, there was a higher percentage of agreement with the quality of tertiary education (66.7%). This level of agreement with the quality of tertiary education (38.5%) decreased when combined with disagreement with the funding strategy. This implies that, in this specific subgroup, the alignment of positive views toward the funding model played a role in fostering a more favourable perception of the quality of tertiary education. In the subset of respondents who disagreed with administrative

policy practices and concurred with the funding strategy, the observed count (8) of those expressing disagreement with the quality of tertiary education was lower than the expected count (12.6). This highlights the pattern that students holding positive views on the funding model were less likely to disagree with the quality of tertiary education. On the contrary, the respondents who both disagreed with implementation of administrative policy and funding were more likely to disagree with the quality of tertiary education. This tendency is demonstrated by the observed and expected counts of 32 and 27.4 respectively.

The chi-square analysis results indicated a significant relationship between the combined impacts of funding and administrative policy practices on tertiary education quality ($\chi^2 (1, N = 186) = 9.470, p < .05$). This suggests that it was nearly impossible to attribute the observed association to chance, validating the argument that there was a real and significant relationship between these variables. The result of the study suggests that the administrative policy practices and funding (combined) and the quality of tertiary association have a low strength of association, according to the Cramer's V value ($\phi_c = .226$).

Chapter five. Qualitative Findings

5.0 Presentation of qualitative findings and analysis

5.0.1 Introduction.

This chapter introduces and focuses on the qualitative data gathered from participants through semi-structured interviews (section 3.6.0) to obtain insights into staff and students' perceptions of the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria, emphasising funding and policy implementation in the selected tertiary Institutions (Session 2). The purpose of triangulating data, i.e., obtaining information from different groups (students, staff, including managerial staff) and utilising both questionnaires and interviews, was to validate the information gathered from the questionnaires and to achieve clearer data that supports the aims and objectives of the study.

5.0.2 Mapping research questions to the purpose of the research instrument:

S/N	RESEARCH QUESTION	OBJECTIVE	PURPOSE	Sample semi-interview question
RQ/1	What are the perceptions of staff and students on the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria?	To examine the perceptions of students and staff on what constitutes quality tertiary education in Nigeria	To understand the overall perceptions of staff and students regarding the quality of Tertiary education in Nigeria	From your perspective, would you say the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria is high or low? (See Section A of interview questions)

RQ/2	What are the perceptions of staff and students on the influence of administrative practices when implementing policies relating to quality of education within tertiary Institutions in Nigeria?	To explore the perception of students and staff on the administrative policy practices as they affect the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria.	To determine the perspectives of staff and students on the impact of administrative practices on the effective execution of policies aimed at improving educational quality.	What teaching conditions do you believe are necessary for Tertiary education Institutions to function effectively? (See Section B of interview questions)
RQ3	What are the perceptions of staff and Students on funding of education within tertiary Institutions in Nigeria?	To examine the perception of students and staff on influence of funding on the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria	To gather insights into how staff and students perceive the funding situation and its implications for education within Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria.	In your opinion, what is the importance of funding Tertiary education in Nigeria? (See Section C of interview questions)

RQ4	Do administrative policy practices have an influence on staff and students' perception of quality tertiary education in Nigeria?	To explore the perception of students and staff on the administrative policy practices as they affect the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria	To assess the perspectives of staff and students regarding the influence of administrative policy practices on the overall quality of Tertiary education.	Have you heard about the National Policy on Education in Nigeria? (See Section B of interview questions)
RQ5	Does funding an influence on staff and students' perception of quality tertiary education in Nigeria?	To examine the perception of students and staff on influence of funding on the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria	To establish whether funding plays a significant role in shaping the perceptions of staff and students about the quality of Tertiary education.	What are your opinions regarding the funding of education within higher Institutions in Nigeria? How do you think it affects various aspects of education?" (See Section C of interview questions)

RQ6	What is the combined influence of funding and policy implementation on staff and students' perception of quality tertiary education in Nigeria?	To assess the combined influence of funding and policy implementation on staff and students' perception of quality of tertiary education in Nigeria.	To understand the holistic impact of both funding and policy implementation on the perceptions of staff and students regarding Tertiary education quality.	In what ways do policy and funding impact the quality of Tertiary education in Nigeria? (See Section D of interview questions)
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Table 5.0 Mapping research questions to the purpose of the research instruments.

5.1 The Interview

Twenty-two (22) participants were interviewed including students, teaching and non-teaching staff. This includes 10 females and 12 males. Of these are 4 at the managerial level, 8 are at the senior and other levels and 10 are students from different disciplines. The purpose of selecting three different groups i.e., teaching, non-teaching staff and students, was to obtain a holistic view of the concept as they are directly involved and have firsthand experience about the educational environment, and some are involved in delivering and managing educational processes. Considering diverse perspectives, using mixed method approach, will enhance the validity and reliability of the findings. (Creswell and Creswell, 2018)

Quantitative data was obtained first through questionnaires, and then further data through the interviews was gathered to obtain deeper information to seek responses to the aims of the study. Both findings from quantitative and the qualitative data have been triangulated and considered independently and interdependently to give a robust understanding of the study.

The interview section started by asking the participants for their consent for the interview to be audio recorded and their right to stop or withdraw from the interview if they wish. The researcher also asked the participants about their understanding of the National Policy on education, confirming the level of studies for students and staff, confirming the number of years spent in the Nigeria civil service. This is to ascertain and validate the sample/participant as capable and have the right understanding of the interview questions before proceeding with the main interview. The participants were asked the following questions, though it is a semi structured interview, responses determined the next questions to ask to have clarification and ensure that clear perceptions were obtained. Also, there was little difference between the staff and students' questions based on their roles, but all questions focused on how funding and policy implementation affect their perception of quality tertiary education in their Institutions (See the semi-structured interview in Appendix 4)

Table 5.3: Participants' Profile/ Roles and Positions at the Institutions

Participant	Position/ Role	Gender	Years of experience/ Level
SL 1	Managerial Staff	Male	18 years
SL 2	Managerial Staff	female	17 years
SL 3	Managerial Staff	Male	16 years
SL 4	Managerial staff	female	15 years
SL 5	Chief lecturer	Male	15years

SL 6	Chief lecturer	female	14 years
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SL 7	Senior Lecturer	Male	12 years
SL 8	Senior Lecturer	Male	8 years
SL 9	Lecturer 1	Male	7 years
SL 10	Lecturer 1	female	7 years
SL 11	Lecturer 1	female	6 years
SL 12	Lecturer 1	female	5 years
ST i	Student Primary Education	female	4th Years
ST ii	Student Voc/Tech	Male	4 th years
ST iii	Student / Science	Male	4 th year

ST iv	Student/ Voc/Tech studies	Male	4 th year
ST v	Student/ Social sciences	Male	4 th year
ST vi	Student/ Art	Male	4 th year
ST vii	Student/ Special Education	female	4 th year
ST viii	Student Art & Social sciences	female	3rd year
ST viii	Student/ Voc/tech studies	female	3 rd year
ST x	Student/ sciences	Male	3 rd year

5.2 Method of Data Analysis

A thematic analysis approach is adopted for this study. The following are the processes used to generate codes and themes from data obtained from participants' interview sessions. Thematic analysis was employed to analyse the qualitative data received from the interview sessions. Braun and Clarke (2022:pp 315-316) describe TA as a qualitative analysis method that is used to explore, interpret and report patterns and meanings in a given set of data through the process

of coding to generate themes. The thematic analysis involves identifying and exploring patterns, themes, and meanings within a dataset. (Braun and Clarke, 2006; 2012; 2022). This helps to gain insight and a deeper understanding of the viewpoints, experiences, and perceptions of the participants with relation to the research under study. The full processes of thematic analysis have been discussed in section 4.8.2.

The thematic analysis approach allows the classification of data based on the research questions. Braun and Clarkes (2022; 2006) further explained that the analysis process involves systematic stages that allow a detailed analysis procedure that follows the underlisted stages:

Transcription: The interviews were in English, but Nigerian English accents differ, so they were transcribed manually, as most of the available automated transcription tools are trained on British and American English datasets, which showed lower accuracy when transcribing Nigerian English accents and locally contextualised expressions during the interview.

Translation: Although the interviews were conducted in English, participants occasionally used expressions and phrases, characteristic of Nigerian English. After verbatim transcription, the researcher clarified certain locally contextualised expressions to improve readability and analytical clarity. This process did not alter the original meaning, tone, or intent of participants' responses. It involved clarifying participants locally contextualised expressions while carefully preserving their original meanings, tone, and intent of participants' responses. ensured that participants' perceptions were accurately represented in a consistent written form.

Familiarisation- This was done by carefully listening to the tape repeatedly, including the notes taken during the interview session, to ensure all information was accurately captured, transcribed, and translated and to capture hidden nuances and tones as appropriate to get a deep understanding of their responses.

Coding: The data obtained were divided and grouped into patterns based on the responses captured from participants comments during the interview. These were grouped as patterns emerged. This was done by first generating and identifying the initial codes in the data and highlighting the features, refining them and grouping them into patterns as they occur, for example, the initial codes generated were almost a hundred before being grouped and regrouped

into focused patterns to generate subthemes and the main themes emerged. (See Figure 5.0 for the initial codes generated and the coding process)

Reviewing themes: the themes generated were examined and regrouped to ensure that meaningful themes were captured.

Reporting: This is the point at which the data are reported, introduced and interpreted understandably. Eventually, four themes emerged from the analysis using the thematic approach. They are as follows;

1. The quality of tertiary education in Nigeria
2. Policy implementation impact on the quality of Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria
3. Impact of Adequate funding on Students and Staff perception of Quality Tertiary Education
4. Combined influence of Funding and Policy Implementation on the quality of education

5.3 Presentation of findings/codes/categories/themes/sub-themes

A systematic and detailed process was strictly and ethically employed to arrive at the codes and themes generated from the data obtained from the interview sessions, to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings. The steps taken have been thoroughly discussed in Chapter 3. (See section 3.6, 3.6.1 and 3.9.4.). The researcher ensured a reflexive approach was maintained during the analysis process. (See section 3.9.4.) This was done by paying attention to the participants' voices and experiences throughout the analysis process, without biases or opinions from the researcher. (Attia, and Edge, 2017) The step-by-step approach of the thematic analysis made it possible to thoroughly examine the obtained data, revealing multiple levels of meaning and significance to ensure that all the information and themes within the data set have been thoroughly explored and captured. (Braun and Clarke, 2022).

The qualitative aspect of the study identified four key themes that reveal how students and staff perceive the quality of higher education in Nigeria, especially concerning funding practices and policy implementation. The specific steps guiding the analysis were detailed in Chapter 3, section 3.2. Here in this section, the focus is on presenting the themes that emerged from the interview responses. To create a deeper understanding of the research, all data were objectively

examined, free from bias and preconceptions. The following are sample codes and the processes that led to the emergence of themes, supported by relevant quotes from the participants during the interview. (See Appendix 6 for detailed information on codes and themes.) These results will contribute valuable insights to the research, ensuring a deeper understanding of students' and staff's perceptions of the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria, with a focus on funding and policy implementation. As noted in the previous section, four themes emerged from the interview responses.

Sample Coding Table (Sampled overview of all four themes)

The samples in Table 5.4 present an overview of all four themes, including selected subthemes, categories, and codes. The full detailed coding table is in Appendix 6.

Theme	Subthemes	Categories / Codes	Illustrative Quote
Quality of Tertiary Education	Staff Perception Student Perception	High curriculum relevance Infrastructure challenges Funding concerns Strikes and instability	"...in terms of infrastructure and resources, I will say it is poor."
Policy Implementation Impact	Administrative Practices Staff Perception Student Perception	Understanding NPE Policy consistency Transparency and accountability Admission standards	"The administrative practices in our institution significantly influence policy implementation."

Impact of Funding on Quality	Staff Perception Student Perception	Budget preparation Financial autonomy Adequate infrastructure Understaffing Global competitiveness	"Adequate funding is vital to maintain the quality of tertiary education."
Combined influence of Funding and Policy	Staff Perception Student Perception	Quality improvement Research and innovation international recognition Conducive learning environment	"When both funding and policy are aligned, quality improves significantly."

Table 5.4 Sample codes

5. 4 Theme 1- The quality of tertiary education in Nigeria

The interview aimed to gather more information on the factors that affect staff and students' perception of quality tertiary education in Nigeria, focusing on funding and policy implementation. During the interview sessions, some of the issues that came up were (i). Perception on rating of the current state of tertiary education in Nigeria. (ii). to identify and examine what they perceive as indicators of quality tertiary education in Nigeria, (iii) perspectives about experiences of staff and students. (iv) institutional challenges to quality of education in Nigeria. (v) approaches to address the identified challenges.

- i. Perception of staff and students on the perceived current state of tertiary education in Nigeria. Rating of tertiary education in Nigeria and the ratings were done based on their perception.

Staff and students were asked to rate the current state of tertiary education in Nigeria. See the interview questions in Appendix 1.;

Fifteen participants, which includes nine (9) students, and six (6) staff indicated that the current state of tertiary education in Nigeria is high, two (2) agreed it is low, and five (5) agreed it is neither low nor high. However, all agreed that there is more to be done to improve the infrastructure. When asked further to explain the reason for their choice of opinion there were variations in their reasons, explaining further, student **STi**, mentioned that,

“Am rating it high due to the curriculum content, I strongly believe the level of training at this college can match up with its other counterparts in the other parts of the world. But more need to be done in terms of infrastructure, it’s bad. At this institution, there is no constant electricity, no good internet facilities, and our lecturers go on strike most of the time.”

*“Staff **SL8** ”Also supported the statement by saying the level of education is good or good in terms of the content of instruction, Nigerian students excel well after graduation. Our research is also relevant to solve world problems, but we need to improve in area of infrastructure and funding of the Institutions. If this is done, I strongly believe that the quality will be improved.”*

But “**student iv**” has a contrary opinion, stating the quality of education is low, in her words; *“As you can see, the classrooms are overcrowded, students sit on the bare floor to receive lectures, and some cannot hear what the lecturer is saying from the back due to unstable electricity to use the microphone.”*

“**Staff SL5**” corroborated the view by saying;

“It is just low, the government is not seeing education as very important.” Look at the environment, the whole place looks dilapidated.”

Conversely, student “**STiii**”, is of the opinion that the quality of education is neither high nor low, in his words,

“I think the quality of education is neither high nor low, due to the content of the curriculum being taught by the institution, which I consider high. Most Nigerian graduate who travels outside the country excel and even outsmart some of their foreign counterparts, but in the area of infrastructure, it is ridiculously low. The country needs serious improvement on the available infrastructure.”

This opinion is also supported by staff **SL11**; he said;

“The curriculum content is quite high and rich. Most of our students can conveniently compete with foreign students, therefore the quality is high, but more can still be done in terms of facilities and incentives to staff, which, on the other hand, I will say makes the quality of education low in comparison to other parts of the world, hmmm... he sighed”.

These responses suggest that participants viewed the quality of tertiary education as multidimensional rather than simply positive or negative. While many regarded curriculum quality, graduate skills, and academic content as strengths of the Nigerian tertiary education system, concerns about infrastructure, electricity supply, internet access, and industrial action significantly shaped their overall assessment of quality. This supports Harvey and Green's (1993) view of quality as a multidimensional concept and suggests that perceptions are influenced by both academic outcomes and the conditions surrounding teaching and learning. The findings also align with Okeke and Lee (2025), who noted that staff and students associate educational quality with effective teaching, supportive learning environments, and adequate institutional resources. From a Principal-Agent Theory perspective, participants' concerns about infrastructure and institutional conditions may reflect perceived gaps between government policy intentions and the actual provision of educational resources within tertiary institutions.

5.4.1 Indicators of quality tertiary education in Nigeria.

When participants were asked to mention the indicators of quality tertiary education based on their perception, the majority, all 22 participants, agreed and mentioned that, provision of adequate infrastructure, quality research, the quality of student output and implementation of the national educational policy statement.

Commenting, staff **SL3**,

“As for me, the indicators of quality tertiary education are seeing, adequate classroom, appropriate teacher/student ratio, good road, payment of salary and allowance, as at when due, conducive learning and teaching environment, adequate staff, staff training and development, student bursary and loans. Research grants, policy stability, the quality of graduates produced from the universities, and proper planning which goes down to the

management functions. Also, the monitoring and supervision of the available resources”. On the other hand, Staff “SL7” supported the opinion but from another angle, by saying,

“Quality tertiary education depends on strong policy and adequate funding. If the government gives education greater priority, it will attract more attention and resources, making proper policy implementation possible. Indicators of quality include good infrastructure, competent staff, strong student outcomes and meaningful research, but none of these can be achieved without clear policy direction supported by sufficient funding.”

Student “ST vi” also supported and mentioned that,

“The indicators of quality tertiary education are adequate classrooms for students, student grants and loans, payment of salaries and incentives for lecturers, a conducive learning environment, good and free internet facilities for staff and students and availability of stable electricity. Also, putting the right peg in the right hole will ensure good management of the available resources”.

Participants' responses indicate that perceptions of quality tertiary education go beyond just academic achievement alone and encompass a broad range of institutional, infrastructural, and administrative factors. The recurring emphasis on adequate infrastructure, qualified staff, research capacity, effective resource management, staff welfare, and policy implementation suggests that participants view quality as a comprehensive concept that encompasses inputs, processes, and outcomes. These insights support Harvey and Green's (1993) view that quality is multidimensional and can mean different things to different stakeholders. They also align with Okeke and Lee (2025), who noted that staff and students associated educational quality with capable teaching, supportive learning environments, and sufficient resources. Additionally, the focus on policy and resource management suggests that quality is not only about educational delivery but also about good governance and accountability. From a Principal-Agent Theory perspective, this suggests that those managing resources and policies should utilise them effectively to meet educational goals. This aligns with Kivistö's (2008) application of the theory in higher education, which stresses accountability, oversight, and clear responsibilities among policymakers, leaders, and implementers. The emphasis on supervision and resource management further reflects concerns about ensuring that educational actors fulfil their roles to achieve quality outcomes.

5.4.2 Challenges of Quality Tertiary Education in Nigeria

A question was asked about what the challenges of tertiary education in Nigeria are.? All of the participants were unanimous in their opinion that the main challenges facing the tertiary education sector in the country are inadequate funding, insufficient infrastructures and implementation of policies as stated in the National policy on education. Interestingly, one participant stated corruption is one of the challenges facing the tertiary education sector; examples of these views include: Staff SL1, who stated,

“The basic challenges of achieving quality tertiary education in Nigeria is corruption, the resources are not being managed properly. allocation to the education sector is too low compared to other sectors of the economy. Causing delayed payment of salaries, and inadequate infrastructures, and resources. Until the government give priority to funding education the quality will not improve. Another area is providing the right resources to implement the educational policies.”

One of the participants ‘Student ST V’ in support added that,

“The issues are lack of commitment by the government to support our institution properly by allocating adequate funds for infrastructure such as standard classrooms with good electricity, internet and payment of salaries as at when due. Another issue is putting the right peg in the right hole by doing this, guidelines in terms of policies will be well implemented.”

Another participant staff SL2 stated in agreement, stating,

The challenges being faced by college for example, are inadequate funding, which is affecting payment of staff salaries and wages, infrastructure, and resources and the politicisation of education by the government, there is no continuity of purpose for example, every government have a different agenda for the education system just for them to win the election, therefore, affecting the implementation of policies. APC had a different agenda. By the time the PDP won, it changed, so their intention was just to win the election, and once they won, they abandoned the work that was being done by their predecessors. (Hissed... bites tongue in anguish)

Participants' responses suggest that challenges to the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria extend beyond funding and infrastructure, encompassing political stability and policy

consistency. Participants expressed concern that successive governments often alter or abandon existing educational initiatives, revealing that policies are vulnerable to shifting political priorities. This aligns with earlier research suggesting that the main issue is not the lack of policies but the inconsistency between policy intentions and their sustained implementation over time (Imam, 2012; Asiyai, 2015; Ogunode and Adah, 2020). The study further indicates that long-term educational development may suffer when policies are tied to specific political regimes rather than regarded as permanent national priorities. From a Principal-Agent Theory perspective, this suggests difficulties in maintaining commitment to shared educational goals across governance actors, especially during political transitions when priorities change (Kivistö, 2008). As Kivistö (2008) notes, policy success depends on the ability of actors within the governance structure to remain accountable to agreed objectives and responsibilities. Therefore, improving the quality of tertiary education demands not only sufficient resources but also sustained, committed political support and stable policy implementation.

5.4.3 Recommendations for overcoming the challenges.

Staff and students were asked to recommend how to overcome the stated challenges of tertiary education in Nigeria. All 22 participants mentioned the provision of adequate funding, adequate infrastructure such as good electricity, good internet facilities, standard classrooms, funding for research, prompt payment of salaries and wages of staff, staff training and development, provision of scholarship facilities for students and proper supervision. The following are corresponding statements by the participants;

Staff SL8 stated as follows;

“Government should ensure adequate funding of our tertiary Institutions, Payment of salaries and wages as at when due, employ more staffs and ensure guidelines, as proscribed by the national policy on education, are properly monitored and implemented”. In addition, supporting the above opinion, Staff SL 2, mentioned that,

“Government must have proper planning put in place that will cater for over 20 years and review it from time to time. There must be provision for adequate funding to enable the provision

of proper infrastructure, payment of staff and research activities. Then there must be proper monitoring and management of these resources. Also, monitoring to ensure proper implementation of policies that are in place.”

In support, student ‘STii’ reinstated as follows,

“Just as I said earlier, there must be adequate funding. There must be supervision to ensure policies are being implemented by the management of the various Institutions.”

Participants' recommendations largely reflect the challenges outlined earlier, highlighting a strong perceived relationship between funding, policy implementation, and educational quality. Their focus on sufficient funding, improved infrastructure, staff well-being, monitoring, and effective policy implementation indicates that participants view quality enhancement as needing both financial resources and institutional responsibility. These insights align with prior research emphasising that adequate funding and effective policies are crucial to improving educational outcomes in Nigerian universities (Asiyai, 2015; Ogunode and Adah, 2020). The recurring mention of monitoring and supervision underscores the importance of translating resources and policies into tangible outcomes. In summary, improving the quality of tertiary education demands a coordinated strategy that combines adequate resource allocation with robust implementation and oversight mechanisms.

5.5 Theme 2. Administrative practices processes and its influence on the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria.

To explore the perception of staff and students on the administrative practices and how it affects their perception of the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria, questions were asked to dig deeper to understand their knowledge about the national policy on education, level of implementation at the College and explore the implication of implementation of the national policy on education and its impact on the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria. The following concepts were unpacked;

5.5.1 Definition of the Nigerian National Policy on Education

Prior to unpacking participants' views about the National Policy on Education (NPE), they were asked if they were aware of the National Policy on Education (NPE). Fortunately, all were aware of the policy. All twenty-two participants interviewed agreed that the NPE is a comprehensive document that outlines and guides the educational aims and objectives, policies, principles, programmes, and plans of each level of the educational sector in Nigeria. All the participants agreed that the primary objective is to promote accessible, high-quality education that meets the needs of every person in Nigerian society.

Below are some of the definitions by the participants:

(Student STv),

“National policy on education is a document written to guide the educational sector to achieve the aim and objectives of quality education in Nigeria “

(Staff SL1), *“The National policy on education is a comprehensive and well-tailored policy document that proscribe and guide the activities, programme, aims and objective of achieving quality education at all levels of the educational system in Nigerian, to meets the needs and aspiration of each individual in the society for national growth and development.”* A management staff ST4, stated that:

“The national policy on education is a policy documents that clearly outline the aims and objective of each level of education, the role of administrators in achieving the stated goals to meet the educational needs of the Nigerian society to promote quality and satisfactory education. It covers the curriculum design and structure, school plant, administrative and managerial roles, etc. It's a complete guide for everyone”.

Based on the stated definition and explanation provided by all participants, they all had an awareness and good understanding of the national policy on education document and its functions; therefore, all were capable of providing answers and opinions to the questions being asked during the interview.

The participants demonstrated a consistent understanding of the National Policy on Education (NPE), viewing it as a guiding framework for educational goals, programmes, administration,

and quality assurance within Nigeria's education system. This shared understanding is important because it indicates that their later critiques of policy implementation were rooted in their experiences of how the policy is applied in practice, rather than in a lack of awareness of the policy itself. The findings highlight a recurring theme in the study: the distinction between policy formulation and policy implementation. This aligns with existing research, which suggests that the main issue in Nigerian education is often not the absence of policy frameworks but the challenge of effectively translating policy intentions into practice (Imam, 2012; Ogunode and Adah, 2020). Therefore, their understanding of the NPE is a crucial basis for interpreting their later views on policy implementation and educational quality.

5.5.3. The level of implementation of the national policy on education.

When asked, if the NPE guidelines as stipulated for the tertiary education sector is being implemented in the institution, only 14 participants agreed that the guidelines are being implemented in the Institution, 5 disagreed and stated the reasons for their disagreement while 3 declared they are not sure. The following are the responses,

Staff SL4, at the managerial level, stated,

“At this institution, both the administrative and academic programmes are tailored in line with what is stipulated in the national policy on education. Right from the admission and enrolment of students, staff recruitment, to curriculum design, academic and non-academic activities are all done as guided by the national policy on education document.”

In agreement, Staff ST ii stated,

“They are being implemented as there are committees who are charged with the responsibility of ensuring this is done. I also believe monitoring exercise by NUC, and the like is for implementation. For example, the number of staff needed by faculties before accreditation of any course is ensured by the College if not, we will not get accredited for the courses we are offering. Though a lot still needs improvement, I believe we will get there with more funding.”

As opposed to the above statement, staff SL9, vehemently disagrees that the National policy is being implemented. They stated that:

“In my opinion, I don’t believe that the policy statement is being implemented, for example, the teacher/student ratio is too low, we have one teacher teaching over 200 students in one class, the instructional aides are lacking, and no electricity, coupled with a non-conductive classroom where there is no stable electricity to cool the room or use the speaker. even the current curriculum does not meet the needs of the current society anymore. Look at the environment, looking tattered, no good internet facilities to aid teaching and learning, recruitments of staff are biased, it is who you know that will guarantee your employment, the computers are all old just to mention a few.”

Student v, who is not sure of the implementation, stated thus;

“I am not sure if it’s being implemented or not, cause of the situation in the country, I am confused because the government did not allocate adequate finance. So, I am not sure if the policy is being implemented or not.”

Participants' responses show varying perceptions of how fully the National Policy on Education is implemented within the institution. Some see evidence in admissions processes, curriculum delivery, accreditation requirements, and administration, while others doubt the extent of implementation due to persistent challenges, including inadequate infrastructure, staff shortages, recruitment challenges, and limited teaching resources. This disparity suggests that policy implementation is not felt equally across all groups within the institution. Similar findings have been noted in prior research, which states that having policies does not automatically lead to effective practice (Imam, 2012; Ibrahim, 2018; Ogunode and Adah, 2020). From a Principal-Agent Theory perspective, these results highlight the difficulties of translating policy goals into practical outcomes across different levels of the education system. As Kivistö (2008) notes, success depends not only on policy creation but also on proper implementation, monitoring, and accountability. Therefore, participants tend to assess policy success based on tangible results in their learning and work environments rather than on policy documents alone.

5.5.4 Implication of the implementation of the national policy on education and its impact on the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria.

When participants were asked about the implications of implementing the national policy on education on the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria, the majority of them thought that policy implementation could help to improve the quality of tertiary education. The following responses were obtained,

Staff SL5, stated;

“The NPE is a wonderful well thought out policy document on education that if well implemented, could lead to development of the education sector in Nigeria. One, the Nigerian graduates will be better equipped which in turn will contribute to the development of the Nigeria society and the world at large. Internationally, we will be respected, and Nigeria will be on the high ladder, Nigerian universities will be regarded as one of the best in the world. You see, the benefits of implementation are massive.”

Management staff SL2, who is of the same view stated that,

“Implementation of the NPE will lead to the actualisation of the national education goals and objectives. One of the aims of the tertiary education sector as stated in the national policy on education is to produce graduates who can meet the needs of the Nigerian economy, in fact in summary the aim is to develop individuals who are intellectually, and physically sound and can provide solutions to the needs and aspirations of the Nigerian society. This will invariably lead to development in every sector of the economy be it education, health, finance, and everything and that is the goal at this institution.”

The response of Student **ST I** is not different, he thinks that;

” Implementation of the policy will lead to students graduating and getting jobs immediately because adequate planning is already in place to plan for students graduating and people retiring too. Also, it will lead to having a quality educational system in Nigeria”. Implementing NPE, will structure the curriculum design to fit and meet the needs of the society. Implementing NPE will improve the quality of tertiary education IN Nigeria.”

Participants' responses suggest that the perceived value of the National Policy on Education lies not just in its existence but in its ability to translate educational goals into concrete results. They consistently linked effective policy implementation to improved graduate quality, greater employability, more relevant curricula, institutional growth, and national development. This suggests that participants view policy implementation as a practical means of achieving educational objectives, rather than merely aspirational statements. This aligns with the policy's aim of producing graduates who can contribute to national progress and meet societal needs (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013). The findings also support literature emphasizing that educational quality depends not only on policy design but also on how effectively policies are implemented within institutions (Imam, 2012; Ibrahim, 2018). From a Principal-Agent Theory perspective, the results suggest that the realisation of educational goals depends on how effectively implementers translate policy plans into observable outcomes (Kivistö, 2008). Overall, participants see policy implementation as a vital link between educational aspirations and the quality of experience in tertiary institutions.

5.5. THEME 3. Impact of adequate funding on students and staff perception of quality tertiary education

Data was obtained from students and staff about their perception on funding and its impacts on the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria (see appendix A section C). From this question the following sub themes emerged.

- The significance of adequate funding on the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria
- Identification of major sources of funding.

5.5.1 Perception on funding of tertiary education in Nigeria

The researcher asks the participants about their opinions on the importance of funding for tertiary education in Nigeria.

All the twenty-two (22) participants agreed that adequate funding have a significant influence in improving the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria. One of the Management **staff SL4** described it as follows;

“Funding Is the bedrock of achieving quality education, infrastructure, planning, implementation and even results, needs adequate funding, without funding there is no educational institution, funding provides acquisition of knowledge in terms of payments of staff, acquisition of equipment, infrastructure and everything. It is the bedrock for providing quality education. With proper and adequate funding, then educational quality can be achieved”.

Student iv, in support added that,

” Funding provides all the human and material resources needed for the actualisation of the national educational goals. Adequate funding provides good teaching and learning conditions. Adequate funding provides for human and material resources and the overall delivery of quality tertiary education. It supports implementation and actualisation of the educational objectives”

In addition, the same opinion expressed by **Staff SL12**, stated that;

“Adequate funding is required if any meaningful development in the education sector is desired in the Nigerian education system. Funding of education must be moved from the concurrent list to the exclusive list by the government. Without adequate funding of the tertiary education sector, the overall economy of the country will be in shambles.”

Participants consistently regarded funding as an essential requirement for delivering quality tertiary education. Their responses linked funding not just to infrastructure and educational resources but also to staff welfare, research, policy enforcement, and educational goals. This indicates that participants view funding as a key enabler of various facets of institutional effectiveness and educational excellence.

Based on the responses of the participants, the researcher asked further to give their opinion on the sufficiency of funding allocated to the institution.

“What is your perception on the current adequacy of funding available to your institution”?

Twenty (21) respondents stated that the current allocation by the government is not enough for running the institution, which has impacted negatively on the quality of education at the Institutions. While only one (1) said it was sufficient.

As stated by ‘**staff SL14**,

“The funds being allocated to education generally is not sufficient, that is why there is always strike actions by the staff, inadequate resources, and infrastructure. No bursary for students or allocation of adequate funding to carry out research by academic staff, payment of allowances and wages are not done as at when due, we are understaffed and underpaid in comparison to our foreign counterparts. See the effect is endless. Look at the college as we speak, no electricity and the college cannot afford to put on the generator for long hours. There is a need for more and adequate funding of our Institutions by the government”.

These perceptions align with the quantitative findings, which show that both staff and students indicated that inadequate funding negatively affects institutional effectiveness and quality.

In support, a **student SL I** also said;

“Majority of the issues we have in this college are due to money issues, for example, no free or good internet facilities, inconducive classroom and our lecturers are always on strike, if the government could allocate more funds the whole issues would be settled, and the quality of our education will improve”.

A **staff SL4**, held a contrary opinion, in his words;

“In my opinion, the allocation is sufficient, I believe the problem is mismanagement and corruption that has not allowed the fund to get to the stakeholders. If the available resources are managed properly with proper monitoring and accountability measures put in place, I believe things will look better”.

While most participants considered current funding levels insufficient, one participant suggested that the real issue is not the amount of funding, but rather how resources are allocated and managed. This disagreement indicates that not all participants believe that the primary problems in tertiary education stem from inadequate funding. Instead, the findings suggest that

issues related to resource distribution, accountability, and institutional management also significantly impact the situation.

5.5.2 Identification of major sources of funding.

Further questions were asked to explore the participants' perceptions and gain a deeper understanding of the country's financial landscape in education, by asking them to state the sources of funding in tertiary education in Nigeria.

The participants all mentioned the various sources of funding for tertiary education in Nigeria and identified the government as the main source of public institution funding, along with contributions from private donations, businesses operated by the colleges, alumni donations, and international bodies and NGOS. The following statements were made:

A student, (STii) mentioned the following as the sources of funding for tertiary education;

“The number one source of funding is the government while the Institutions also get support from the private sector for donations, Tuition paid by the students, internally generated revenue and the tertiary education trust fund (TETFund)” In support of the statement, Staff 11 stated that,

“Sources of funding are TETFund, Government allocation, Alumni contribution, Businesses established by the Institution such as poultry, Farming, Bottled water factories, business centres and donations by private organisations. The students’ tuitions go directly to the government. Mainly, the government is the sole owner and financial of the tertiary Institutions.”

Another staff SL 10, also mentioned other sources not included by others, he said;

“The sources of funding for this institution is majorly from the government allocation, then the college also gets support by establishing part-time degree and “SIWESS” programmes for adult learners, donations by philanthropist and allocation by Tertiary Education Trust Fund.”

Another staff (SL10) responded that,

“The major source of funding for this institution is the Tertiary Education Trust fund. Am sure that without TETFund, some of the Nigerian Institutions of learning would have closed down”

5.5.3 Assessment of the sufficiency and efficiency of the existing funding techniques and processes.

To explore the sufficiency and efficiency of the existing funding sources available to the tertiary Institutions, the researcher asks questions about their awareness of budget preparation processes in the tertiary institution.

All the participants interviewed agreed that the budget preparation is a structured process and ultimately concludes at the Ministry of Education, which manages and supervises all budgets and funds allocated to the various institutions of learning in Nigeria. They represent the government as the major source of funding distribution.

A management staff SL2, stated, that;

“Budget preparation is a structured process that involves different stakeholders from the institution. The process is done by conducting a need assessment of the upcoming year which involves presenting funding needs for academic and non-academic programmes. The second phase is to call for all the departments to forward their proposals to the faculty who in turn send them to the budget committee of the College. The budget committee discussed and made necessary adjustments before being approved and forwarded to the national budget office for final approval by the minister of education”

The same assertion in support, expressed by, a staff SL5, opined, in his word;

” I remember that the head of the department always sends a memo to staff to bring forward their needs which is collated and sent to the faculty who later collate and forward to the provost of the college and the budget committee for approval before being sent to the federal ministry of education for consideration.”

Student STii also responded that;

“Based on a course I took in the second year, I was taught that budget preparation takes structured steps that involve calling for input from the various units and departments and later being sent to the federal Ministry of Education for final approval”.

Participants typically view the institution's budget preparation as a systematic, consultative process that involves various stakeholders at the departmental, faculty, institutional, and government levels. The uniformity of responses across staff and students suggests a shared understanding of how funding requests are generated and managed within the institution. These results suggest that while participants are aware of formal budgeting procedures, this awareness does not necessarily translate into perceptions that funding levels are adequate to fulfil the institution's needs.

5.5. The interactive impact of funding and policy implementation on the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria.

To explore the perception of staff and students on the interactive impact of funding and policy implementation on the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria, this question was asked, “What is your perception on the interactive impact of funding and policy implementation on the quality of tertiary education at this institution?”

All twenty-two (22) participants agreed that funding and policy implementation have a positive impact in promoting the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria and adequate funding, coupled with proper implementation of stated policies will help to improve the quality of education in the country. According to some of the statements by the participants, **staff SL 9**, stated as follows.

“The importance of funding and policy implementation cannot be over-emphasised in promoting quality education in our country, the federal government have implemented and brought up a lot of fantastic policies aimed at improving the quality of the education system, but the impact of such policies could not be felt due to insufficient funding to properly implement it. For example, recently there is the policy on teacher’s student ratio and research input but due to lack of funding, it could not be implemented in this college because more staff needs to be employed, researchers need funding to carry out research, but there is no money to recruit more staff to implement such. Therefore, both policy and funding work hand in hand,

without proper funding, policy cannot be effectively implemented, and these are needed to improve the quality of our tertiary education sector.”

The same view expressed by , staff **SL3**, stated as follows,

“In this institution, we strive daily to ensure the implementation of the tertiary education policies which are aimed at improving the quality of instruction but due to constrain posed by insufficient funding we could not implement some of them. I will give you an example, there is a programme that needs accreditation by (NCCE) National commission for colleges of education, the college could not get accreditation due to lack of a particular equipment and the laboratory that need to be built in a specified design. This are equipment that needs to be funded by the government, and we miss it. Therefore, adequate funding is needed implement policies to improve the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria. When policy backed by adequate funding, the quality of education would improve immensely.”

These assertions were also echoed by student **ST iv**, in her words,

“There are lot of policies made to improve the quality of tertiary education but could not be actualised due to lack of funding, I remember, a policy meant to provide scholarship opportunities for students from poor homes to access university education but many of them are still waiting for approval till now after applying over three years ago, this was due to lack of funds. Also, scholarship programme for first class students was also aborted due to lack of funding. As you can see, to actualise or improve the quality of education in this country we need funding to back all the good policies that are in place. They work hand in hand to improve the quality of education.”

Participants consistently perceived funding and policy implementation as deeply interconnected influences on educational quality, rather than as separate factors. They often argued that effective policies require sufficient financial support to succeed, and that funding alone is inadequate without proper implementation. The findings therefore suggest that participants viewed quality improvement as relying on the combined operation of both factors rather than on either factor in isolation.

5.6. Summary

This chapter presented the findings from the qualitative findings from the interview sessions. The thematic analysis method was used to present findings, and four themes emerged, which were,

- i. The quality of Tertiary Education in Nigeria,
- ii. Policy implementation impact on the quality of Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria, iii.
The impact of adequate funding on the quality of Tertiary Education in Nigeria, iv. The combined influence of policy implementation on the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria.

The findings from the qualitative data will be integrated with those from the quantitative data, then discussed and analysed in the next chapter. The following section (Chapter 6) will present the analysis and discussion of findings triangulated from both quantitative and qualitative data gathered.

CHAPTER 6: Analysis And Discussion

6.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the qualitative and quantitative data and findings from the two previous chapters, informed by the key results of the literature review. The primary objective is to identify and understand staff and students' perceptions of the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria. This focus centres on how funding and policy implementation affect selected institutions, especially amid resource constraints, uneven policy enforcement, and their influence on educational outcomes in Nigeria. The chapter aims to explain these perceptions, why they exist, and how they reflect broader structural issues in the Nigerian tertiary education system.

This study explores the relationship between funding and policy implementation, examining how these factors influence perceptions of quality tertiary education. The perspectives of staff and students at the selected colleges of education are central to this research, as they are the ones directly affected by government policies, institutional decisions, and resource allocation. Analysing their views helps to shed light on the daily realities that support quality delivery and how institutional actors interpret the impact of funding and policy practices in their environments.

To achieve this, the analysis combines the quantitative data from Chapter Four with the qualitative insights from Chapter Five and existing literature. The discussion is organised thematically around the six research questions and links the findings to relevant theoretical and policy debates. This approach avoids treating results in isolation; instead, it places them within Nigeria's broader educational context and the frameworks that have guided tertiary education reform.

Integrating the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the study, along with the reviewed literature, offers a comprehensive understanding of each research question. The Likert-scale questionnaire data identified measurable patterns and correlations in participants' opinions on funding, the implementation of educational policies, and the quality of higher education. These numerical findings are supported by semi-structured interviews, which provide contextual insights and lived experiences that give meaning to the trends observed in the quantitative

analysis. In this way, the discussion advances beyond merely describing data to explaining why certain patterns arose and what they reveal about institutional realities.

Combining mixed methods with participant diversity enhances the credibility and depth of interpretations by allowing findings to be examined from various methodological and experiential perspectives. The quantitative data identify broad patterns across respondents, while the qualitative data provide detailed explanations based on the participants lived experiences. Additionally, including students, teaching staff, and non-teaching staff ensures that interpretations are not based solely on a single institutional viewpoint but reflect the different roles within the colleges. This convergence of methods and participant groups increases confidence in the consistency and robustness of the study's conclusions. This aligns with the guidance of Creswell and Creswell (2018) and Plano-Clark and Ivankova (2016), who note that mixed-method strategies enhance the reliability of quantitative results while adding narrative evidence. In this study, integrating perspectives from students, teaching staff, and non-teaching staff helps verify results across different levels of institutional experience.

The diverse range of participants also allows for a more nuanced understanding of how funding and policy implementation are perceived and experienced within colleges of education in Nigeria. Rather than simply comparing statistics, the analysis examines the underlying meanings behind respondents' perceptions, linking them to broader policy frameworks, resource limitations, and governance challenges. Triangulating evidence from multiple stakeholders is crucial for ensuring credibility and robustness in higher education research (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2010; Flick, 2018).

The following sections discuss the findings related to the study's six research questions. Each question is explored using a combination of quantitative and qualitative evidence, with analysis placing the results within relevant theoretical and policy contexts. The findings were able to address the following research questions;

6.1 Research questions guiding the discussion

To guide the discussion, the six research questions are restated:

1. RQ1: What are the perceptions of staff and students on the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria?

2. RQ2: What are the perceptions of staff and students on the influence of administrative practices when implementing policies related to quality within tertiary Institutions in Nigeria?
3. RQ3: What are the perceptions of staff and students on the funding of tertiary education in Nigeria?
4. RQ4: How do administrative policy practices influence staff and students' perceptions of quality tertiary education in Nigeria?
5. RQ5: How does funding influence staff and students' perceptions of quality tertiary education in Nigeria?
6. RQ6: What is the combined influence of funding and policy implementation on staff and students' perceptions of quality tertiary education in Nigeria?

6.2 How the Chapter is organised

The discussion adopts a thematic, theme-by-theme approach. For each theme, the researcher examines and identifies patterns, demonstrates how quantitative and qualitative elements support or oppose each other, and connects the findings to existing literature and theory. When participant voices are quoted, only brief phrases are used, as full quotations are provided in Chapter 5. Additionally, detailed discussions are provided in response to the study's research questions.

6.2.1 Analysis of Findings, Codes, Categories, and Themes

Thematic analysis was conducted following Braun and Clarke's (2012, 2013, 2019) reflexive thematic analysis framework. The process followed their six-step approach: becoming familiar with the data, initial coding, searching for themes, reviewing these themes, defining and naming them, and finally generating the report. Throughout the analysis, a reflexive perspective was maintained to prioritise participants' views while recognising the researcher's active role in interpreting meanings (Braun & Clarke, 2019). Additional procedural details on how the framework was implemented are discussed in the methodology chapter (section 4.8.2). Four main themes were identified.

1. The quality of tertiary education in Nigeria.
2. Policy implementation's impact on the quality of tertiary Institutions in Nigeria.
3. The impact of funding on staff and students' perceptions of quality tertiary education.
4. The combined influence of funding and policy implementation on tertiary education quality.

6.3 Theme 1: Perceptions of the quality of tertiary education (RQ1)

6.3.0 Indicators of Quality Tertiary Education

Quality is defined in Chapter Two, Section 2.4, as a term that varies in meaning for different people. In Nigeria, it is multifaceted, it encompasses many indicators. According to the National Policy on Education in Nigeria (NPE, 2014), the term covers student intake, the quality of staff, teaching and learning, curriculum, services, and resources, among others. (NPE, 2014) In this study, participants described their perceptions of tertiary education quality in Nigeria by identifying indicators based on their understanding and experiences within the system. These indicators were not predefined but naturally emerged from their perspectives. During data collection, prompts from policy documents and the literature, such as the NPE and quality assurance frameworks, were used to stimulate reflection. This guidance assisted participants in expressing their views on recognised indicators, including qualified staff, sufficient funding, functional infrastructure, effective teaching, and credible assessment methods.

All 22 participants interviewed recognised similar indicators as the factors that determine the quality of tertiary education. They described these indicators as including the adequacy of infrastructure facilities, research quality, and high student outcomes, all of which are consistent and align with the National Policy on Education statement. Fourteen participants specifically linked quality to staff quality and student intake, while the other eight highlighted a more comprehensive set of factors, including physical and human resources, staff qualifications, quality policy frameworks, intellectual resources, and physical infrastructure.

The findings indicate that overall perceptions of quality are more positive than negative among both staff and students, although concerns remain regarding infrastructure, student support, and institutional responsiveness. Staff members strongly supported quality indicators such as lecturer competence and curriculum alignment. This strong support demonstrates that the quality of staff resources is widely regarded as essential to institutional performance.

Rather than simply recognising levels of agreement, this result suggests that participants see academic competence as a key factor influencing the quality of tertiary education. However, while this high level of confidence may suggest belief in staff ability, it should be viewed with caution. A number of participants expressed concerns about recruitment practices, where appointments are sometimes based on connections rather than strictly on merit. For instance, one participant described the situation as *“putting the wrong peg in the wrong hole,”* reflecting a perceived mismatch between roles and qualifications.

This concern, highlighted in various national studies and policy reviews, questions whether competence is always the main criterion for employment or promotion. Studies on Nigeria's tertiary education sector have highlighted the influence of patronage, internal politics, and no merit-based recruitment practices on staffing decisions (Okebukola, 2015; Saint, Hartnett, & Strassner, 2003). Similarly, the World Bank (2009) report found that governance challenges in tertiary education institutions can weaken transparency in recruitment and promotion processes. A more recent analysis (Iwara, Ishmael, & Kilonzo, 2024) also emphasised that weaknesses in the recruitment and career progression system can negatively affect institutional effectiveness. Taken together, both participants' accounts and existing literature suggest that while competence is valued in principle, its application in practice remains contested.

This concern by the participants also extends to student admissions, where access is sometimes perceived as influenced by personal connections rather than by transparent, merit-based criteria. Such perceptions reflect broader governance challenges already discussed in Chapter Two, section 2.8.1.7. As noted by Okojie (2013) and Ofoegbu and Alonge (2016), politicised recruitment and nepotistic tendencies weaken institutional credibility and undermine accountability in public colleges. Consequently, while many staff members perceive themselves as capable, this perception must be considered alongside structural realities that sometimes compromise merit-based staffing and student admissions processes. Quality,

therefore, cannot be understood solely through self-reported confidence in competence but must be situated within the wider institutional and governance framework that shapes tertiary education in Nigeria.

Similarly, while the participants mostly agreed that the curriculum supports national development goals. A totable minority expressed reservation. Specifically, 3 (2.5%) of respondents (See table 4.3.1) suggested that the curriculum content does not always translate effectively into practice. Particularly regarding labour market needs and implementation constraints.

The high level of agreement might be reflecting the participants' awareness of national policy expectations and the formal alignment of institutional curricula with regulatory standards. However, it also raises questions about how much these goals influence their day-to-day practice. For many teaching staff, national development goals often act as guiding principles embedded in policy documents rather than active drivers of curriculum delivery. Their agreement, therefore, may reflect alignment with official standards more than direct engagement with national objectives.

In contrast, agreement on the adequacy of physical facilities was noticeably lower. This is important because classrooms, laboratories, and libraries are tangible parts of the institutional environment that directly impact teaching preparation, research productivity, and student engagement. However, infrastructure issues cannot be viewed in isolation from policy and funding realities. The condition of physical facilities often reflects how well policies are implemented and the adequacy of financial resource management. In this way, infrastructural limitations can be seen as visible signs of deeper structural problems related to funding distribution, governance practices, and institutional capacity. The more critical responses in this area, therefore, likely reflect actual institutional constraints rather than mere opinions, emphasising the material outcomes of policy and funding decisions.

Among students, there was widespread agreement that they received quality instruction, which supports the staff's perception about teaching competence and curriculum quality. This convergence across sources strengthened the credibility of both data sources, suggesting confidence in instructional delivery as a relative institutional strength. However, it is important to differentiate this positive assessment of classroom practice from broader concerns about

institutional management and governance. Trust in staffs' competence does not automatically imply confidence in their administrative abilities or strategic leadership. Additionally, students reported lower satisfaction with physical facilities and expressed concerns about limited representation in institutional decision-making. This suggests that while students value instructional quality, their overall lived experience depends not only on classroom teaching but also on infrastructural conditions and their sense of inclusion in governance. Consequently, quality appears as a multidimensional concept where strong teaching can coexist with infrastructural and administrative shortcomings.

Qualitative data reinforced these findings, showing that participants define quality through visible and functional elements such as skilled lecturers, reliable electricity and internet, well-maintained classrooms, and student support services. While these perceptions broadly align with the literature, the alignment is not complete. For example, while both staff and students emphasise the importance of competent lecturers and functional facilities, the literature extends this definition to include systemic accountability and continuous improvement mechanisms that were less evident in participants' responses.

This partial alignment reflects the views of Ogunode and Suleiman (2024), who argue that effective structures and research funding remain key indicators of institutional excellence, and those of Nyanchoka (2021) and Mgaiwa and Poncian (2016), who observed similar regional patterns of positive teaching ratings but persistent infrastructural deficiencies in Kenya and Tanzania. Likewise, Igwe et al. (2021) emphasised that adequate infrastructure and funding are essential for improving educational standards in Nigeria.

Furthermore, Harvey and Green (2006) described quality education as the relationship between input and expectation, pointing out that the quantity and quality of resources largely determine educational standards. This aligns with participants' emphasis on material resources as a key indicator of quality. Conversely, UNESCO (2020) highlights that without adequate funding, significant improvements in academic standards are unlikely and recommends that governments dedicate approximately 15-20% of public expenditure or 4-6% of GDP to education (UNESCO, 2020), highlighting the need for sustained investment to enhance educational quality. Additionally, Nigeria's Education Policy aims for an ambitious benchmark of 26% of the national budget to education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013).

In contrast, Ajayi (2016) and Budgit (2021) note that no Nigerian government has allocated more than 9% of its budget to education in the past twenty years. This gap between the recommended budget and actual funding levels explains why participants in this study, despite recognising teaching competence, remain dissatisfied with physical infrastructure and research support. The participants' perceptions, therefore, extend and support existing literature by demonstrating how persistent underfunding is experienced in practice, particularly through inadequate facilities, limited research capacities, and a constrained learning environment that affects daily academic experiences.

In summary, the findings suggest that participants associate quality tertiary education with effective teaching, relevant curricula, and sufficient infrastructure. These opinions were consistently reflected in both the quantitative and qualitative data, especially in the responses to Research Question Two and the interview themes in Section 5.4.1. Although these perspectives align with the main research conclusions, they also emphasise contextual factors, such as limited funding, institutional culture, and resource shortages, that continue to affect the delivery of quality education in Nigerian tertiary institutions.

6.3.1 Participants' Assessment of Quality of Tertiary Education

The participants were asked to rate the current state of tertiary education in their Institution and in Nigeria more broadly.

The qualitative findings revealed varied perceptions about the current quality of tertiary education in Nigeria. Eight students and four staff members awarded high ratings, while two participants rated the existing quality of tertiary education as low. This was compared to five participants who perceived the education as neither low nor high. Although participants were not provided with a formal measurement framework for these ratings, their assessments were informed by their experience and practical indicators that repeatedly emerged during the interviews, including infrastructural adequacy, teaching competence, research output, student outcomes, and institutional responsiveness. Their ratings were therefore not arbitrary but reflected practical indicators of quality derived from their lived institutional experiences.

One staff member noted that the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria was relatively high, citing the quality of instruction and the dedication of lecturers in their colleges as comparable

to standards found in other parts of the world. However, such comparisons should be approached with caution. While staff may have some exposure to international academic standards through collaboration, media, or professional exchanges, their assessments are often based on perception rather than direct benchmarking or experience. In today's global and digital environment, many academics and students in Nigeria access information about tertiary education internationally through the internet, read research papers and academic reports, and follow international educational news. Some have travelled abroad for conferences, training, or study, and many have colleagues or former students who are now studying or working overseas. These experiences shape their awareness of conditions elsewhere and may influence how they rate their institutions at home. This view is consistent with existing research on how people perceive educational quality comparatively. It indicates that awareness of external standards can shape local assessments, even if resources and institutional capacity do not match those standards (Iwara, Ismail and Kilonzo; Babatunde, 2018). This exposure might help explain why some staff members see their institutions as comparable on an international level while still recognising the persistence of local resource limitations.

The quantitative results complemented these qualitative findings. Slightly more than half of respondents indicated that funding has a positive impact on educational quality, while fewer than half of staff viewed current policy practices as supportive of improvement. This distribution suggests a divided perception rather than a strong endorsement of existing policy frameworks. The fact that a majority did not clearly affirm the policy's effectiveness aligns with the qualitative concerns raised about infrastructure gaps and implementation challenges. Rather than indicating strong confidence in policy structures, the findings suggest cautious or conditional support, as participants recognised that although policies are intended to improve educational quality, their impact is limited by weak implementation, insufficient funding and infrastructural deficiencies. These perspectives emphasise a tension between perceived teaching effort and infrastructural inadequacies, which limit the quality of tertiary education delivery in Nigeria.

The literature broadly supports this view. Quality education depends not only on staff competence and curriculum, but also on the condition of learning environments. Ogunyemi (2021) emphasised that sustained investment in the physical and technological infrastructure of tertiary institutions is essential to meet the evolving and ever-changing demands of learners.

Similarly, Imam (2021) argued that the present state of Nigerian tertiary education requires targeted reforms and infrastructural renewal if it is to produce graduates who can compete globally.

While these studies identify the structural gaps, the current research provides new insights by examining how those directly involved, including students and staff, perceive these challenges in their daily experiences. Additionally, this study builds on existing work by involving a wider range of participants, such as students and non-teaching staff, who are key stakeholders in education and whose voices are often overlooked in previous studies on educational quality. Their inclusion allows for a more comprehensive understanding of how funding, policy, and institutional practices can interact, intersect, and shape perceptions of quality within Nigerian tertiary institutions.

This distinction is important because much of the available literature and studies often analyse quality at a policy or institutional level. In contrast, this study integrates the everyday realities of participants within the broader context of the debate. The data reveal that even when participants describe the system as high or improving, this optimism is affected or influenced by frustrations with funding, infrastructure, and institutional support. In this way, the findings both align with and extend the literature by illustrating how positive attitudes can coexist with systemic constraints that continue to limit educational delivery or output.

In summary, staff and students in this study recognise strengths in teaching and professional commitment but also acknowledge that these qualities exist within a limited context. A perception of high or satisfactory educational quality does not mean there are no challenges; instead, it reflects the resilience of those working under challenging conditions. This perspective offers a more detailed understanding of Nigeria's tertiary education sector, where professional competence coexists with infrastructure and funding challenges that continue to impact institutional performance and limit the delivery of quality education. These findings, therefore, show that perceptions of the current state of tertiary education are varied and mixed, rather than entirely positive. While many participants identify areas of strength in teaching quality, staff commitment, and curriculum delivery, a substantial proportion also emphasise existing weaknesses related to inadequate infrastructure, insufficient funding, and limited policy implementation. The data suggest cautious confidence rather than full approval,

indicating that meaningful improvements are still necessary to enhance the overall standard and quality of tertiary education in Nigeria.

6.3.2 Challenges of Quality Tertiary Education

Participants during the interview session unanimously identified several key challenges facing tertiary education. These included inadequate funding, infrastructure issues, gaps in policy implementation, and monitoring or oversight issues, among others.

Although participants expressed different opinions on the quality levels across their institutions, these assessments were generally based on observable indicators such as infrastructure adequacy, availability of learning resources, teaching effectiveness, and institutional support systems. Some participants therefore rated the quality of tertiary education as ‘high’, particularly in teaching commitment and curriculum delivery, while others described it as ‘low’ due to insufficient facilities, funding, and institutional support, indicating variation in institutional performance and experiences across the sampled colleges.

In this study, a basic level of quality refers to the minimum standards outlined in the National Policy on Education (NPE, 2014) and supported by the Federal Government’s quality assurance frameworks (see Chapter Two, Section 2.4). These standards include having qualified academic and administrative staff, appropriate infrastructure and facilities, relevant curricula, and effective teaching and learning processes. Conversely, a high level of quality pertains to institutions where these elements are not only present but are sustained through ongoing funding, transparent management, and regular performance assessments aligned with institutional quality assurance standards (see section 5.4.1 and Table 4.11 for related findings).

The difference between basic and high-quality levels was not predetermined for participants; instead, it emerged through their experiences and professional perspectives during data collection. In this study, quality is therefore examined through the contrast between policy defined standards and the everyday realities within the institutions. Many staff and students compared the quality standards outlined in policy documents with their everyday experiences at the institutions. For example, although teaching and curriculum relevance were often viewed as improving, a lack of steady maintenance funding, research grants, and staff development

opportunities diminished participants' confidence in the system's ability to consistently deliver high-quality results.

These findings highlight that perceptions of quality in Nigerian higher education are conditional and influenced by specific contexts. When funding is consistent and accountability systems are clear, people view the quality as high; however, when financial support is sporadic and facilities decline, perceptions decrease to a basic level. The data show some progress in certain institutional areas, but sustainability and depth are constrained by weak financial bases and governance practices. This supports earlier quantitative research that linked sufficient funding with positive quality perceptions (see Chapter 4, Section 4.3.2.5) and aligns with literature emphasising how quality results depend on financing and management systems (Ogunode and Musa, 2020; Materu, 2007). It also explains why staff and students often request more transparent and fair funding processes to improve and maintain quality in Nigerian higher education.

Another concern was inadequate infrastructure, as participants mentioned poorly maintained classrooms, laboratories, and technological tools that impede effective teaching and learning. One participant vividly described this during an interview in a location without electricity, which made the environment uncomfortable due to the high temperatures. This situation highlights the connection between funding and infrastructure; insufficient financial resources lead to deteriorating facilities, which in turn negatively affect teaching quality, student engagement, staff morale, and overall performance. Even the most well-designed policies cannot succeed without adequate physical and technological support for learning. Poor conditions also reduce motivation and productivity, as staff and students need their basic needs to be met before they can perform optimally. This aligns with the idea that addressing fundamental needs enhances motivation and performance in educational settings (Maslow, 1943; Deci and Ryan, 2000). Recent studies in educational settings further demonstrate that higher levels of motivation are associated with improved academic performance, engagement and learning outcomes (Abdulrahman et al. 2023; Sah, 2025)

Gaps in policy implementation also emerged strongly, with mention of the inconsistent enforcement of the National Policy on Education (NPE, 2013), which has hindered the achievement of policy goals. Corruption was another issue, described by participants as a factor

that undermines the allocation and management of resources. Although the interviews did not directly reveal evidence of corruption, participants repeatedly highlighted 'diversion of funds' and 'misplaced priorities,' indicating a common view of systemic mismanagement. This view is supported by earlier research from Akinfolarin & Rufus (2019) and Usman (2016), which demonstrates that corruption and inadequate oversight undermine accountability in Nigerian higher education. Combining these insights reveals that while funding shortages are apparent, corruption acts as an unseen force that skews resource allocation and use, reducing the effectiveness of available funds. The key point is that addressing corruption can be integral to making funding effective and impactful, rather than a separate issue.

These views are supported by the numerical data gathered for this study (Chapter 4, section 4.3.2.5), which suggest a moderate association between perception of funding and quality of tertiary education (Cramer's $V = 0.230$). The association should be interpreted cautiously, as it reflects the respondents' perceptions rather than an objective measurement of institutional quality. Nevertheless, it remains analytically useful in demonstrating how stakeholders understand the role of funding within their institutional context.

The moderate strength of this association suggests that although funding influences quality, it does not operate in isolation. Some other mediating factors, such as leadership integrity, institutional accountability, and monitoring, also shape how funding translates into perceived outcomes. Suggesting, funding alone does not guarantee improvement; how it is managed and overseen within the institutions determines whether it leads to quality outcomes.

The literature supports these findings by highlighting that corruption, poor monitoring, and inconsistent policy implementation could contribute to worsen inefficiencies in the education sector (Akinfolarin & Rufus, 2019; Usman, 2016). Although participants did not explicitly use technical terms such as "monitoring" or "policy inconsistency," their descriptions of "neglect," "lack of follow-up," and "abandoned projects" highlight similar systemic issues. Studies and literatures on Nigerian tertiary education governance (e.g., Jacob, 2020; Ogunode and Musa, 2020; Materu, 2007) further supports these observations and further demonstrates that weak monitoring, irregular policy implementation, and administrative lapses are recurring challenges across the sector. These finding suggests that without institutional reforms to strengthen oversight, transparency, and continuity in policy implementation, increasing funding alone will

not yield a sustainable improvement in quality of tertiary education in Nigeria. Taken together, the data indicate that while funding is essential, its effectiveness is limited when institutional frameworks are undermined by mismanagement, deteriorating infrastructure, and a lack of accountability.

Although this study did not conduct direct administrative audits, the combination of participants' insights and existing literature suggests that these problems are deeply ingrained in the governance framework. Research by Materu (2007) and Obasi & Asodike (2014) supports this, showing that weak internal controls and political interference hinder accountability in resource management. This points to a broader governance challenge, in which policy goals are often disconnected from execution due to insufficient oversight and the absence of penalties or consequences for mismanagement. Ultimately, securing quality results requires more than just funding; it depends on transparent, accountable, and participatory governance structures.

Analysing these issues using Principal-Agent Theory (Section 2.1-2.11) reveals systemic misalignments between policymakers (principals) and institutional actors (agents). Policymakers are responsible for providing resources and policies to enhance quality, while agents implement these policies. Due to information asymmetry, corruption, and weak accountability, agents frequently act in ways that deviate from policy goals, thereby weakening policymakers' intentions. This theoretical perspective explains why there is only a moderate link between funding and quality in the data; it is not due to policy failure but a breakdown in implementation accuracy. In reality, principals often do not have real-time data on resource usage, enabling agents to prioritise their own interests over the collective educational goals.

Therefore, enhancing quality in Nigerian higher education depends on reducing this principal agent gap by implementing better oversight, increasing data transparency, and establishing participatory monitoring systems.

This analysis, by triangulating participants' accounts, quantitative data, and existing literature, demonstrates that issues such as funding, infrastructure, policy implementation, and corruption are interconnected, reflecting deeper structural problems in Nigeria's tertiary education governance.

This study's findings clearly indicate that reforming the system requires more than just increasing funding. This perspective explains why the data showed only a moderate connection between funding and quality. Resources alone are insufficient without transparent allocation, strong oversight, and faithful implementation. The challenges are interconnected: insufficient funding leads to infrastructural deficits, which in turn diminish morale and accountability, worsening inefficiency and corruption. Addressing these issues in isolation would reproduce the cycle; Therefore, a comprehensive, integrated approach is crucial for achieving lasting quality improvement.

These insights lay the foundation for the next subtheme, which explores participants' views on addressing quality challenges in Nigeria's tertiary education.

6.3.3 Proposals to Overcome Challenges

Participants were asked to share and propose their opinions on how to address some of the previously identified challenges related to the quality of tertiary education. Several strategies emerged from both qualitative and quantitative data, with increased and better-structured funding among the most consistently highlighted. From the perspective of Principal Agent Theory, this reflects an effort to address the resource imbalance between policymakers, acting as principals responsible for allocating resources, and institutional actors, acting as agents expected to implement policies and deliver educational services effectively (Godin and Katz, 2010). When principals fail to provide adequate and timely resources, agents are hindered in their ability to discharge these responsibilities effectively, thereby weakening service quality. (Nyewusara and Yusuf, 2018).

Quantitative data highlights the importance of this issue. In the survey, 38.5% of respondents specifically mentioned the need to review the current funding structure to improve sustainability and efficiency. This does not imply that others considered funding reform unimportant. Instead, it shows that participants prioritised different solutions, with some focusing more on related institutional issues like accountability, monitoring, infrastructure, or staff welfare. Overall, the results show that the funding review is a significant concern, even though participants proposed various other solutions.

This interpretation is important because it demonstrates that stakeholders do not see the challenges of tertiary education quality as solely related to funding. Instead, their responses suggest that while increased funding is crucial, it must be complemented by broader institutional reforms to achieve meaningful and lasting improvements.

While increasing funding is understandable, without reforming accountability measures, it could sustain existing inefficiencies criticised by some of the participants. The key argument is not simply for 'more money,' but for improved fund management. Studies like Akinfolarin and Rufus (2019) and Olaleye et al. (2020) highlight that without systemic reform, additional funds may leak through corruption or weak monitoring. Therefore, sustainable progress depends on the concurrent implementation of policy enforcement, transparency, and capacity building to ensure funding achieves its goals.

The need for better infrastructure, including dependable electricity, internet access, and well equipped classrooms, was also highlighted by the participants within the study. This again demonstrates how information imbalance influences perceptions; while students, as “clients,” cannot directly observe the teaching, they judge the quality based on visible facilities. Students indeed observe their teachers consciously and unconsciously, but their judgments of quality tend to prioritise what is most visible and immediately experienced. As Principal-Agent Theory implies, where information asymmetry exists, clients (students) use observable cues such as punctuality, engagement, and classroom conditions to infer unseen teaching quality. Hence, students' evaluations combine both behavioural and environmental observations, reinforcing why infrastructural and contextual factors heavily shape their perceptions of educational quality. Principal-Agent Theory helps explain why participants consistently emphasised infrastructural development as key to perceptions of quality (Yalley, Juusola, and Tomola, 2018). The statistical data support this view, although a link was found between funding and quality (Cramer's $V = 0.230$), indicating only a moderate association. This suggests that both infrastructure and accountability systems are equally vital, as funding alone does not directly lead to improved outcomes.

Funding for research and staff support, especially timely salary payments, training, and professional development, was also emphasised. These observations correspond to data presented in Chapter 4, Sections 4.7 and 4.8, where staff respondents mentioned delayed

salaries and lack of training opportunities as major constraints. These suggestions highlight the need to align incentives between principals and agents. When lecturers and administrators are inadequately remunerated or supported, they may lack motivation to effectively implement policies or produce high-quality results effectively. Improving incentives and accountability helps principals ensure that agents' actions align with policy goals. The work of Yalley et al. (2018) supports this argument by demonstrating that effective incentive systems strengthen motivation and compliance among academic staff. Their findings align with this study's data, confirming that without appropriate rewards and career support, agents tend to prioritise personal survival over institutional objectives. Thus, the literature reinforces, rather than contradicts, the claim that aligning incentives with accountability can enhance the implementation of education policies.

Participants also proposed student scholarships and effective supervision mechanisms to enhance access and accountability. From the Principal-Agent Theory perspective, this could suggest that weak monitoring systems allow agents to act against the principals' intentions, thereby creating risks of inefficiency and corruption. Strengthening supervisory structures would, therefore, reduce these gaps by making agents more responsible for managing and utilising resources, as well as for implementing policies.

The sources of research and literature support these findings, emphasising the importance of collective and systemic initiatives to address challenges in higher education. Eboh and Nwafor (2022) emphasise the need for coordinated reforms, while Olaleye et al. (2020) highlight that addressing the root causes of policy failures and corruption is essential. International case studies, such as those by Nyanchoka (2021) and Otonko (2020), also underscore the importance of public-private partnerships in closing resource and infrastructure gaps. Overall, the combination of participants' perspectives, quantitative data, and existing literature confirms that, although funding is essential, its impact on quality depends on the effective implementation of policies, infrastructure, and accountability systems.

The findings also emphasise the importance of better aligning funding strategies with policy objectives, as the current gap continues to cause inefficiencies and results that do not meet expectations. Although the quantitative analysis showed a moderate correlation between funding and perceived quality (Cramer's $V = 0.230$), institutions with relatively better funding

still faced persistent operational and structural challenges. This suggests that inefficiencies are caused not only by limited financial resources but also by inadequate coordination between funding inputs and policy execution. Consequently, institutional performance is limited, suggesting the need for systemic reform alongside increased financial investment.

This pattern corresponds to the dynamics described in Principal-Agent Theory. Whereby, principals allocate resources, weak accountability mechanisms, and limited oversight enable agents to use these resources inefficiently or without clear alignment to policy objectives. These dynamics hamper the ability of funding to achieve the expected improvements in institutional quality. Existing research supports this view. Olaleye et al. (2020) emphasise how policy failures and corruption undermine the intended benefits of financial allocations, while Akinfolarin and Rufus (2019) show that inadequate monitoring leads to resource wastage and poorer implementation outcomes.

In terms of infrastructure, the results from the study reveal a notable difference between the perceived potential for funding and the actual condition of facilities. Quantitative data showed that many student respondents opined that, with proper management, tuition fees could be sufficient to sustain the facilities and support institutional operations (see Chapter 4.3.2.3). However, the same respondents did not view the current facilities as being well maintained. The qualitative insights also highlighted ongoing issues, such as unreliable electricity, inconsistent internet, and outdated classroom equipment. Participants distinguished between the ideal of sufficiency and the actual reality.

This distinction holds significant analytical value. It shows that while students understand the potential of funding streams, significant infrastructural constraints still hinder learning experiences and institutional effectiveness. Having sufficient funds, in theory, does not always translate into practical adequacy, highlighting broader issues of funding and policy misalignment. In essence, even when financial resources are available, issues such as weak implementation, poor planning, and limited oversight prevent these funds from improving quality.

The existing literature supports this view. Yalley, Juusola, and Tomola (2018) state that students mainly assess quality based on visible resources because pedagogical processes are less transparent to them. Similarly, comparative studies similarly identify infrastructure as a key

factor in both perceived and actual educational quality (Anyira and Idubor, 2020). When facilities are unreliable or inconsistently maintained, opportunities for meaningful learning decrease, and confidence in institutional quality weakens. These findings reinforce the broader implication that increasing funding alone is not enough. Effective improvement requires stronger policies. With coordination, targeted investment, and accountability mechanisms, the system will continue to produce uneven and inefficient outcomes.

Staff motivation and professional development emerged as further issues. These relate to qualitative data in Chapter 5, Section 5.4, where participants emphasised the need for training opportunities and salary stability. Some participants express frustration over professional stagnation, which aligns with the staff survey data showing low satisfaction with institutional support. This perception confirms the consistency of evidence across different data sources and strengthens the analytical argument. Participants attributed declining morale among lecturers to delayed salaries, a lack of training, and inadequate career support.

The link between delayed remuneration and declining morale is well documented in educational management research. For example, Adegbite (2019) and Chankseliani and McCowan (2021) both report that irregular salary payments lead to disengagement and diminished teaching quality in African higher education systems. This reinforces the study's finding that consistent staff motivation and fair compensation are prerequisites for sustaining quality teaching and institutional performance.

These findings generally suggest significant systemic misalignments in Nigeria's tertiary education system. While resources are essential, their effectiveness relies on transparent distribution, proper oversight, and implementation committed by institutional managers. Addressing these issues requires cooperation between principals and agents, as well as broader collaboration with NGOs and private sector partners, with the principal representing the government of Nigeria and the agent representing various tertiary Institutions. (As Chankseliani and McCowan (2021) and Anyira and Idubor (2020) note, aligning funding with policy aims and investing in infrastructure and professional development are vital for improving access and quality. Considering that education spending accounted for only 0.39% of Nigeria's GDP in 2021, reforms in this area are urgently required.

These opinions and suggestions emphasise the need for the Nigerian government to allocate more resources and invest in education, as highlighted by the research participants, to improve the standards and quality of education in Nigeria. This also relates to an asymmetry described by the Principal-Agent Theory, in which students, regarded as "clients or customers," cannot observe all teaching processes but can see the physical facilities. (Yalley, Juusola, and Tomola, 2018) Therefore, their perceptions are shaped by their lived experiences of what they can tangibly see in their academic environment. To strengthen and enhance the institution's quality, Nigerian universities should invest in upgrading their physical and digital infrastructure and in regular maintenance. At the same time, ongoing professional development for lecturers will help sustain strengths in pedagogy and curriculum delivery. (Ogbuofor, 2021).

This dual approach supports the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG4, which aims to provide inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all (United Nations, 2015). Additionally, aspects of SDG9, stressing resilient infrastructure and innovation, are relevant for enhancing educational facilities and digital capacity. Both international and national views, such as those by Chankslani, M and McCowen, T. (2021) and Anyira and Idubor (2020), highlight the importance of coordinated investment in infrastructure, human capital development, and policy alignment. This strategy will foster greater access and improved quality in tertiary education.

These interrelated issues collectively illustrate how systemic weaknesses continue to hinder quality improvement in Nigeria's tertiary education. Viewed through the lens of Principal Agent Theory and relevant literature, participants' comments suggest that addressing higher education challenges requires more than just increasing funding. It calls for systemic reforms to reduce asymmetries, improve accountability, and align incentives among policymakers and institutional stakeholders.

These insights lay the groundwork for the next theme, which explores how policy implementation affects the quality of tertiary Institutions in Nigeria more closely.

6.4 Theme 2: Policy Implementation Impact on the quality of tertiary Institutions in Nigeria (RQ2 and RQ4)

6.4.0 Awareness of the National Policy on Education (NPE)

All 22 participants demonstrated an understanding of the National Policy on Education (NPE), viewing it as a comprehensive guide to Nigeria's educational objectives, policies, principles, and programmes across all levels of education in Nigeria. The policy was generally perceived as a framework designed to promote accessible, high-quality education. This supports Rasheed (2020), who emphasises that the awareness of the policy frameworks is essential for successful implementation. From a critical realist standpoint, awareness is a structural condition for action, but whether this understanding leads to actual practice depends on specific contextual and institutional factors.

6.4.1 Implementation of the National Policy on Education (NPE)

Participants expressed mixed views on the implementation of the National Policy on Education (NPE). Twelve indicated that the policy was being implemented in their Institutions, while seven disagreed, citing inefficiency and non-compliance with established norms. Three remained vague or undecided about the extent of adoption.

The quantitative findings reinforced these mixed perceptions. A majority (62%) agreed that compliance with the NPE guidelines is essential for achieving institutional goals, suggesting a general acknowledgement of their importance. However, both students and staff mention gaps in the actual implementation of the policy (Chapter 4, Section 4.2.2), particularly the lack of effective monitoring structures, an issue also identified in earlier studies (Ogunode & Abubakar, 2020). This points to a typical principal-agent challenge: the policy (principal) provides the framework, yet weak enforcement allows institutional actors (agents) to deviate from the intended goals. (Yallew et al., 2018). Statistical evidence further confirmed a link between policy effectiveness and perceived quality. For instance, staff responses revealed a significant association between administrative practices and quality perceptions ($\chi^2(1, N = 122) = 5.71, p < .05$, Cramer's $V = .216$). A stronger relationship emerged among students ($\chi^2(1, N = 186) = 20.871, p < .05, V = .335$), indicating that the presence or absence of policy implementation is more evident in student experiences. This suggests that students, as direct beneficiaries of policy outcomes, are more likely to be aware of and sensitive to gaps in practice.

6.4.2 National Policy on Education (NPE) Implementation and Implications

Most staff and students agreed that proper implementation of the National Policy on Education (NPE) would significantly enhance the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria. They emphasised that for the policy to achieve its intended purpose, it must align with national and societal needs, be adequately funded, and be managed by competent administrators. They argued that effective implementation would strengthen accountability, ensure timely student graduation, improve teaching and learning, and make curricula more responsive to labour market and societal demands.

Quantitative data (see Table 4.3) supported these perceptions, showing that institutions with stronger NPE compliance reported higher quality outcomes in areas such as teaching effectiveness, student satisfaction, and administrative responsiveness. The significance of this finding is that policy awareness alone does not guarantee improvement, rather, it is the institutional commitment to apply NPE principles that determines perceived quality. This reinforces Adeyemi's (2011) and Imam's (2012) argument that policy outcomes depend less on the policy text and more on how institutions interpret, operationalise, and monitor implementation.

Participants' call for stronger monitoring mechanisms provides further insight into why implementation gaps persist. Although Nigeria's education policy framework clearly outlines roles, standards, and accountability measures, these are often undermined by weak enforcement and limited institutional capacity. This reflects what Ogunode and Abubakar (2020) describe as the "implementation dilemma," where sound policy design is rarely matched by effective delivery. Thus, while the NPE articulates laudable objectives on paper, in practice, these are only partially realised due to poor monitoring, bureaucratic inefficiency, and resource constraints.

From the Principal-Agent Theory perspective, these findings demonstrate the tension between policy formulators (the principal) and implementers (the agents). This suggests that when monitoring oversight is weak, agents may pursue organisational or personal interests that diverge from policy objectives. This leads to what Ross and Meckling (1976) described as moral hazard, where institutions outwardly comply with policy expectations but fail to deliver on outcomes. Strengthened monitoring and clear performance incentives can, therefore, reduce

information asymmetry and restore alignment between the principal's goals and the agent's actions.

From this perspective, implementing the National Policy on Education (NPE) can be linked to familiar agency challenges discussed in (Chapter 2, Section 2.1.4.) Information asymmetry issues relate to institutions displaying formal compliance while concealing ongoing problems such as overcrowded classrooms, poorly equipped laboratories, and weak enforcement of standards needed for course accreditation or funding. (Obadara and Alaka, 2013) This can impair principals' ability to evaluate performance and enforce policies consistently and fairly. Moral hazard becomes apparent when specialised universities for agriculture, technology, or education now offer law, business administration, or economics programmes, and some technical colleges have started providing non-technical degrees. Short-term revenue motives often drive these actions under weak government oversight rather than the visions of the NPE's national manpower planning. (Oyeweso, 2020; NUC, 2019). Adverse selection occurs when funds or approvals are granted without proper understanding of institutional capabilities, favouring superficial signals over real strength and resulting in poor outcomes and neglected performance issues. Motivational challenges are compounded by irregular salary payments and underfunding, which reduce staff morale, trigger strikes, and shift managers' focus from policy adherence to survival strategies. (Saint et al., Asiyai, 2013) A mismatch in risk preferences further affects implementation, as leaders often prefer visible, short-term, low-yield projects such as ceremonial infrastructure over tangible, higher-impact investments in staff development, research, and modern learning facilities. (Afolayan, 2015) These behaviours collectively weaken the policy's intent, distort programme selection and resource distribution, lead to duplication among institutions designed to provide complementary functions, and consequently widen the gap between national policy objectives on paper and the realities of tertiary education delivery. This results in declining confidence among staff and students, diminishing perceptions of quality and accountability. Within the NPE's framework, achieving the policy agenda's successful implementation depends on credible monitoring, transparent performance data, and incentive structures that make compliance more attractive than short term deviations, while balancing autonomy and accountability. (NUC, 2019)

Participants also emphasised stakeholder participation as a key feature of effective policy implementation. Empirical data showed that institutions adopting participatory governance

models reported higher perceived quality. This indicates that decision-making processes are as important as the decisions themselves. Such approaches foster ownership and transparency, reducing passive compliance risks. Adeyemi (2011) and Madani (2019) further highlight that inclusivity in governance promotes mutual accountability, enabling staff and students to become active agents in improving quality rather than mere recipients of policy directives.

Another recurring theme in the interviews was the call for increased institutional autonomy. Participants argued that without the flexibility to adapt NPE guidelines to local contexts, implementation remains mechanical and less effective. Autonomy allows institutions to respond to local realities while remaining aligned with national policy. As Imam (2012) and Yallew et al. (2018) note, autonomy coupled with accountability creates a feedback loop that encourages innovation, efficiency, and ongoing improvement. Centralised control within Nigeria's education system often restricts institutional discretion and delays reforms. The critical realist approach offers a deeper explanation. As discussed earlier in Section 3.3.1, critical realism distinguishes between policy structures (the real) and their actual implementation (the empirical). The findings demonstrate that although structures such as policy frameworks, accreditation guidelines, and monitoring units are in place, underlying causal mechanisms, such as inadequate funding, politicised appointments, and limited autonomy, prevent these from functioning effectively. This suggests that realising policy goals requires addressing these deeper causal factors rather than merely refining policy wording.

Supporting this interpretation, quantitative data (see Tables 4.9 and 4.11) reveal that institutions with more efficient administration and participatory systems scored higher on quality perception measures. This indicates that policy implementation produces measurable outcomes, supporting literature that links administrative effectiveness to educational quality (Adeyemi, 2011; Olatunji, 2018; Ogunode & Abubakar, 2020). The implication is that reforms should focus on strengthening administration as a foundation for enhancing quality.

Secondary literature further contextualises why these results align with broader evidence. Studies by Ng (2015), Madani (2019), and Ogunode and Abubakar (2020) show that countries which institutionalise monitoring, empower administrators, and invest in training tend to achieve more sustainable policy outcomes. Conversely, systems relying solely on central control often achieve compliance without genuine transformation, a pattern evident in Nigeria.

Overall, triangulated data suggests that administrative practices influence perceived quality both directly and indirectly. Qualitative insights reveal how awareness, participation, and application of the NPE matter, while quantitative data demonstrate their impact on perceived outcomes. Hence, quality is inseparable from how the policy is implemented, as weak governance structures and limited autonomy undermine the NPE's aims, turning its promises into mere aspirations rather than realities.

In conclusion, the findings suggest that the current experience gap between the objectives of the National Policy on Education and its actual outcomes mainly arises from implementation challenges rather than flaws in policy formulation. From a Principal-Agent point of view, the study reveals that weak supervision/monitoring, sound accountability structure, and information asymmetry between governments bodies and higher education institutions continue to undermine effective policy delivery. These institutions often operate with limited oversight and interpret policy directives independently, leading to inconsistencies in compliance and diverse quality standards.

Through the triangulation of findings, it is evident that administrative practices play a crucial role in shaping Nigeria's tertiary education quality. The qualitative data highlight the importance of awareness and proper implementation of the NPE for success, while the quantitative analysis shows the statistical significance of effective administration. Collectively, these results affirm that good governance and strict policy adherence are key to realising the policy's objectives.

The findings have important implications. When coordination, reporting, and enforcement strategies are inconsistent, even well-designed policies may not lead to real improvements in teaching, learning, or institutional governance. For real progress, implementation needs to be transparent, based on data, and founded on clear accountability between principals and agents. Strengthening monitoring, aligning incentives with institutional performance, and encouraging responsible autonomy will help tertiary institutions better meet the goals of the NPE.

This evidence also corroborates existing research cited in the study, emphasising the importance of comprehensive reforms to enhance compliance with national policies and optimise resource allocation. Tackling these structural and behavioural challenges will enable Nigeria's tertiary institutions to achieve the aims of the NPE more effectively and improve educational quality.

Success relies on increased collaboration among key stakeholders and the consistent use of empirical data to inform decisions.

Ultimately, Nigeria's educational policies' success depends on bridging the gap between structure and practice, ensuring the NPE functions not merely as a statement of intent but as an effective mechanism to enhance educational quality, relevance, and equity across the tertiary sector in Nigeria.

6.5 Theme 3: Funding perceptions and their influence (RQ3 and RQ5)

Funding emerged as a central theme in determining the quality of tertiary education in this study. Both qualitative and quantitative findings suggest that adequate and timely funding is perceived as a crucial factor in achieving high-quality tertiary education outcomes. Throughout the data, participants repeatedly stressed that inadequate funding limits institutional capacity, affects teaching and learning, and negatively influences infrastructural and research development in the teaching and administration of quality educational delivery.

6.5.1 Perceptions of Funding

Nearly all the participants mentioned and highlighted that adequate funding is crucial for improving educational quality. Twenty-one of the twenty-two interviewees believed that current government funding allocations were insufficient and negatively impacted on the institutional outcomes. Only one participant, argued that the issue was not with the amount of funds but with mismanagement and corruption. While not the prevailing view, this perspective provides a vital counterpoint, highlighting the complex link between funding and institutional accountability. It argues that increasing funding alone will not lead to improvements without strong internal governance. This aligns with Imam (2012) and Ogbuofor (2021), who note that financial inefficiency and administrative corruption can negate the benefits of higher funding.

Quantitative data corroborates this perception. As demonstrated in Chapter 4, Table 4.11a, approximately 85% of staff and student respondents consider government funding insufficient for achieving institutional goals. This consistency between qualitative and quantitative results reflects a shared understanding among stakeholders that underfunding remains both persistent and systemic. The literature supports this view: Olatunji (2018), Madani (2019), and Ng

(2015) identify ongoing underfunding as a structural barrier to quality achievement, while UNESCO's 26% budgetary benchmark recommendation for education continues to be unmet in Nigeria, with allocations ranging between 6% and 10%. This financial shortfall, along with inadequate monitoring, perpetuates a cycle of insufficiency and unfulfilled institutional needs. From a Principal-Agent point of view, this suggests a longstanding issue of incentive misalignment, the government (principal) sets ambitious policy goals without providing sufficient resources. At the same time, institutions (agents) struggle to meet expectations within severe budget constraints.

6.5.2 Funding Sources

Most participants also noted that government allocations remain the primary funding source, complimented with other Internally generated revenue sources (IGR), such as, private donations, and external grants, playing supplementary roles. However, these alternative sources were described as irregular and unsustainable. Quantitative results supported this, showing that 76% of staff and students believed government funding was not only inadequate but also unreliable.

The literature corroborates these concerns. Kivistö (2005) and Ng (2015) highlight the importance of diversifying funding sources to reduce over- reliance on Federal and state government allocations. Comparative studies in Sub-Saharan Africa indicate that while diversification can enhance institutional resilience, government funding remains the cornerstone of equitable access (Materu, 2007). Similarly, Adeniyi (2023) notes that sustainable financial models must combine state responsibility with additional sources such as alumni contributions and private partnerships. Studies from Kenya and Tanzania (Nyanchoka, 2021; Mgaiwa & Poncian, 2016) show that strong public-private partnerships can enhance financial sustainability while still maintaining the government's duty to provide equitable access.

From a Principal-Agent Theory perspectives, funding diversity poses both opportunities and risks. It allows institutions to generate resources proactively but also raises the possibility of goal displacement. When underfunded institutions depend heavily on IGR, they might focus on revenue-generating programmes or services that could undermine academic quality and policy goals. This creates a moral hazard, where agents prioritise short-term financial survival over aligning with national educational aims.

6.5.3 Efficiency and Effectiveness of Funding Procedures

Participants consistently pointed out delays in disbursement of funds as a major problem. Noting that even after approval, funds are frequently released late, disrupting planning and leading to operational inefficiencies. One staff member described institutions as turning into “resource-poor organisations” because of unpredictable disbursement of funds and bureaucratic delays. Quantitative data backed this up, with 68% of respondents expressing dissatisfaction with the delayed release of funding.

This aligns with findings by Imam (2012), Ogbuofor (2021), and Ogunode & Musa (2020), who state that inconsistent disbursement and poor financial coordination weaken institutional effectiveness and accountability. Under the Principal-Agent model, these inefficiencies reflect information asymmetry, whereby agents are expected to deliver outcomes without timely or predictable financial inputs from principals. Consequently, planning becomes weaker, with a focus on short-term solutions and reactive management instead of strategic implementation of the NPE.

Participants also proposed several reforms to improve funding effectiveness and accountability. These included increasing government funding to meet institutional needs, ensuring timely and predictable disbursements, promoting structured public-private partnerships, expanding access to research grants and endowments, and strengthening institutional capacity for financial management (Otonko, 2021).

While these ideas were broadly accepted, their scale and practicality differ. Increasing government funding was seen as an immediate priority, as ongoing underfunding remains a major obstacle to quality. However, participants also acknowledged that simply increasing allocations would not guarantee improvements without mechanisms for transparent use and regular audits. This aligns with the views of Ogbuofor (2021) and Adeniyi (2023), who stress that sustained funding must be coupled with institutional accountability and performance-based budgeting.

The need for timely disbursement stresses predictability more than simply larger sums. Delays in releasing funds interfere with planning cycles and can lead to wasteful short-term expenditure, reducing administrative efficiency (Imam, 2012). Similarly, while public-private partnerships (PPPs) offer promising options, they depend on the context. Participants observed that, although PPPs can diversify income and ease government budget pressures, poorly regulated partnerships might shift focus toward commercial activities and worsen inequalities. Studies from Kenya and Tanzania (Nyanchoka, 2021; Mgaiwa & Poncian, 2016) demonstrate that successful PPPs require strong oversight and clear quality standards.

Finally, building administrative capacity and efficient financial management is crucial. Weaknesses in budgeting, procurement, and reporting maintain inefficiencies and diminish trust in the system. Developing managerial skills and staff training supports the Principal-Agent framework by improving oversight and reducing information asymmetry between government funders and administrators.

Overall, these reform ideas demonstrate participants' awareness that funding challenges extend beyond the amount allocated. They acknowledge that quality improvement relies on how funds are distributed, managed, and held accountable within transparent frameworks.

The combined results from both data sources suggest that perceptions of funding sufficiency and timeliness strongly influence how staff and students assess educational quality. The analysis of funding trends shows that funding and quality are closely linked challenges in Nigeria's tertiary institutions. While qualitative findings highlight the need for more funding and diverse sources, quantitative results confirm the significance of funding adequacy as a key factor in institutional performance. These findings align with Ogunode and Musa (2020), who state that improving funding processes and accountability is vital for educational advancement. Such reforms would help sustain financial resources, infrastructure, and foster innovation aligned with national and international educational goals. Quantitative data also reveal a significant relationship between perceived funding adequacy and positive evaluations of institutional quality ($\chi^2(1, N = 186) = 8.80, p < .05; V = .230$), showing that stakeholder confidence and policy credibility depend on how funds are allocated, monitored, and used.

6.5.4 Discussion and Implications

In conclusion, findings suggest that perceptions of funding adequacy and timeliness strongly influence staff and students' views on educational quality. The results expand existing literature by demonstrating how underfunding interacts with governance inefficiencies to produce accumulated adverse effects on institutional performance. Within the Principal-Agent framework, the funding crisis reveals a more profound issue of structural dependence, where tertiary institutions lack financial autonomy and reliable oversight.

Implications are twofold. First, policy implementation relies on fiscal capacity; consistent, adequate, and accountable funding is essential to meet the goals of the National Policy on Education (NPE). Second, reforms should focus on enhancing funding efficiency, reducing bureaucratic delays, and embedding accountability at all levels of educational governance. Sustainable improvements require not only increased budgets but also transparent systems that motivate responsible management, timely reporting, and measurable outcomes.

Therefore, funding is both an economic and governance challenge. It influences the relationship between policy and institutional quality, shaping the realisation of the NPE's objectives. When funding is irregular, opaque, or poorly monitored, it perpetuates principal agent distortions, weak incentives, moral hazard, and unequal accountability, all characteristic of Nigeria's tertiary education system.

6.6 Theme 4: The Combined influence of Funding and Policy Implementation on Tertiary Education Quality

While Themes 2 and 3 examined policy implementation and funding separately as factors affecting quality, the data also revealed that their interaction produces outcomes beyond what either variable can explain alone. This theme therefore explores the combined impact of funding and policy implementation, emphasising how aligning financial resources with policy objectives enhances credibility, accountability, and institutional performance. The analysis shows that the joint effect of both factors has a greater impact on quality than considering each one individually.

6.6.1 Relationship Between Funding and Policy Implementation

All the twenty-two participants emphasised that funding and policy implementation are equally crucial for enhancing the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria. They all unanimously agree on the reciprocal importance of both variables in improving the standard of education. Stressing that, there is a need to provide adequate funding and implement sound policies for the enhancement of tertiary education in Nigeria. Participants further observed that the actualisation of policies, including the National Policy on Education (NPE), requires adequate financial support. Likewise, funding allocations need to be structured in a way that aligns with existing policy goals to achieve tangible outcomes. These dual dependencies underscore the importance of integrated intervention from both parties in addressing and resolving the issues and challenges facing tertiary education in Colleges of Education in Nigeria.

Quantitative data supported this connection. Perceptions of quality were highest when both funding and policy implementation received positive ratings, and lowest when both were rated negatively. This combined effect was statistically significant for both staff ($\chi^2(1, N = 122) = 10.44, p < .05; V = .331$) and students ($\chi^2(1, N = 186) = 9.470, p < .05; V = .226$). These findings demonstrate that the influence of one factor relies on the other, reinforcing the view that an integrated approach is essential.

From a Principal-Agent viewpoint, this relationship reveals the mutual dependence between policy (as the government's contract) and funding (as the incentive). Policies without resources lack credibility, and funding without clear policy direction risks misallocation of resources. Ensuring alignment between both reduces information gaps, helping Institutions better meet expectations. (Cooley, 2015).

6.6.2 Significance of Policy-Aided Funding

Participants consistently argued that funding decisions are most effective when guided by clear policy priorities, especially in areas such as infrastructure, research, staff development, and student support. They suggested that the government is the main financier for all public tertiary institutions in Nigeria. However, they pointed out that funding needs to be carefully managed to align with specific policies to achieve a greater impact.

Quantitative data support this alignment: 72% of respondents agree that outcomes improve when funding is linked to specific policy frameworks. Staff and students at both institutions share this view, emphasising the importance of coherence between policy and financial decisions. This link is vital because it enhances institutional credibility, efficiency, and accountability. When disbursements align with policy priorities, they are seen as genuine commitments rather than political rhetoric. Such policy credibility encourages compliance with reforms and builds trust between leadership and the academic community. Furthermore, policy-driven funding increases allocative efficiency by directing limited resources toward high-impact areas like teaching materials, research facilities, and professional development, thus ensuring resources are used strategically to improve education quality.

Moreover, integrating policy and funding improves accountability through measurable milestones. Administrators can be assessed based on whether financial resources achieve the desired policy results. This approach reduces the information gap between policymakers (principals) and implementers (agents), promoting transparency in fund usage and outcomes. Literature supports this; Ogunode and Musa (2020) find that effective administration with sufficient funding enhances quality, while Olaleye et al. (2020) state that policy-guided funding boosts institutional performance. Studies in developing countries also show that when funding frameworks align with policy objectives, institutions operate more effectively (Nyanchoka, 2021; Lawan & Jacob, 2020). These findings indicate that institutions with clear, policy-linked funding outperform those with ad hoc or politically motivated allocations. Conversely, weak policy guidance or unpredictable funding often results in resource waste and unmet objectives.

Therefore, the significance lies not only in the amount of funding but also in the clarity of policy guidance and the accountability mechanisms that oversee its use. In the Principal–Agent framework, policy functions as a contract outlining expectations, funding serves as an incentive for compliance, and robust monitoring guarantees that the agent’s actions align with both institutional and national educational objectives.

6.6.3 Barriers to Effective Interaction Between Funding and Policy

While policy linked funding can improve institutional quality, several factors reduce its effectiveness, as identified in both quantitative and qualitative data. The main challenges are inconsistent funding, weak monitoring, and resource misalignment.

The first issue involves unpredictable resource flows. Respondents noted that inconsistent or irregular funding releases and bureaucratic delays disrupt implementation, hinder long-term planning, and cause project stagnation. Even well-structured policies are undermined when funding is unstable. This reflects a weak incentive structure, where agents lack decisive action due to unstable signals from principals. From a Principal-Agent perspective, this inconsistency damages the contractual relationship and accountability because implementers prioritise short-term survival over sustained improvements. When allocations are delayed or unpredictable, institutions cannot effectively carry out planned programmes, damaging trust in government interventions. This pattern aligns with literature by Adeyemi (2011) and Ogunode (2020), who note Nigeria's policy failures due to unstable resource flows that do not meet policy promises. Without stable financial backing, policies remain aspirational rather than actionable.

The second challenge involves weak monitoring mechanisms. Participants noted that poor oversight hampers efforts to track policy implementation, even when funds are allocated. The absence of strong oversight leads to policies drifting without accountability, as pointed out by Jacob (2020). Imam (2012) also found that ineffective monitoring impairs Nigerian tertiary institutions. From a Principal- Agent view, this monitoring failure increases information asymmetry between government (principal) and institutions (agents), creating room for misalignment and non-compliance. Many participants observed that oversight mainly focuses on financial compliance rather than verifying whether funded initiatives achieve educational goals. This narrow monitoring scope allows programmes to drift from policy objectives, making performance assessments superficial and based on expenditure rather than impact.

The third challenge is resource misalignment, with participants expressed concerns over resource mismanagement and corruption. One participant specifically mentions corruption as a factor that hampers the achievement of policy-driven funding goals. This is consistent with existing literature, which identifies corruption as a persistent obstacle in Nigeria's education sector (Ogbuofor, 2021; Ogunode & Musa, 2020). Quantitative data show only a weak positive

link between funding levels and policy compliance, indicating that simply increasing funding alone does not guarantee effective policy implementation in practice. This result suggests that, without proper safeguards, monitoring, and accountability mechanisms in place, the impact of funding may be limited, as resources are not always used in ways that fully support the intended policy outcomes.

Where oversight is weak, funds may be diverted to non-priority areas, absorbed by administrative costs, or misapplied to projects that do not directly improve teaching and learning. This explains why, despite quantitative data showing a generally positive perception of funding adequacy, there remains a weaker correlation between funding levels and effective policy implementation. In other words, money alone does not translate into improved quality when accountability structures are weak.

Overall, these obstacles demonstrate why integrating funding and policy remains challenging in practice. Although participants acknowledged the potential benefits of alignment, issues like inconsistency of funding allocation, poor oversight, and mismanagement weaken the link between financial inputs and policy results. This creates a delicate system and situation where even well-planned policies often struggle to produce significant outcomes because the funding and administrative structures needed to support them are unreliable. Achieving synergy and coherence between funding and policy implementation demands more than just increased budgets. Key factors include predictability, transparency, and consistent monitoring. Institutionally, there should be a clear chain connecting funding, outputs, and measurable results. This ensures funds stay aligned with their intended purpose and that impacts are visible to staff and students. Effective monitoring also minimises information gaps, prevents misuse of funds, and boosts public trust in educational governance.

6.6.4 Clarifying the Literature and Extending the Debate

The findings of this study reinforce what much of the literature on higher education reform has established: that the interaction between policy and funding significantly influences institutional performance. Studies by Olaleye et al. (2020) and Ogunode (2020) demonstrate that when institutions receive sufficient funding and policies are effectively implemented,

outcomes such as student input, research productivity, and staff motivation improve markedly. Evidence from other African countries also confirms that aligning funding with policy frameworks helps address systemic gaps in access and quality (Nyanchoka, 2021; Lawan & Jacob, 2020).

However, rather than treating the literature as a separate element, this chapter integrates relevant studies throughout the analysis of funding, policy, and their combined effects on staff and students' perceptions of quality in tertiary education in Nigeria. In this way, literature functions not only as background support but also as part of the data set used to interpret participants' views, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative results. When policies are well-defined and funding is sufficient, clear improvements can be observed in staff motivation, infrastructure, teaching conditions, and student learning experiences.

Nevertheless, this study also offers new insights by revealing why alignment between policy and funding sometimes fails in practice. While previous literature has described the problem in broad terms, the present findings illustrate the mechanisms through which discrepancies occur. Participants perceived that reforms lose momentum when funding decisions are influenced by political considerations or when monitoring focuses on paperwork rather than measurable outcomes. In such cases, institutions may receive substantial funds without corresponding improvements in quality, fostering cynicism among staff and students. This finding deepens the literature by showing that perceptions of quality are shaped not just by the amount of money spent, but by the visibility and credibility of how it is spent. The implication is clear: sustainable improvement in educational quality depends on both policy coherence and predictable funding. Without these, even increased investment can become non-performing expenditure. This reinforces the principal-Agent argument that when the “contract” (policy) lacks credible enforcement, and the “incentive” (funding) is applied inconsistently, agents are likely to act in ways that prioritise convenience over commitment. The resulting inefficiency perpetuates a cycle of underperformance, where reforms are announced repeatedly but rarely fully realised.

6.6.5 Proposals to Enhance Interactions

Participants proposed several practical strategies to strengthen the link between funding and policy implementation. A common recommendation was policy-driven budgeting, which involves organising allocations in accordance with the objectives of the NPE and related frameworks. Participants argued that, without such coherence, funding often becomes fragmented and poorly aligned with institutional needs. Literature supports this view, as Ogunode and Musa (2020) emphasise that budgets detached from policy priorities often fail to deliver the expected outcomes. The suggestion is to make budgeting explicitly policy-driven, with each expenditure line linked to specific deliverables. For instance, instead of broadly allocating funds to “infrastructure,” disbursements should specify measurable actions such as “completion of library renovation to NPE standard by the third quarter.” This level of specificity ensures outcomes are trackable, promotes accountability, and enhances institutional credibility.

Another important recommendation is the adoption of predictable multi-year funding cycles. A rolling two- or three-year plan would help institutions plan better and implement projects more effectively and with fewer disruptions. Such predictability enhances efficiency in procurement, staffing, and resource management, while also reducing uncertainties that often lead to projects being abandoned. Although participants did not explicitly propose multi-year funding cycles, their concerns about political instability and lack of continuity, particularly the tendency for successive Governments to discontinue existing initiatives, point to the need for more stable and predictable funding arrangements. These views suggest that longer-term planning frameworks may be more effective than reliance on annual or ad hoc disbursements, which often create uncertainty and disrupt implementation processes. Predictable cycles would enable organisations to plan for infrastructure, staff development, and research over time. This approach aligns with international practices where long-term funding is linked to strategic education objectives (Adeniyi, 2023).

Another commonly mentioned perspective was the need for improved oversight mechanisms. Participants observed that even when funds are allocated, the lack of effective monitoring can lead to diversion or waste of resources. Therefore, implementing robust auditing and performance tracking was recommended to ensure funds are used in line with policy

commitments. This aligns with Jacob (2020), who highlights that enhanced monitoring reduces corruption and boosts compliance. The need for stronger oversight mechanisms that focus not only on financial compliance but also on performance outcomes. This could take the form of combined financial and performance audits, with periodic public reporting on policy achievements. Transparent evaluation reduces information asymmetry and discourages diversion of funds, making institutional managers more accountable to both the government and stakeholders.

The significance of stakeholder collaboration becomes clearer when considering accountability and resource inefficiencies. Improved coordination among the government, private sector, and tertiary institutions can lead to more consistent funding choices and help minimize project duplication, especially in contexts where monitoring is weak and governance is fragmented. Comparative evidence from Kenya and Tanzania demonstrates how public-private partnerships helped diversify resources and stabilise educational funding (Nyanchoka, 2021; Mgaiwa & Poncian, 2016). Additionally, staff and student involvement in policy implementation was recognised as an essential factor. Allowing stakeholders to contribute to the selection and review of key priorities increases legitimacy and ensures resources are allocated to needs that directly impact teaching and learning. This participatory approach aligns with international evidence indicating that inclusive decision-making enhances policy ownership and sustainability.

Finally, participants underscored the importance of transparency and accountability. They argued that without visible checks and balances, even sufficient funding cannot produce sustainable improvements. (Chapter 5. Section 5.5.1) Literature agrees with these results, Ogbuofor (2021) and Ogunode & Attah (2024) emphasise that transparency in both disbursement and utilisation of funds fosters trust and enhances the credibility of policy outcomes. Overall, these proposals emphasise that effective interaction between funding and policy is not merely about increasing allocations but about ensuring resources are targeted, monitored, and aligned with long-term policy goals. Quantitative analysis reveals that 74% of respondents confirmed that policy-driven funding enhances institutional performance, underscoring the necessity for reforms in these areas.

Collectively, these proposals demonstrate how effective alignment between policy and funding can transform institutional performance. Within the Principal-Agent framework, they represent clearer contracts, predictable incentives, and transparent verification processes that reduce moral hazard and promote accountability. More importantly, they affirm that real improvement in educational quality will be judged not by the amount of money allocated but by tangible results observed in classrooms, laboratories, and the broader learning environment.

The current section examines the relationship between policy implementation and funding, emphasising their connection along with the barriers and opportunities that influence their success. While these themes offer valuable insights, it is also crucial to include perspectives from staff and students, as well as survey data and existing research, to develop a more comprehensive understanding. Therefore, the following section integrates insights from various sources to provide a more detailed and cohesive analysis of how these factors shape perceptions of the quality of tertiary education.

6.7 Triangulation and discussions on Research Questions

6.7.0 Integrated summary across Research Questions

Across the six research questions, the results reveal that perceptions of quality are complex and multifaceted. Staff and students acknowledge strengths in teaching and curriculum but highlight weaknesses in infrastructure and support services. Administrative practices and funding are both crucial individually; their combined influence is significant. These findings indicate that policies and resources should be aligned to improve perceived quality.

6.7.1 Research Question 1

The triangulation of results from both quantitative and qualitative data reveals both consistencies and tensions in how staff and students perceive the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria. Overall, responses indicate a generally favourable assessment of quality, while a substantial proportion simultaneously point to serious deficiencies, particularly in infrastructure, resources, and policy implementation. This pattern suggests that participants

may recognise progress in some areas yet remain concerned about persistent systemic constraints that limit sustainable improvement. The contradiction might indicate a balance between recognising progress and worries about persistent structural issues. Additionally, staff responses could have been somewhat affected by their institutional roles, which may influence how they perceive quality.

Qualitative evidence further deepened these findings. Participants often highlighted positive experiences, such as staff dedication, innovative teaching methods, and compliance with specific aspects of the NPE. At the same time, they expressed strong concerns over inadequate facilities, inconsistent policy enforcement, and funding shortages. Examples included overcrowded classrooms, lack of internet access, outdated teaching materials, and poorly maintained laboratories. The coexistence of optimism and frustration demonstrates that perceptions of quality are nuanced and context dependent rather than uniform.

The literature clarifies this complexity. Research by Mbon et al. (2019) and Abubakar et al. (2020) suggests that investment in research infrastructure and teaching resources is crucial for educational quality. Likewise, Oviawe (2020) observed that poor infrastructure hampers instructional delivery and diminishes students' learning outcomes. These findings align with the current study's qualitative data, in which staff and students explained how inadequate facilities directly hinder effective teaching and learning.

From a theoretical standpoint, Principal-Agent Theory explains the tensions shown by the data. The government (principal) establishes overall policy goals and allocates resources, anticipating that institutions (agents) will implement them effectively. However, issues such as inconsistent funding, poor monitoring, and insufficient support structures lead to gaps between policy intentions and actual practice. These shortcomings lead to inefficiency, the misallocation of resources, and a loss of trust in the system. The staff's perception that policies exist but are not always enforced highlights these accountability issues.

The analysis of data sources reveals three main implications. Firstly, perceptions of quality are multi-layered; staff and students can acknowledge policy frameworks and dedicated teaching staff while also noticing the deterioration of quality due to infrastructural issues and insufficient funding. For example, limitations in funding for infrastructure maintenance, staff

training, and continuous professional development are reflected in participants' concerns about deteriorating facilities and limited opportunities for academic growth. Secondly, the relationship between funding and policy is a key factor shaping these perceptions. Resources alone, without clear policy direction, may be misallocated and unfocused, and policies without adequate funding may lack credibility and effective implementation. Thirdly, both existing literature and theories support the idea that misalignment among policy intent, funding provision, and implementation processes helps to explain why Nigeria's tertiary education system continues to face challenges and limitations despite multiple reform efforts.

6.7.2 Discussion: Research Question 2

The analysis of administrative policy practices showed a divided view among respondents. Quantitatively, a large proportion of respondents agreed that existing administrative policies were clear, consistent, and aligned with institutional goals, while a slightly larger proportion disagreed, citing ambiguities, selective enforcement, and limited stakeholder involvement. This divide indicates that policy frameworks are in place in Nigerian tertiary institutions, but their effectiveness is limited by inconsistent implementation and minimal engagement.

The qualitative data provided additional insight into this divide. Participants with a positive view of administrative practices described policies as transparent, clearly communicated, and supported the institution's efficiency. They mentioned that policies sometimes clarified procedures, enhanced accountability, and guided organisational direction. Conversely, critics raised concerns such as insufficient consultation during policy creation, inconsistent enforcement, and weak monitoring mechanisms. Specific examples included perceived bias in disciplinary actions, where some staff received more lenient treatment than others, which they believed damaged trust and morale.

These concerns closely align with existing literature. Yaro (2018) and Jacob (2020) argue that administrative policies in Nigerian tertiary institutions often fail due to a lack of clarity, consistency, and support from key stakeholders. Similarly, Ogunjiafor et al. (2023) and Bolaji (2015) highlight how opaque compliance mechanisms and weak enforcement undermine organisational trust and effectiveness. The qualitative evidence in this study illustrates these theoretical issues in practice, demonstrating how gaps in communication and monitoring lead to ineffective implementation. From a Principal-Agent perspective, these findings reflect the

challenges in aligning institutional actors (agents) with government and policy directives (principals). When policies are unclear or resources for implementation are insufficient, institutions might interpret directives differently, resulting in inconsistent practices and reduced accountability. Participants noted that selective policy application can also widen the information gap between the principal and the agent, undermining trust in the system. The combined evidence from quantitative, qualitative, and literature sources indicates that administrative policies, although intended to establish structure and boost efficiency, often fail due to inconsistent and unfair implementation. This variability directly affects how quality is perceived. Staff and students tend to view the institutional environment more favourably when they perceive administrative processes as transparent and inclusive. Conversely, when policies seem arbitrary or inconsistent, trust in the institution's quality diminishes. Several key takeaways emerge from these findings. Firstly, it is crucial to communicate policies clearly and consistently to prevent misinterpretation and promote shared understanding among staff and students. Secondly, involving stakeholders in policy development boosts their sense of ownership and increases the likelihood of policies being practical in real-world settings. Thirdly, investing in capacity building for administrative officers is vital, as successful implementation relies not only on having policies but also on the skills of those responsible for executing them. Lastly, regular policy reviews should be implemented to ensure policies remain relevant and responsive to evolving institutional needs.

Overall, the findings for RQ2 reveal a dual reality: policies exist and sometimes operate effectively, but gaps in clarity, enforcement, and participation weaken their wider impact. Unless these systemic issues are addressed, administrative policies will continue to generate mixed perceptions, enhancing institutional quality in some areas while simultaneously undermining it in others.

6.7.3 Discussion: Research Question 3

Perceptions of funding arrangements among staff and students showed both stability and dissatisfaction. Quantitatively, a clear majority of staff and about half of the students agreed to some extent that the current funding provides stability for core activities, particularly recurring costs such as salaries. Meanwhile, a significant minority of staff respondents and a comparable proportion of students disagreed, citing insufficient funds and poor alignment with institutional

priorities. This division highlights a broader paradox in Nigerian tertiary funding: allocations prevent collapse but do not promote growth or innovation.

The qualitative findings deepened understanding by illustrating how staff and students experience these funding shortages firsthand. Participants reported ongoing shortages of teaching facilities, outdated learning materials, and insufficient research support. Staff highlighted issues like delayed pay and limited opportunities for professional growth, which they linked to underfunding, leading to low morale and sometimes industrial action. Students also noted the absence of bursaries or scholarships for disadvantaged learners, which worsened inequalities in access and participation. Some participants argued that although funds appeared to be available, mismanagement and corruption diminished their effectiveness, leaving essential needs unmet.

The literature supports these perspectives. Ogunode, Attah, and Ebute (2024) recognise that recurring allocations promote predictability, but they argue that sufficiency remains problematic as the demand for quality increases. Jacob, Lawan, and Solomon (2021) highlight structural challenges such as low disbursement rates and the lack of strategic funding mechanisms, which undermine educational outcomes. Similarly, Ogunode et al. (2021) emphasise that bureaucratic delays and resource misallocation decrease the effectiveness of funds, reflecting participants' frustrations with inefficiency. International comparisons indicate that performance-based funding models could enhance accountability; however, these approaches have not yet been extensively tested in Nigeria.

From a principal-agent perspective, these results highlight the risks associated with misaligned incentives and incomplete contracts. The government, acting as the principal, provides funds to institutions in the expectation of better-quality outcomes. Yet, when disbursements are delayed, unpredictable, or too small, institutions (agents) may be tempted to divert resources or cut corners to survive. Additionally, weak monitoring of resource use allows inefficiency and mismanagement to persist. This scenario suggests that funding alone is insufficient without proper oversight and monitoring of resources; even sufficient resources may not yield better results.

The triangulated evidence suggests that funding arrangements, as they are currently set up, both stabilise and limit institutional performance. On one side, recurrent grant ensure that basic

functions, such as salaries, are covered, preventing collapse. On the other side, insufficient capital and research funding lead to ongoing shortfalls that hinder infrastructure development and innovation. The dual perception among staff and students, recognising stability but criticising sufficiency, reflects the paradox of Nigerian tertiary education: a state of survival without sustainable growth.

Several essential implications emerge. Firstly, concerns among staff and students highlight the need to rebalance resource allocations, emphasising capital expenditure and research alongside recurrent costs. Secondly, the differing perceptions between those who attribute issues to scarcity and those who blame mismanagement suggest the need to address both resource adequacy and utilisation simultaneously. Thirdly, international examples demonstrate that diversifying funding sources, such as through alumni contributions, partnerships, and global collaborations, can be beneficial; nonetheless, public funding remains crucial for ensuring fairness and long-term sustainability.

Overall, RQ3 reveals that staff and student perceptions of funding are inconsistent but shaped by their experiences of inadequacies, delays, and management issues. Quantitative data confirms these patterns, while qualitative interviews illustrate how these problems affect daily life. Literature and theory indicate that unless both adequacy and efficiency are addressed, funding will remain a stabilising but inadequate factor in Nigerian tertiary education.

6.7.4 Discussion: Research Question 4

The results demonstrated a strong link between perceptions of administrative policy practices and perceptions of quality in tertiary education. Quantitative data revealed that an overwhelming majority of both staff and students viewed quality positively when administrative policies were considered adequate. Only a small minority disagreed, suggesting that while concerns exist, policy practices have a significant influence on stakeholder assessments of quality. This highlights that efficient administration plays a direct role in shaping quality experiences, rather than functioning as an invisible background process. The qualitative evidence clarifies why this relationship exists. Participants explained that policies which were clearly communicated and fairly enforced contributed to building trust and credibility within their institutions. For instance, policies supporting professional development

and research were seen as directly enhancing teaching quality and academic performance. Similarly, staff noted that consistent implementation of administrative policies boosted morale and made institutional goals seem more attainable. In contrast, selective enforcement or vague directives led to suspicion and frustration, weakening commitment to institutional objectives.

The literature supports these findings. Yaro (2018) and Yusuf and Afolabi (2014) observed that coherence, equity, and monitoring in administrative policies directly influence staff attitudes and organisational outcomes. Similarly, Ubon et al. (2019) argue that transparency and inclusiveness in policy processes foster a sense of ownership, which in turn improves perceptions of quality. This aligns with participants' focus on fairness and involvement. Olatunji (2018) further indicates that policies encouraging professional development enhance both staff satisfaction and student outcomes, illustrating the tangible benefits of effective administration. From a Principal-Agent perspective, these results underscore the risks of misalignment between policy intent and institutional action. The government (principal) designs broad policies such as the NPE, but institutions (agents) interpret and implement them in various ways. When monitoring mechanisms are weak, this results in inconsistent practices, creating perceptions of unfairness. Selective enforcement, as reported by participants, reflects information asymmetry, where principals cannot fully observe how agents apply policies, leading to trust deficits and reduced accountability.

The findings highlight that policy practices are not just neutral administrative tools but actively shape perceived quality. Positive views emerged when policies were transparent, inclusive, and consistently enforced, whereas negative views were associated with inconsistency, inadequate oversight, and exclusion from the decision-making process. These contrasting experiences suggest that Nigerian tertiary institutions operate within a fragmented policy environment, where effective frameworks are in place, but their practical implementation varies.

The implications of these findings are substantial. Firstly, clarity of policy and effective communication are vital: without a clear understanding, staff interpret rules differently, resulting in inconsistent application. Secondly, fairness and consistency in enforcement are as important as the policies themselves, since perceptions of bias damage trust and morale. Thirdly, involving stakeholders in policy development enhances legitimacy and increases the likelihood that policies will be practical and widely supported. Lastly, professional

development and resources must be prioritised to ensure staff have the capacity to meet policy expectations.

Overall, RQ4 indicates that the way administrative policies are implemented significantly shapes how people view the quality of higher education in Nigeria. Transparent, inclusive, and consistently applied policies lead to more positive perceptions among staff and students. On the other hand, policies that are inconsistent or perceived as unfair tend to decrease confidence. The strong statistical relationship underscores that administrative policies are not just routine procedures but are crucial to how quality is perceived and experienced.

6.7.5 Discussion: Research Question 5

The findings suggest that perceptions of funding have a powerful yet complex impact on how staff and students assess the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria. Quantitative data showed that a strong majority of respondents viewed quality positively when funding was perceived as sufficient, with staff particularly expressing high level of agreement. However, a notable minority disagreed that the current funding arrangements have improved quality, indicating a significant difference in opinion. This emphasises the contentious role of funding as both a stabilising factor and a limitation on institutional quality.

Qualitative evidence provided deeper insights into these divisions. Participants who viewed funding positively highlighted specific areas where financial support enhanced outcomes, such as infrastructure development, better learning facilities, and staff remuneration. For instance, some noted that timely salary payments and professional development allowances helped retain staff and boost productivity. Others observed that targeted research grants and student support programmes enhanced institutional reputation and promoted equity. Conversely, participants critical of current funding practices emphasised systemic inadequacies. They reported chronic delays in disbursement, which disrupted planned projects and fostered instability. Several also noted the lack of resources for laboratories, research equipment, and up-to-date teaching materials, which, in their view, compromised the quality of the learning experience. Students remarked that bursaries and scholarships for disadvantaged groups were scarce, limiting equitable access. A recurring concern was the misalignment of budget priorities, with excessive expenditure on administrative costs while core academic and student services remained underfunded. The literature offers valuable context for these findings. Ogunode (2021) argues

that adequate and appropriate funding is a vital element of quality, influencing infrastructure, instructional materials, and staff motivation. Olatunji (2018) similarly emphasises that funding forms the foundation upon which all other quality aspects depend. However, Olaleye et al. (2020) argue that the main issue in Nigeria is not merely a lack of funds but also inefficiency in their allocation and utilisation. This aligns with participants' concerns about mismanagement at multiple levels of the system, including institutional management responsible for budget execution and, more broadly governance structures that oversee fund disbursement and monitoring such inefficiencies were perceived as a key factor undermining quality, even when funds are available.

The Principal-Agent theory offers a valuable perspective for understanding the moderate link between funding and perceived quality observed in this study. While funding is an incentive supplied by the government (principal), its effectiveness depends on how Institutions (agents) utilise it. When monitoring is weak and accountability mechanisms are lacking, funds may be diverted, delayed, or misused, reducing their influence on quality. Conversely, where transparent oversight exists, financial resources are more likely to be directed towards achieving intended outcomes. This theoretical framework emphasises that merely providing sufficient funding is insufficient; governance and monitoring are also crucial in ensuring that resources genuinely enhance quality. Integrating quantitative, qualitative, and literature evidence shows that funding is regarded as essential but insufficient for improving quality. Most staff and students acknowledge its importance, but ongoing delays, inefficiencies, and misallocations limit these positive perceptions. This dual outlook indicates that perceptions of quality in Nigerian tertiary Institutions depend not just on resource levels but also on management, allocation, and oversight of these resources.

Several implications follow. First, strategic allocation of funds is vital: resources should be prioritised towards core academic programmes, research development, teacher training/professional development and student support, rather than consumed by administrative expenses. Second, the findings underline the importance of strong financial management within Institutions; training administrative staff in fiscal responsibility could enhance the efficiency of resource utilisation. Third, diversifying funding sources through alumni contributions, private sector partnerships, and international collaborations can supplement government allocations; however, public funding remains indispensable for achieving equity and systemwide progress.

Overall, RQ5 demonstrates that funding plays a crucial role in shaping perceptions of tertiary education quality in Nigeria; however, systemic inefficiencies and governance issues significantly influence its impact. Quantitative data affirms its importance, while qualitative stories reveal frustrations caused by mismanagement and delays. Both literature and theory emphasise that while funding is essential, it must be accompanied by accountability, strategic alignment, and stakeholder trust to enhance educational quality effectively.

6.7.6. Discussion: Research Question 6

The combined analysis of funding and policy implementation shows that quality in Nigerian tertiary education is best understood as arising from their interaction rather than as separate factors. The data indicated that perceptions of quality were highest when both funding and policy implementation received positive ratings and lowest when both were rated negatively. The statistical significance association between these two variables suggests that neither adequate funding, nor Implementation of administrative policies alone are sufficient to sustain quality tertiary education instead alignment of both appears central to shaping the respondents' evaluations of performance.

What stands out and is most interesting in these results is not just the confirmation of underfunding or weak policy implementation, well-known issues from existing literature (Ogunode & Musa, 2020; Jacob, 2020), but also the evidence that their combined effect is greater than the sum of their individual impacts. Participants noted that funding only improves quality when it is directed and focused through effective policy frameworks, and that policies are ineffective without resources for proper implementation. This holistic and in-depth view demonstrates that staff and students perceive educational quality as a system where resources and governance mutually reinforce each other, rather than as separate factors.

The literature offers both supporting and contrasting perspectives, accompanied by relevant examples. Comparative and international studies in other developing African nations, such as Kenya and Tanzania, suggest that reforms could only be successful when the resources are effectively aligned with policy objectives (Nyanchoka, 2021; Mgaiwa & Poncian, 2016). Conversely, Nigeria's history demonstrates that increased funding alone does not lead to improvements due to weak accountability and corruption, which diminish the impact (Ogunode

& Abubakar, 2020). Therefore, this study's findings revealed that aligning funding effectively with policy is crucial for reforms to achieve meaningful results.

The principal-agent theory in relation to this study offers a valuable framework for understanding these findings. Policy can be viewed as the 'contract' established by the government (principal), while funding serves as the 'incentive' for Institutions (agents) to fulfil their responsibilities. When both elements are in place and transparency reduces information asymmetry, agents are more likely to align with principals' expectations, leading to better outcomes. However, situations where the contract is weak (due to poor policies) or incentives are lacking (resulting from underfunding). In that case, Institutions receive conflicting signals, which can lead to inefficiency, policy evasion, and a decline in trust.

The integration of quantitative and qualitative data in this research offers strong and wider evidence that funding and policy implementation are interconnected issues. Their combined effect is the primary influence on quality perceptions in the Nigerian tertiary education sector. This is a significant contribution, as most previous research has analysed governance and finance separately. By emphasising how these factors interact, the study fills a research gap. It offers a practical takeaway: reforms in funding or policy alone will be ineffective unless they are planned and implemented together.

The combined analysis of funding and policy implementation reveals that quality in Nigerian tertiary education is best understood as the result of their interaction, rather than the sum of their individual effects. The data indicated that perceptions of quality were highest when both funding and policy implementation were rated positively, and lowest when both were rated negatively. This significant relationship ($\chi^2(1, N = 122) = 10.44, p < .05; V = .331$ for staff; $\chi^2(1, N = 186) = 9.470, p < .05; V = .226$ for students) shows the importance of considering these two factors together.

6.8 Methodological and reflexive note

The quantitative analysis was primarily descriptive, focusing on associations rather than causality. The qualitative sample was deliberately selected to include various roles and Institutions, which allowed for an in-depth understanding but did not support statistical generalisation. These limitations were acknowledged during interpretation.

As a Nigerian researcher pursuing a doctoral degree in the UK, I hold both insider and outsider perspectives. My familiarity with the Nigerian tertiary sector provided valuable insights into the participants' stories; however, I am also mindful that my academic background influenced my interpretation. This reflexivity enhances the transparency of the discussion.

6.9 Conclusion

This chapter discusses and analyses the results from both qualitative and quantitative data, focusing on how staff and students view the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria. It demonstrates that a single factor does not define quality, but instead results from the interaction of administrative practices, funding, and policy implementation.

Four main themes organise the analysis. First, perceptions of policy implementation highlight both awareness of national frameworks and frustration over gaps in monitoring, enforcement, and institutional autonomy. Second, administrative practices influence trust, morale, and perceptions of fairness, with inclusive and transparent processes seen as key to improving quality. Third, funding is recognised as essential for progress, but delays, underfunding, and mismanagement limit its effectiveness. Ultimately, the combined impact of policy and funding is more significant than either alone, with integrated approaches yielding the most positive views of quality.

Triangulating the data in relation to the research questions confirmed that stakeholders value existing structures and acknowledge progress, yet they also consistently point out deficiencies that hinder sustainable improvements. Principal-Agent Theory helps interpret these dynamics, illustrating how gaps in monitoring, accountability, and incentives explain the gap between policy goals and actual practice.

In conclusion, the findings emphasise that educational quality in Nigerian tertiary Institutions depends not only on policy and funding but also on how well these are aligned, implemented, and perceived by stakeholders. The next chapter outlines the study's overall conclusions, contributions, and policy and practice recommendations.

Having examined the interconnectivity and roles of funding, policy implementation, and administrative practices in shaping the quality of tertiary education, this chapter highlights both the strengths and persistent challenges in the Nigerian context. The next chapter

(Chapter 7) builds on these insights to synthesise the overall conclusions of the study, outline its contributions to knowledge, and propose recommendations for policy and practice.

CHAPTER 7: Conclusion and Recommendations

7.1 Overview of Findings

This chapter consolidates the main findings from this research and provides key conclusions and recommendations. It integrates insights from quantitative and qualitative data to provide a clear understanding of the factors affecting the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria. The discussion is structured around three main integrated patterns identified through combined data analysis: (1) perceptions of educational quality and its key indicators, (2) the interaction between funding and policy implementation, and (3) institutional practices and accountability mechanisms that influence overall quality results. These patterns do not replace the four qualitative themes identified in Chapter Five. Instead, they serve as integrative insights that emerged when statistical trends were analysed alongside interview narratives during the mixed methods analysis. The first pattern, concerning perceptions of educational quality, mainly derives from Theme One, which examines how quality is understood within the Nigerian tertiary context. The second pattern, focusing on the interaction between funding and policy implementation, reflects Theme Four, emphasising their combined influence on institutional performance. The third pattern, related to institutional practices and accountability, combines insights from Themes Two and Three, which focus on how policy implementation and funding influence staff and student perceptions. In this way, these patterns serve as a broader level interpretive lenses that unify the thematic findings within the broader, integrated framework of the research. These patterns reveal how, when combined, funding, administrative, and institutional factors affect staff and student perceptions, highlighting both areas of progress and ongoing challenges within the participating institutions.

The primary aim of this study was to explore the factors that influence the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria. Therefore, the research addressed key questions regarding the current state of tertiary education quality, perceptions of administrative policy practices, the impact of funding, the relationship between funding and perceived quality, and the combined effects of financing and administrative policy. It concludes by highlighting the study's contributions to knowledge, providing practical policy and management recommendations, and identifying and proposing directions for future research.

Throughout the analysis of the results, it was recognised that there are some areas of strength in the standard of Nigerian tertiary institutions. When this chapter refers to standards, it points firstly to Nigeria's National Policy on Education (2014) and associated quality expectations (staffing norms, infrastructure adequacy, curriculum delivery). It also reflects participants' expectations, evidenced in this study, namely access to functional facilities, credible assessment, competent staff, and responsive student services. This approach resonates with Tikly (2011), who stresses that standards must be interpreted within local contexts rather than imported wholesale from international models.

However, the education at most Institutions falls short of the standard set out in the Nigerian National policy on Education and the expectations of stakeholders in the Nigerian educational sector. Both staff and students identified underfunding, policy inconsistency, infrastructural decay, outdated curricula, and a widening disconnect between graduates' competencies and labour market needs as major concerns. As discusses in (Chapter 6, section 6.5 and 6.6) Staff and students noted that, despite universities' efforts to offer quality education, broader systemic dysfunctions often hinder improvement. This study, therefore, supports a broader understanding and a shift in the definition of quality beyond that of enrolment statistics to include learning outcomes, employability, research output, and the satisfaction of those directly involved in the educational process. (Ogunode et al., 2024; Olatunji, 2018).

This study's broader perspective on quality reveals that key institutional factors, effective policy implementation, and adequate funding influence perceptions of quality in tertiary education. In the two colleges examined, effective policy implementation was demonstrated through timely decision-making, clear allocation of responsibilities, and consistent adherence to guidelines. Adequate funding was described as financial allocations that are sufficient, predictable, and transparently utilised for essential academic resources such as laboratories, libraries, staff and student support, electricity and internet facilities, and well-equipped classrooms. Both quantitative and qualitative data identified these two factors as significant predictors of perceived quality. The findings support Harvey and Green's (1993) concept of quality as fit for purpose and process consistency. They also correspond with Principal-Agent Theory (Jensen and Meckling, 1976; Kivistö, 2007), particularly in emphasising how gaps may emerge between government funding intentions and institutional practices. Adequate funding and policy effectiveness/implementation are interlinked; weaknesses in either reduce an

institution's ability to deliver quality. Overall, the evidence suggests that quality in Nigerian higher education relies not only on availability of resources but also on the alignment between policy, funding, and practice.

Combining findings from both quantitative and qualitative data enhances this understanding. Themes were derived from the qualitative analysis, while the patterns discussed here reflect broader insights that emerge when interpreting statistical trends alongside interview narratives. This demonstrates the complementarity of numerical and narrative evidence, illustrating how participants' explanations contribute to understanding the statistical patterns identified earlier. Such integration provides a more comprehensive understanding of how funding, policy implementation, and institutional practices impact perceptions of quality. This approach aligns with Creswell and Plano Clark (2018), who emphasise that mixed-methods research not only combines datasets but also improves interpretation by explaining the "why" behind the quantitative results.

The first integrated pattern revealed that administrative policy practices have a substantial impact on shaping the perception of educational quality. Clear communication, consistent enforcement, and transparent policy monitoring lead to higher confidence in institutional delivery and effectiveness. Conversely, inconsistency, delays, and politicised decision-making undermine trust in quality assurance. For example, where transparent and inclusive rules were implemented, participants reported improvements in academic services, staff morale, and students' participation. However, findings from the qualitative interviews (See Chapter 5.4.2) suggest that the politicisation of appointments, inadequate monitoring systems, inconsistent application of standards, and insufficient stakeholder engagement often compromised the objectives of these regulations. Qualitative data revealed that top-down policy design, typically detached from campus realities, further hindered effectiveness. This disconnect between policy formulation and institutional execution mirrors long-standing criticisms of Nigeria's centralised tertiary education governance (Yaro, 2018; Yusuf & Afolabi, 2014).

The second integrated pattern suggests that, perceptions of quality are closely linked to the sufficiency and visibility of funding. Participants repeatedly associated quality with visible improvements in infrastructure, staffing, and learning materials. While agencies like TETFund had positive visible effects, underfunding, uneven distribution, and late disbursements

generated frustration and a sense of neglect. This is a central insight from the study concerned with the impact of funding on both perceived and actual quality. Although participants acknowledged that funding had improved in nominal terms, it was widely perceived as inadequate when considered in relation to rising enrolment figures, inflation, and the cost of modern academic infrastructure. Staff expressed concern over stagnant salaries, outdated teaching tools, and a lack of research funding. Many students reported difficulties in accessing libraries, laboratories, and technology-enabled learning spaces. These perceptions suggest that not only is funding inadequate, but its allocation lacks strategic alignment with institutional priorities. When more money is invested without proper use or control, it does not improve the quality of education.

The third integrated pattern identified that, the strongest perceptions of quality emerged when both funding and policy implementation were robust. Statistical analysis confirmed that ratings peaked when these two factors were strong and declined when both were weak. This highlights their interdependence: effective policies require sufficient resources, and funding alone has a limited impact without consistent implementation. These findings support previous studies (Materu, 2007; Okebukola, 2015; Olatunji, 2018), which demonstrated that policy goals are attainable when backed by transparent and adequate funding mechanisms. They also align with broader literature suggesting that quality outcomes in tertiary education depend on the coherence between financial inputs, institutional governance, and accountability structures (Altbach, Reisberg and Rumbley, 2009; Yalew, 2019).

Notably, the findings emphasised that the interaction between policy and funding is vital in identifying systemic weaknesses and missed opportunities in Nigeria's tertiary education sector. Respondents observed that institutions with relatively better financial support and well implemented policies tended to perform better. This mirrors the patterns seen in the quantitative findings presented in Chapter 4, Section 4.4.6, Table 4.14, where perceptions of quality increased significantly when both policy implementation and funding were rated highly. However, as discussed in the themes emergent from the qualitative data gathered (Chapter 5, Section 5.4.2), most institutions operated under conditions where at least one of these aspects was inadequate. In some cases, relatively better-resourced institutions experienced policy lapses, while institutions with sound policies struggled due to severe financial constraints. These findings further suggest that policy implementation and adequate funding should be

managed in conjunction rather than separately, to effectively strengthen and transform the system in line with Nigeria's national development goals for tertiary education. This approach aims to ensure quality inputs and outputs that contribute to the country's growth and development (NPE, 2014; see also the detailed discussion on the goals of Nigerian tertiary education in Chapter 1, Section 1.1.5).

In summary, for Nigerian tertiary education to meet the quality standards outlined in the National Policy on Education (NPE, 2014), tertiary institutions require clear policy direction, consistent adherence to regulatory frameworks, adequate and well-planned funding, and sufficient institutional autonomy. The findings suggest that when these components are aligned, the participant observed improved institutional performance and increased confidence in quality delivery. (see Chapter 6, Sections 6.6 - 6.6.2). Conversely, fragmented governance, insufficient or poorly managed funding, and inconsistent policy enforcement weaken perceptions of quality and reduce institutional effectiveness. Addressing just one factor alone is unlikely to produce significant improvements. Therefore, the findings suggest that a coordinated approach, including governance, policy implementation, proper resource allocation, and active collaboration between regulatory bodies and institutions, is essential for effective implementation and the sustained delivery of quality.

7.2 Answering the Research Questions and Achieving the Objectives

While Section 7.1 provides an overall overview of the three main patterns identified in the study, this section directly connects the findings to each research question and its specific objective. The aim is to demonstrate how the study's objectives were achieved through the results presented in Chapters 4 and 5, which are further examined, analysed, and discussed in Chapter 6. Each summary revisits evidence from both quantitative and qualitative data, emphasising how the findings answer the research questions. To help the reader, each subsection also references the relevant earlier chapters where the data and analysis were initially presented.

RQ1/Objective 1- Perception of quality

The primary objective was to investigate how students and staff perceive what constitutes quality tertiary education in Nigeria. This was achieved through both questionnaires and

interviews, which consistently indicated that quality was linked to effective teaching, accessible and current resources, staff competence, and adequate student support. Both staff and students described quality as including sufficient funding, operational infrastructure, qualified personnel, credible assessment, and relevant curriculum presentation. These findings, presented in Chapters 4 and 5 and further analysed and discussed in Chapter 6, correspond with Harvey and Green's (1993) multidimensional concept of quality, which considers it as a blend of consistency, suitability for purpose, and value for transformation.

The findings also suggest that participants' perceptions extend beyond theoretical definitions to reflect the real challenges faced by the Nigerian tertiary system. Respondents highlighted challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, overcrowded classrooms, and curricula that do not align with labour market demands, echoing concerns raised by Olatunji (2018) and Ogunode et al. (2024). While staff commitment and student resilience were acknowledged, systemic issues like insufficient funding and poor implementation continue to influence negative perceptions of quality. Ultimately, views on quality are rooted in both participants' direct experiences and their understanding of broader institutional and policy challenges, emphasising the importance of adequate resources and effective institutions in shaping educational standards.

RQ2 / Objective 2 - Administrative policy practices

The second objective was to explore how administrative policies influence perceptions of quality. Findings showed strong links between regular, transparent monitoring and higher quality ratings. Both staff and students especially valued inclusive participation and open communication. Conversely, selective enforcement, politicised appointments, and top-down directives that did not reflect institutional realities reduced trust. Administrative practices influenced perceptions but were hindered by bureaucratic delays, poor communication, and a lack of transparency and accountability. These findings, presented in Chapters 4 and 5 and further analysed in Chapter 6, Sections 6.6.2-6.6.4, align with Principal-Agent Theory, which highlights gaps between policy principals and institutional agents (Yalew, 2018). It confirms that governance practices, not merely the existence of policy, are critical to perceptions of quality.

RQ3 / Objective 3 - Funding

The third objective was to evaluate staff and student perceptions of funding and its influence on educational quality. Funding was consistently viewed as inadequate. Questionnaires revealed widespread dissatisfaction, while interviews detailed consequences such as delayed salaries, insufficient teaching materials, and deteriorating facilities (Ajani, 2025; Altbach et al., 2009). Evidence showed that participants mainly linked sufficient funding with higher quality. (See table 4.6 and chapter 5, section 5.5) Adequate, predictable, and visible funding was associated with better infrastructure, resources, and training opportunities. Conversely, underfunding, delayed allocations, and misallocated resources compromised quality. These findings align with the broader literature, which indicates that Nigerian higher education frequently suffers from chronic under-resourcing (Ogunode, Jacob, and Musa, 2021).

RQ4-RQ6 - Objective 4: The interaction of funding and policy implementation

The final objective was to examine how funding and policy implementation interact to affect perceptions of quality. This was explored through three related research questions. Findings from the quantitative and qualitative analyses (See Chapters 4, section 4.4-4.6; Chapter 5, Section 5.6 and chapter 6, section 6.4-6.6) indicates that the relationship between these factors is both interdependent and substantially important.

First, the analysis revealed that the manner of policy implementation had a direct influence on perceived institutional quality. Second, funding alone improved perceptions primarily when focused on essential teaching and learning inputs. Third, chi-square tests showed that the most positive perceptions of quality arose when both funding and policy implementation were positive, whereas the weakest perceptions occurred when both were negative.

Both staff and students emphasised that funding and implementation together shape perceptions of quality. Neither alone was enough, confirming the interconnected relationship between the two factors. The combined effect was statistically significant, perceptions of quality were highest when both funding and implementation were viewed positively, and lowest when both were considered negatively. These results are consistent with previous discussion in chapter 6 and align with existing literature (Materu, 2007; Tikly, 2011). Which argued that quality improvements depend on the alignment between financial resources and

government practices. This also resonates with comparative governance studies (Busemeyer and Trampusch, 2012), which show that system changes are only effective when properly funded and consistently implemented with commitment. This highlights that funding and policy enactment are interconnected and mutually reinforce each other in improving quality.

This overall objective directly connects to the study's central themes. The first theme highlighted the impact of funding on the quality of teaching, learning, and infrastructure, while the second showed how weak policy implementation undermines institutional effectiveness. The third theme on governance and accountability indicated that leadership and administrative capacity influence both funding and policy success. The fourth, and overarching, theme, the interaction between funding and policy implementation, synthesised these links, illustrating that quality improvements depend on how well both are aligned in institutional practice.

This integrated view enhances understanding by providing empirical evidence of how funding and policy implementation mechanisms jointly affect perceived quality in Nigeria's higher education sector. It emphasises that funding and policy should not be viewed in isolation; instead, their coordination, supported by effective governance and accountability, drives ongoing quality enhancement.

7.3 Contributions to Knowledge

The contributions of this study are fundamental to its significance and represent the core value of the research. They demonstrate originality by expanding debates on quality in tertiary education in Nigeria, illustrating how funding and policy implementation interact, and emphasising how Nigerian staff and students perceive quality within their own institutional and policy contexts. These contributions are organised into three main areas: empirical, conceptual, and methodological.

1. Empirical Contribution

This study offers rare, systematic insights into perceptions of quality in Nigeria's Colleges of Education, a sector that has received less academic attention than universities and polytechnics

(Materu, 2007; Olayiwola, 2010; Ajani, 2025). Including perspectives from both staff and students' highlights the experiences of those immersed in the system daily, who learn, live, and work within it. This dual perspective offers a new understanding of how stakeholders perceive "quality," moving beyond policy language to reveal the realities that affect teaching, learning, and institutional performance.

Another valuable empirical contribution is highlighting the perspectives of groups whose voices are typically absent in existing studies. Nigerian higher education research often emphasises expert analyses or policy assessments, overlooking how students and staff perceive the impact of funding and policies on institutional quality. This study addresses that gap by including both groups and giving equal consideration to their views, demonstrating how their experiences and suggestions can enhance understanding of quality in real-world practice. This approach expands the evidence base and fosters a more people-centred discussion of quality in Nigerian tertiary education.

The findings suggest that although funding and policy are individually important, their combined application has the most significant influence on perceptions of quality. This study provides a practical understanding of how resource distribution and governance influence educational outcomes in developing settings.

2. Conceptual Contribution

A significant contribution of this study lies in its refinement and contextual application of Principal-Agent Theory (PAT) to the governance of tertiary education in Nigeria. While the theory has been widely used in public administration and higher education management (Ross, 1973; Kivistö, 2008; Yallew, 2014), its direct application to understanding how funding and policy implementation shape perceptions of quality in Nigeria's tertiary system remains limited. This study extends and contextualises the Principal Agent Theory by demonstrating how information asymmetry, misaligned incentives, and weak monitoring mechanisms operate within Nigerian education governance, thereby affecting institutional accountability and performance.

However, the findings suggest that while PAT effectively explains the structural links between government agencies and tertiary institutions, it does not fully consider the sociopolitical

factors that influence educational governance in Nigeria. Research by Kivistö (2008) and Yallem (2014) highlights that PAT assumes rational and transparent accountability systems, which may be absent in developing countries. In Nigeria, issues such as political interference, patronage networks, unstable funding, and limited institutional independence (Materu, 2007; Jacob, 2020) shape the behaviour of principals and agents, often outside formal accountability frameworks. These localised conditions indicate that applying PAT to Nigeria's education system requires including social and political factors that affect decision-making and compliance. Doing so would make the theory better suited to the realities where informal relationships and conflicting interests often overshadow formal agreements (Obasi, 2008; Saint, Hartnett and Strassner, 2003).

The study suggests that insufficient funding, unclear policies, or poor supervision from the “principal” (such as the government or funding body) can cause the “agent” (institutional management) to act in ways that prioritise their interests, often at the expense of quality outcomes. By linking this behaviour to staff and student perceptions, the research ties theory to real-life experiences, offering a more realistic understanding of governance failures and institutional responses.

These findings also point towards a broader conceptual implication regarding how quality may be understood within the governance framework of Nigerian Tertiary education. Building on Principal-Agent Theory and established ideas of quality in higher education (Harvey and Green, 1993; Kivistö, 2008), the findings of this study suggest consideration of an agent-centric view of quality within Nigerian tertiary education. Traditional definitions focus on excellence, fitness for purpose, value for money, and transformation (Harvey and Green, 1993). While these perspectives remain important, the findings indicate that quality may also be understood in relation to how effectively institutions fulfil the responsibilities delegated to them through national education policies and regulatory frameworks. From a Principal-Agent Theory perspective, tertiary institutions act as agents responsible for executing government educational goals, managing public resources, and delivering educational outcomes in accordance with the National Policy on Education and other regulatory expectations (Kivistö, 2008; Yallem, 2014). The findings shows that participants often assessed quality not only through educational outputs and learning experiences but also through the institution's ability to implement policies efficiently, utilise funding appropriately, maintain accountability, and meet its mandated

responsibilities. In this sense, perceptions of quality were closely linked to how effectively institutions performed their obligations within the wider governance structure of Nigerian tertiary education.

This view does not aim to replace existing ideas of quality but instead complements them by emphasising institutional responsibility, accountability, and policy implementation in shaping perceptions of educational quality. Therefore, this research suggests that adopting an Agent-Centric perspective could be a useful conceptual tool for understanding quality in tertiary education systems, where governance arrangements, resource allocation, and policy implementation significantly influence institutional performance (Materu, 2007; Kivistö, 2008). Although additional research is needed to adapt and test this approach across various types of tertiary education institutions, it offers a potentially innovative conceptual insight that arises from applying Principal-Agent Theory in this study.

In addition, the contextual application of Principal-Agent Theory in the Nigerian tertiary education sector offers a flexible analytical framework for future researchers investigating funding, governance, accountability, and policy implementation in other developing-country contexts. The study also enriches theoretical discussions by demonstrating how governance concepts originally developed within Western public administration can be adapted to explain the realities of educational systems in Sub-Saharan Africa. In doing so, it highlights the value of contextualising established theories to better reflect the political, social, and institutional conditions within which educational policies are implemented.

3. Methodological Contribution

Methodologically, this study contributes to knowledge by showing how mixed-methods research can be adapted to examine governance and quality in resource-limited educational environments. Although mixed methods are a well-established approach (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018), their application in education governance studies in Sub-Saharan Africa remains limited, particularly in the Nigerian tertiary education sector. This research demonstrates how combining quantitative descriptive analysis with qualitative thematic interpretation effectively uncovers systemic trends and individual institutional experiences. As discussed in Chapter 3,

this integration was not merely linear but interactive, enabling insights from one method to inform and deepen understanding in the other.

This study contributes methodologically by integrating survey data and in-depth interview evidence within a convergent mixed-methods framework. Instead of treating the qualitative insights as separate streams, they were systematically used to interpret and improve the statistical patterns, offering deeper explanations. This approach shows how perception-based measures can be robustly analysed and integrated to produce credible governance research in complex tertiary education contexts. It shows that manual thematic analysis, guided by local knowledge, can substitute automated tools without losing rigour. The method emphasises researcher reflexivity and the importance of authentic participant voices, including input from underrepresented groups such as non-teaching staff and students, alongside statistical data. This integrated approach proves especially valuable in Chapters 4 to 6, where participant stories complement and contextualise the statistical findings, enriching the understanding of quality and governance issues.

This methodological approach builds on existing mixed-methods frameworks by presenting a practical model for conducting credible, context-sensitive educational research in settings with limited resources. It demonstrates that strong evidence can be generated even when institutional data are fragmented or incomplete, providing a template for future studies on governance and policy implementation in developing countries.

7.4 Policy and Practical Implications

The findings suggest that enhancing the quality of tertiary education necessitates integrated reforms that align policy, governance, and resources. Based on the evidence presented, Six practical recommendations emerge, each grounded in the data and supported by existing literature.

Establish a Strengthened and Harmonised National Quality Assurance Framework

Although the Nigerian tertiary education sector has regulatory agencies that are responsible for sector-specific quality assurance, such as the National Universities Commission (NUC), the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), and the National Commission for Colleges

of Education (NCCE), these entities often operate independently and enforce standards inconsistently. The QAA (2021) Country Report on Nigeria emphasises that fragmented oversight and uneven standards hinder comparability and erode public confidence in tertiary institutions. Participants in this study associated perceived quality with clear and consistently applied standards, including sufficient staffing, operational facilities, and trustworthy external evaluations. Repeated concerns about irregular monitoring and lack of transparency weaken trust in the system. Improving coordination among these agencies through a unified national framework with shared benchmarks, external peer reviews, and public reporting would bolster accountability and uniformity. This aligns with Materu's (2007) view that fragmented quality assurance systems in Sub-Saharan Africa damage institutional credibility and supports Dangara and Chinyere's (2022) assertion that weak monitoring remains a significant barrier to progress in Nigeria.

However, implementing a harmonised national quality assurance framework is likely to face practical and political challenges. Institutional resistance to increased external oversight, overlapping statutory mandates among regulatory bodies, and concerns about institutional autonomy may complicate coordination efforts. Resource limitations, particularly in conducting regular monitoring visits, maintaining transparent reporting systems, and consistently enforcing standards, may further hinder effective implementation. There is also the risk that centralisation, if not carefully planned, might lead to bureaucratic delays rather than resolve existing inefficiencies. Overcoming these potential obstacles would necessitate clear role definitions, phased implementation plans, and sustained governmental commitment to reform. Without these safeguards, efforts to harmonise may unintentionally renew the problems they seek to eliminate.

Within the institutions in focus, implementation could involve establishing internal quality enhancement committees that work closely with existing quality assurance units and with regulatory requirements. These committees could conduct periodic self-evaluations, coordinate internal audits, monitor compliance with quality standards, and prepare departments for external reviews by the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) and other regulatory agencies. Regular publication of quality improvement reports and action plans would also help strengthen transparency and accountability within the institutions.

Institutionalise Inclusive and Context-Sensitive Policy Development

The study emphasises the need to integrate inclusive and context-sensitive approaches into institutional policymaking. Interviews revealed widespread dissatisfaction with authoritarian rule-making and politicised choices that ignored campus realities, damaging staff morale and student confidence. Participants noted that policies were frequently imposed without proper consultation or customisation to local circumstances, resulting in poor implementation and limited stakeholder involvement. Establishing formal co-design processes and organised bottom-up feedback could help bridge the divide between policy intentions and real-world application, enhancing legitimacy and acceptance.

Practically, this involves establishing institutional and national platforms that engage academic staff, students, and administrators in policy review. Regular consultations with stakeholders, participatory budgeting, and feedback sessions help ensure policies reflect real-world conditions, thereby enhancing responsiveness and accountability. These approaches support Tikly's (2011) view that improving overall education quality should consider local contexts and social justice, and echo Busemeyer and Trampusch's (2012) idea that participatory governance fosters ownership and sustainability. Evidence from this study, particularly in Chapter 6, Sections 6.6.2 and 6.6.4, demonstrates that when staff and students feel involved in institutional decisions, policies are more likely to be accepted and perceived as higher quality.

Strengthen Needs-Based Funding Allocation Mechanisms

Building on previous discussions about how funding adequacy and timeliness influence perceptions of quality, the evidence from this study suggests the importance of adopting a funding strategy that responds to each institution's unique needs and developmental goals. Participants consistently linked quality to sufficient infrastructure, teaching and learning resources, staff development opportunities, research support, and student services. Nonetheless, the findings reveal that institutions often face very different circumstances, which necessitate diverse levels and forms of financial support.

The results from Chapters 4 and 5, discussed in Chapter 6, indicate that a one-size-fits-all approach to funding might not effectively address differences in institutional capacity, infrastructure, staffing, and resource requirements. Institutions located in disadvantaged areas or those facing significant infrastructural and staffing issues may need extra support to meet the quality standards set by the National Policy on Education (NPE, 2014). Additionally, institutions at various developmental stages may prioritise different funding areas, such as staff training, research, laboratory infrastructure, digital facilities, or student support services.

A needs-based funding approach would therefore enable funding bodies and government agencies to allocate resources according to identified institutional requirements rather than applying uniform allocation models across all institutions. Such an approach would promote greater equity by recognising contextual differences while supporting institutions in addressing their most pressing quality-related challenges. This recommendation is consistent with broader higher education research, which argues that funding allocation mechanisms should recognise differences in institutional capacity, developmental priorities, and resource requirements in order to promote greater equity and educational quality (Johnstone, 2004; UNESCO, 2021). Additionally, it addresses concerns in Nigeria about the unequal effects of resource limitations across tertiary institutions (Ogunode and Adah, 2020).

Implementation might involve regular institutional needs assessments carried out collaboratively by regulatory agencies and institutional management. These assessments would analyse issues like infrastructure gaps, staff training needs, student enrolment challenges, research capabilities, and technological requirements. Funding decisions could then be based on the identified priorities, ensuring that resources target areas that enhance educational quality and institutional performance. In the Colleges of Education involved, this could mean dedicated funding for staff postgraduate staff training, laboratory and library upgrades, Information Technology improvements, student support services, and infrastructure repairs highlighted during reviews. This strategy would foster quality improvements while ensuring fairness, sustainability, and ongoing institutional growth across Nigeria's higher education sector.

Strengthen Monitoring and Evaluation of Policy Implementation

For reforms to be truly effective, establishing strong systems for monitoring and evaluating policy implementation is important. A common issue highlighted in this study is weak follow-

up, where policies are well-documented but poorly implemented, often due to insufficient accountability measures and political interference. Enhancing implementation processes with independent oversight bodies, real-time dashboards, and enforceable sanctions and incentives can improve implementation and transparency. This aligns with Ogunode, Jacob, and Musa's (2021) observation that Nigerian education policies frequently struggle during implementation and supports Rasheed's (2019) view that accountability frameworks are essential for closing the gap between policy formulation and actual results.

At the institutional level, monitoring and evaluation could be strengthened by establishing regular policy implementation review mechanisms that involve academic departments, faculty representatives, quality assurance units, and institutional management. Within the participating Colleges of Education, semesterly review meetings could be used to assess progress against institutional objectives, identify implementation challenges, and monitor compliance with policy requirements. Annual implementation reports, supported by clear performance indicators and stakeholder feedback, would further promote transparency and provide evidence for continuous improvement. Such mechanisms would help ensure that educational policies are not only adopted but also consistently translated into improved teaching, learning, and student support outcomes.

Address Brain Drain Through Incentive Mechanisms.

Addressing brain drain in human capital is a key factor in sustaining quality in Nigerian tertiary education, as it directly affects staff retention, institutional stability, and academic effectiveness. (Adeyemi et al., 2018; Baridam and Don-Baridam, 2020) The study's findings suggest that staff retention is closely related to perceptions of institutional stability and academic effectiveness. Participants consistently linked declining quality to the exit of experienced lecturers, limited research opportunities, and restricted career progression. In both institutions, staff and students associated quality delivery with continuity in teaching, mentoring, and administrative coordination. When experienced personnel left, participants reported disruptions in course planning, supervision, and academic support. These insights suggest that staff turnover impacts more than just numbers; it directly affects teaching quality, institutional memory, and overall confidence in the institution's performance.

Respondents identified competitive pay, clear career development paths, enhanced research support, and recognition of academic accomplishments as key factors in reducing staff turnover. When promotion processes were perceived as slow or unclear, morale declined, and commitment weakened. Similarly, limited access to research funding and professional development reduced motivation and long-term engagement. These findings align with previous research by Imam (2012) and Iwara, Ishmael, and Kilonzo (2024), who suggest that limited career progression leads to academic attrition, and Babatunde (2018), who states that neglecting professional growth jeopardises system stability. Participants also stressed that incentives should go beyond salary increases to include meaningful professional development and supportive work environments.

However, implementing effective incentive mechanisms faces several practical challenges. Increasing salaries and offering more development opportunities require sustained financial commitment within a context of competing national priorities. Public sector salary systems and regulatory frameworks may restrict institutional flexibility in designing tailored retention packages. Additionally, disparities in access to incentives across departments or institutions can create perceptions of unfairness if not properly managed. Another broader challenge is ensuring that incentive reforms align with transparent governance practices to prevent politicisation or favouritism. For brain drain strategies to be successful, they must be consistent, well-communicated, and supported by credible monitoring structures. Without coordinated reforms, incentive mechanisms risk being short-term solutions rather than sustainable ones.

Within the participating Colleges of Education, implementation could involve creating structured staff retention and professional development plans tailored to institution's needs. These plans might include support for postgraduate studies, mentoring programs for early-career academics, clear promotion pathways, research assistance initiatives, and recognition schemes for teaching and administrative excellence. Conducting regular staff satisfaction reviews could help institutional leaders identify emerging retention issues early and take proactive measures. These strategies would enhance institutional capacity and promote the long-term retention of experienced academic and administrative staff.

Improve Information Technology and Digital Learning Resources

Ultimately, the findings highlight the pressing need to upgrade information technology (IT) and digital learning facilities. Both staff and students noted limited accessibility to libraries, labs, and technology-based learning spaces. Investing in broadband, digital libraries, and learning management systems would enhance current services and increase resilience to future disruptions. This aligns with Adeyemi (2011), who described Information Technology as crucial for improving access and quality in Nigerian higher education, and with Ajani (2025), who highlighted that technological investments are vital for expanding participation.

Within participating Colleges of Education, implementation could begin with phased Information Technology development plans informed by institutional needs assessments and available resources. Priority areas may include improving internet connectivity, upgrading computer laboratories, expanding access to digital libraries, and strengthening learning management systems. Institutions could also establish dedicated Information technology support teams responsible for maintaining digital infrastructure and providing technical assistance to staff and students. Regular digital skills training for academic and administrative staff would further enhance the effective integration of technology into teaching, learning, research, and institutional administration. Such measures would help ensure that IT investments translate into meaningful improvements in educational quality and student learning experiences.

Together, these interconnected recommendations demonstrate that improving Nigeria's tertiary education system requires not only policy reforms but also sustained funding, effective monitoring, and inclusive governance practices. The findings suggest that improving the quality of tertiary education requires comprehensive reforms that integrate policy, governance, and resource allocation. Six practical recommendations have been identified, each based on the data and supported by existing literature sources.

7.5 Strengths of the Study

Despite some limitations, this study has notable strengths. It used a mixed-methods approach, combining survey questionnaires with semi-structured interviews. This combination enabled the understanding of descriptive patterns within the context of participants' real experiences. The integration provided richer, more detailed insights than using either method separately.

The study also involved two Federal Colleges of Education, Institutions that reflect Nigeria's diversity under the Federal Character principle, which guides staff recruitment and student admissions. This ensured that perspectives from across the country were represented, even though both Institutions are located within a single geopolitical zone.

Furthermore, grounding the findings in established theories such as Principal-Agent Theory strengthened the analytical rigour and ensured interpretations were both descriptive and theoretically sound. Finally, by linking Nigerian evidence with broader comparative literature (e.g., Materu, 2007; Tikly, 2011; Altbach et al., 2009), the study adds to global discussions on tertiary education quality while remaining attentive to local contexts.

7.6 Limitations of the Study

This study has certain limitations. It concentrated on two Federal Colleges of Education within a single geopolitical zone, which naturally limits the scope of generalisation. Although both Institutions operate under the National Policy on Education (2014) and adhere to the Federal Character principle in staff recruitment and student admissions, thus drawing participants from across Nigeria, the sample cannot be assumed to represent all public tertiary Institutions nationwide, including state and specialised colleges, nor does it include private sector Institutions.

The study also used cross-sectional survey (questionnaire) data, which show associations but not causality. Additionally, self-reported surveys and interview data pose risks of bias, such as social desirability and selective recall. (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2018). These issues were addressed by triangulating data from staff and students, integrating both quantitative and qualitative methods, and relating the findings to broader scholarship (e.g., Materu, 2007; Tikly, 2011; Altbach, Reisberg and Rumbley, 2009). However, the results should be viewed cautiously as context-specific insights that can inform understanding but may not be universally applicable to all Nigerian public tertiary Institutions.

7.6.1 Final Reflections and Areas for Future Research

This study presents a comprehensive, evidence-based examination of the challenges and opportunities in Nigeria's higher education sector. It provides new insights into how policy and

funding influence quality, emphasising that quality depends on how well these elements align with institutional needs and national goals. The analysis suggests that high-quality outcomes emerge not only from policy design or resource allocation alone, but also from the interaction of these factors within specific institutional settings. At the same time, the study opens several important avenues for future research.

First, longitudinal studies are essential. This study employed a cross-sectional design, capturing perceptions at a single point in time. Future research could track changes in funding flows, policy implementation, and stakeholder perceptions over several years. Such research would better identify causal mechanisms and help distinguish short-term reactions from long-term trends.

Second, comparative studies across regions and types of Institutions are necessary. This research concentrated on two Federal Colleges of Education within a single geopolitical zone. Future research could include other public Institutions such as polytechnics, state colleges, and universities, as well as private providers. This would help determine whether the funding, policy, and quality relationships identified here are consistent across Nigeria's varied tertiary landscape or if different governance models produce different outcomes.

Third, sectoral comparisons within West Africa and beyond would yield valuable insights. Many African countries face similar challenges such as resource constraints, gaps between policy and practice, and pressures for quality assurance. More comparative analysis could identify best practices, transferable reforms, and context-specific innovations that Nigeria could adopt or adapt.

Fourth, research centred on equity is essential. While this study identified broad patterns among staff and students, it did not examine in detail by gender, socio-economic background, or disability. Future research could investigate how funding and policy alignment (or misalignment) affect different groups of students and staff, particularly those most at risk of exclusion.

Finally, a more detailed evaluation of resource allocation and utilisation within tertiary institutions could offer deeper insights into the link between funding and perceived quality. Future research might, for example, conduct micro-level audits of budgets for labs, libraries,

student support, or professional development, directly connecting these to staff and student perceptions of quality. This approach would identify whether visible, frontline investments enhance confidence in institutional effectiveness and under what conditions these effects are most evident. Such assessments would also strengthen the evidence base for performance based funding models, providing policymakers with concrete data on how specific resource utilisation influences educational outcomes. These future directions address current study limitations and mirror the sector's evolving landscape. They broaden the empirical foundation and support evidence-driven reforms, especially as Nigeria's tertiary institutions, like the recently upgraded Universities of Education, face pressure to demonstrate accountability and quality amid a rapidly changing policy environment.

7.6.2 Reflexive Statement.

This study represents both a professional and a personal journey of learning and discovery for me. My experience as a teacher, student, and education administrator in Nigeria's higher education sector positioned me as both an insider and an outsider in this research. As an insider, my experience with the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) and my previous teaching roles have given me a strong understanding of how funding and policy processes shape institutional realities. At the same time, I remained an outsider to the institutions studied, engaging with them mainly through my professional role and as a student researcher from the University of Staffordshire, United Kingdom.

This dual role demanded continuous awareness and intentional reflexivity to maintain a balance between familiarity and critical research distance. Interacting directly with staff and students at the Colleges of Education exposed me to perspectives that challenged many of my previous assumptions about the links between policy, funding, and quality. This taught me that having system knowledge or familiarity does not necessarily mean understanding the experiences of those living within it. By actively acknowledging how my professional background shaped my interpretations, I approached the data consciously with humility and openness, allowing participants' voices and opinions to guide the collection and analysis. This reflexive approach deepened my understanding of how governance, policy, and educational practice interact in resource-limited settings. It also reinforced my identity as a researcher, capable of bridging policy and practice, insider insights and objective analysis. Overall, this experience has better

prepared me to participate meaningfully in the discussion on improving tertiary education governance and quality in Nigeria and beyond.

7.7 Concluding Statement

This thesis has shown that quality in Nigeria's tertiary education system is shaped not by policy or funding in isolation, but by their interaction. Clear, consistent, and participatory implementation, combined with adequate and transparent funding, offers the most credible path to strengthening teaching, learning, and institutional performance. The study contributes to theory, practice, and policy, leaving a clear message: quality in tertiary education can only be achieved when governance, resources, and accountability are aligned.

In summary, Nigeria stands at a pivotal moment in its long history. The country's higher education system has the potential to play a significant role in promoting national development, fostering innovation, and enhancing global competitiveness. Now is the time to implement reforms, and this will only happen if government leaders, institutional heads, academics, and students all work together to make meaningful changes.

This thesis has demonstrated that the quality of Nigeria's tertiary education system is influenced not only by policy or funding but also by their interaction. Transparent, consistent, and participatory implementation, along with adequate and transparent funding, provides the most credible way to improve teaching, learning, and institutional performance.

The study contributes to theory, practice, and policy, delivering a clear message: quality in tertiary education can only be achieved when governance, resources, and accountability are appropriately aligned.

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APPENDIXES



Participant Consent Form

Project Title: Funding and Policy Implementation as Predictors of Students' and Staff's Perception of Quality Tertiary Education in Nigeria.

The data will be analysed and included in my final research paper or any publication, conference where I will present the findings. I confirm that individual data will be unidentifiable. You can choose to withdraw your participation at any stage before the aggregation of the data for analysis purpose. Please read each statement and tick the box next to it to indicate that you agree with the statements.

I have read the participant information sheet and the nature and purpose of this research have been explained to me.	☐
I understand that my participation in this project is voluntary and that if I change my mind, I can withdraw at any time or stage of the project. I can do this without prejudice and without giving a reason.	☐
I understand that I do not have to answer every question if I do not wish to and I do not have to give any explanation.	☐
I understand that confidentiality will be maintained throughout this project and that I will not be identified in the final report.	☐
I confirm that quotations may be used in the report, provided that the quotations are anonymised and do not reveal my identity.	☐
I confirm I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the project and my participation in it.	☐
I understand that my data will be securely stored in accordance with Staffordshire University protocols and current data protection guidelines.	☐
I confirm that I agree to take part in this research project.	☐
I hereby indicate by ticking the box, that I wish to be interviewed	☐
I agree that the interviews that I take part in may be audio recorded and note-taking during the session	☐

Should I wish to receive a copy of a summary of the study findings I will provide my contact email in the address box below

Participant Name (please print)	
Signature	
Date	
Researcher Name	Adeoye Anike Olufunke

Participant Consent Form

Project Title: Funding and Policy Implementation as Predictors of Students' and Staff's Perception of Quality Tertiary Education in Nigeria.

The data will be analysed and included in my final research paper or any publication, conference where I will present the findings. I confirm that individual data will be unidentifiable. You can choose to withdraw your participation at any stage before the aggregation of the data for analysis purpose. Please read each statement and tick the box next to it to indicate that you agree with the statements.

I have read the participant information sheet and the nature and purpose of this research have been explained to me.	☐
I understand that my participation in this project is voluntary and that if I change my mind, I can withdraw at any time or stage of the project. I can do this without prejudice and without giving a reason.	☐
I understand that I do not have to answer every question if I do not wish to and I do not have to give any explanation.	☐
I understand that confidentiality will be maintained throughout this project and that I will not be identified in the final report.	☐
I confirm that quotations may be used in the report, provided that the quotations are anonymised and do not reveal my identity.	☐
I confirm I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the project and my participation in it.	☐
I understand that my data will be securely stored in accordance with Staffordshire University protocols and current data protection guidelines.	☐
I confirm that I agree to take part in this research project.	☐
I hereby indicate by ticking the box, that I wish to be interviewed	☐
I agree that the interviews that I take part in may be audio recorded and note-taking during the session	☐

Should I wish to receive a copy of a summary of the study findings I will provide my contact email in the address box below

Participant Name (please print)	
Signature	
Date	
Researcher Name	Adeoye Anike Olufunke

Appendix 2- Information Sheet

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS

Title of study: Funding and Policy implementation as Predictors of Students' and Staffs' perception of Quality Tertiary Education in Nigeria.

Invitation Paragraph

I would like to invite you to participate in this research project which forms part of my PhD research. Before you decide whether you want to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what your participation will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear, or if you would like more information.

What is the purpose of the study?

As a PhD student at Staffordshire University, my aim is to undertake research on funding and policy implementation as predictors of students' and Staffs' perception of Quality Tertiary Education in Nigeria. A case study of two selected colleges of Education in South West Nigeria. The central aim of the study is to investigate the perception of staff and students' on funding and policy implementation as its affect the quality tertiary education in the selected institutions in Nigeria.

This project develops research previously completed by other authors and is designed to allow comparisons with their findings.

Why have I been invited to take part?

You have been invited to take part in this study in order to investigate how funding and policy implementation can affect the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria, from the perception of students and staffs in the selected tertiary institutions. The result of this study will not be used to determine your performance or promotion in the institution but it would be strictly used for research purpose. The result of this research, cannot be traced to any particular participant.

Taking part in this research is voluntary and you can withdraw at any time, without consequence up until the point where your data is processed (when it will be anonymised with that of other participants).

What will happen if I take part?

You will be inform on the processes involved in the research, you will be given questionnaires to fill or may be interviewed as the case may be on a number of carefully selected questions to determine the perception of students and staff on funding and policy implementation as its affects the quality of tertiary education in your Institution. The questionnaire and interview will each have a session that lasts approximately 30 minutes for the questionnaire and 20 minutes for the interview. You will not be identified by name when the information is collected and analysed or in any findings that comes out from the study. Your participation in this study is voluntary, and you may choose to withdraw your

Appendix 3– Questionnaire

Questionnaire.

Funding and Policy Implementation as Predictors of Staff Perception of Quality Tertiary Education.

Dear Respondent,

This questionnaire is specifically designed to investigate funding and policy implementation as predictors of staff and students' perception of quality tertiary education in Nigeria. Your kind, honest and objective responses, which shall be treated with a high sense of confidentiality, are essential for this research's success. Thank you for your anticipated co-operation.

SECTION A-

1.1 Demographic Data of Respondents

1. Name of Institution.....

2. Gender: Male ☐ Female ☐

3. Age: 21-25 ☐ 26-30 ☐ 31- 35 ☐ 36- 40 ☐ 41- 45 ☐ 46-50 ☐ 51- 55 ☐ 56 - 60 ☐ 61- 65+ ☐

4. Area of Discipline: ☐ Education ☐ Social Science ☐ Language { } Science ☐ Technology ☐ Art ☐ others (specify).....

5. Rank/ Level. Managerial Level ☐ Senior Level ☐

6. Educational Qualification: B.Ed. ☐ M.Sc. / M.Ed. /M.A. ☐ Ph.D. ☐

7. Year of experience of working in higher education: 5-8 years ☐ 8-10years ☐ 10-12 years ☐ above 15 years

SECTION B

1.2 Staff perceptions of the quality of Tertiary Education in Nigeria

Please indicate what you consider your perceptions of the quality of Tertiary Education in Nigeria based on the following scales:

SA	Strongly Agreed
A	Agreed
D	Disagree
SD	Strongly Disagree

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD
1	The curriculum being implemented in my college can lead to the achievement of the Nigeria National Development goals				
2	Most of the lecturers teaching in the College are qualified and competent				
3	My college has quality classrooms, laboratory, and library facilities				
4	The College makes provision for students' feedback on issues that affect them				
5	Students in the college receive quality and standard instruction				
6	Students' activities are democratized as students are allowed to lead themselves and participate in the decision-making process in the College				
7	Reports from employers indicate that ex-students of the College perform well in their jobs				
8	Reports from the Universities where the ex-students of the College have gone for their further studies (Master, PhD) indicate high academic performance				
9	The global ranking of Nigeria's Tertiary institutions by Webometrics and other reputable international organisations is a true reflection of the state of Nigeria's tertiary institutions.				

SECTION C

1.3 Administrative policy practices in tertiary institutions in Nigeria and how they affect the quality of Tertiary Education

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD
1	The College has a Governing Council that formulates policies for the good governance of the College				

2	The College implements the National Curriculum framework on quality Teacher Education as stipulated in the National Policy on Education				
3	The College implements the student-centered teaching method as stipulated in the National Policy on Education				
4	The College abides by its carrying capacity policy as stipulated by Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) by having a proportionate student teacher ratio				
5	The College has adequate procurement and maintenance policies as stipulated in the Procurement Act on the maintenance of facilities in the College				
6	The College democratises students' Union activities and governance that allows students to freely choose their leaders and give feedback to the Management on issues that affect the students.				
7	The College's promotion and disciplinary procedures follow the National policy as				

SECTION D

1.4 Staff perception of Funding as predictors of Quality Tertiary Education in Nigeria

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD
1	The College budget is made open, and stakeholders have the opportunity to contribute to its preparation				

2	The College is being run effectively because there are enough financial resources to run the College				
3	The major source of revenue for the College is mainly from the government's yearly allocation				
4	The majority of facilities in the College in the last 10 years are financed by Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND)				
5	Lecturers in the College have access to research grants and staff development training financed by TETFund				
6	Facilities in the College are well maintained because there are enough resources				
7	The College generates funds through Internally Generated sources (tuition, donation and business activities) to fund its activities				
8	Nigeria's Government should grant Colleges the financial autonomy to generate funds and manage the fund how they deem fit				
9	Nigeria's Government has the financial power to solely finance education at the tertiary education level without allowing Colleges to charge tuition.				
10	Students should be made to pay tuition if they must receive quality tertiary education				
11	Inadequate funding is one of the factors that are responsible for the poor global ranking of Nigeria's tertiary institutions.				

(STUDENTS)

Funding and Policy Implementation as Predictors of Student's Perception of Quality Tertiary Education

Dear Respondent,

This questionnaire is specifically designed to investigate funding and policy implementation as predictors of staff and students' perception of quality tertiary education in Nigeria. Your honest and objective responses which shall be treated with a high sense of confidentiality are essentially needed for the success of this research.

Thank you for your anticipated co-operation.

SECTION A- Demographic Data of Respondents

1. Name of Institution.....
2. Faculty:
3. Department:
4. Level:.....
5. Gender: Male []Female[]
6. Age: 18-22 [] 23-27 [] 28-32 [] 33- 37 [] 38-42 [] 42 and above

SECTION B:

- 1.1 Students' perceptions of the quality of Tertiary Education in Nigeria

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD
1	The curriculum implemented in my college can lead to the achievement of the Nigeria National Development goals.				
2	Most of the lecturers teaching me in the College are qualified and competent				
3	My college has adequate classrooms, laboratory, and library facilities				
4	The College makes provision for students' feedback on issues that affect them				
5	Students in the college receive quality and standard instruction				
6	Students' activities are democratized as students are allowed to lead themselves and participate in the decision-making process in the College				
7	I am happy to see that a report from companies shows that former students of the College do a good job in their careers.				
8	Reports from the Universities where the exstudents of the College have gone for their further studies (Master, PhD) indicate the high academic performance				

SECTION C:

1.2 Administrative policy practices in tertiary institutions in Nigeria and how they affect the quality of Tertiary Education

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD
1	The College's teaching curriculum is aligned with the National Curriculum Framework for Quality Teacher Education as stated in the National Policy on Education.				
3	Lecturers use the student-centered teaching method as stipulated in the National Policy of Education				

4	The student-teacher ratio is suitable and promotes effective instruction in the classroom				
5	The facilities in the College are well maintained				
6	The College democratizes students' Union activities and governance allowing students to freely choose their leaders and give feedback to the Management on issues that affect the students				
7	The College's students' disciplinary procedures follow due process with students' representatives in the panel				
8	The admission of students follows merit and other conditions stipulated by the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB)				
9	I am aware that some good policies will impact positively on the students that the College refuses to implement				
10	Poor Policy implementation is one of the factors that are responsible for the poor global ranking of Nigeria's tertiary institutions.				

Section D

1.4 Students' Perception of Funding as predictors of Quality Tertiary Education in Nigeria

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD
1	The College budget is made open, and students have the opportunity to contribute to its preparation				
2	The majority of facilities in the College in the last 10 years are built by Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND)				

3	The facilities in the college are well maintained				
4	If properly managed, student fees are sufficient to keep the College's facilities in good condition and to run it efficiently.				
5	Government should solely finance education without students paying tuition				
6	Students should be made to pay tuition if they must receive quality tertiary education				
7	Inadequate Funding is one of the factors that are responsible for the poor global ranking of Nigeria's tertiary institutions				

If you would like to be Interviewed kindly contact me through this email address;
 anikeolufunke.adeoye@research.staffs.ac.uk

Semi-Structure Interview Schedule for Staff

Project Title: Exploring the factors that affect staff and students' perception of quality tertiary education in Nigeria focusing on Funding and Policy Implementation

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed.

Introduction to the research:

- The central aim of this study is to investigate the perception of staff and students in tertiary institutions in Nigeria on the issues of funding and policy implementation as they affect the quality of education in the institutions.
- The interview should take around 20 minutes.
- You are free to withdraw from the interview at any point if you wish to.
- If you have any questions, before, during or after the interview please ask.
- To help me with my notes, and so that I can fully concentrate on what it is you are saying, is it acceptable to record our conversation?
- Please note that the information provided will be used only for research purposes and will be kept confidential. **Background information**
 1. How long have you been employed by the Institution?
 2. What is your academic qualification?
 3. What is your level/rank?

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Name of Institution:

Sex: Male [] Female []

Age: 21-20[], 31-40[], 41-51[], 61 and above [] Category

of Staff: Academic Staff [] Non-Academic Staff []

A. Quality of Tertiary Education

- 1 From your perspective, would you say the quality of Education in colleges of education in Nigeria is high or low?
- 2 In your opinion, what are the indicators of quality tertiary education in Nigeria?
- 3 What are the challenges of achieving quality education in tertiary education in Nigeria?
- 4 In your opinion, what are your recommendations on how these challenges could be overcome?
- 5 In your view, what do you consider as the cause for the low ranking of Nigeria's tertiary institutions among global institutions as stated on the Webometrics?

B. Policy Implementation in Tertiary Institutions

1. Have you heard about the **National Policy on Education in Nigeria**?
2. What do you understand about the Nation Policy on Education in Nigeria, 6th edition, 2013?
3. What particular teaching conditions do you think are required for the effective running of tertiary institutions/colleges of Education?
4. In your opinion, what do you think are the reasons for policy somersault in Nigeria vis-a-vis Colleges of Education?

C. Funding in Tertiary Institutions

1. In your opinion, what is the importance of funding tertiary education in Nigeria?

1. What is your thought about the procedure for budget preparation in Colleges of Education?
2. What do you understand about the criteria for fund allocation to Colleges of Education by the Nigerian government?
3. In what ways do you think financial autonomy impact positively or impede the quality of instruction in tertiary institutions?
4. Are you aware of the available sources of funding to tertiary institutions in Nigeria?

A. Interaction Effect of Quality, Policy, and Funding

1. In your opinion, how does policy implementation affect the quality of tertiary education?
2. How does funding affect the quality of tertiary education/Colleges of Education in Nigeria?
3. In what ways do policy and funding impact the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria?

Semi-Structure Interview Schedule

For Students

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Name of Institution:

Sex: Male [] Female []

Age:

Category of Staff: Full Time [] Part-Time []

Level:

Students

A. Quality of Tertiary Education

1. From your perspective, would you say the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria is high or low?
2. In your own opinion, what are the factors that promote quality tertiary education?
3. What do you think are the challenges of achieving quality instruction in this institution?
4. Can you recommend how these challenges could be overcome?

Nigeria's tertiary institutions are currently ranked below 2000 out of 30,000 world universities ranking, In your own opinion, what do you consider as the reasons for the poor

1. ranking of the Nigerian tertiary institutions among global institutions

A. Policy Implementation in Tertiary Education

1. As a student, can you explain your understanding of the National Policy on Education?
2. What conditions do you think are required for the effective running of tertiary institutions/Colleges of Education?

B. Funding of Tertiary Education

1. In your own opinion, what is the importance of funding for tertiary education/Colleges of Education in Nigeria?
2. How do you think financial autonomy would impact positively or impedes the quality of instruction in Colleges of Education?
3. Are you aware of the available sources of funding available to Colleges of Education in Nigeria?

C. Interactive effect of Quality, Policy, and Funding

1. From your view, how does implementation impact the quality of tertiary education/Colleges of Education?
2. In what ways do you think funding affects the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria?
3. In your opinion, what impact do policy implementation and adequate funding have on quality tertiary education/Colleges of Education?

Appendix 4

Feedback Questionnaire

Thank you for sacrificing your time to participate in my research pilot study. Your feedback on this questionnaire is very important; this would help to make necessary improvements in the main data collection.

Kindly tick (✓) the correct box for each question and answer the open-ended questions. If you need clarification and further inquiry, please you can contact me through my email anikeolufunke.adeoye@research.staffs.ac.uk

1. How long did it take you to complete the questionnaire? 35 to 40 Minutes

2. What do you think of the questionnaire's length?

Right	✓
Too short	
Too long	

3. What do you think about the questions' clarity?

Poor	
Satisfactory	
Good	
Very good	✓

4. Do you understand the concept "Nigeria National policy on Education"?

Yes	✓
No	

If yes, please provide details: It is a guideline for all levels of education in Nigeria

5. Did you encounter any difficulties filling out the questionnaires?

Yes	
No	✓

Thank you.

Appendix 5- codes generated

1. Code: Quality of tertiary education

- "For me, it neither high nor low I'll rather say its average."
- "In terms of what we are being taught in college, I'll say the content is high because it's rich."
- "In terms of facility and comparison with what is obtainable in some other country, it is low."
- "The infrastructure such as internet, electricity, classroom, good roads, etc., is very low."

- "The courses we take are quite good, which will make it high."
 - "The content prepares you to be able to cope and perform wherever you find yourself."
 - "The courses I took during my NCE is still very valid and helping me a lot now."
2. Code: Factors promoting quality tertiary education
 - "The curriculum content if it is valid for what is obtainable and relevant to the needs of the society."
 - "Available funding if it's sufficient to provide the necessary resources needed to achieve the aim of education."
 - "Management of the resources and following the laid down guidelines of educational policy."
 3. Code: Challenges of achieving quality instruction
 - "Strike action by lecturers all the time."
 - "Basic amenities are not available such as internet, electricity, favouritism, political instability, management issues."
 4. Code: Overcoming challenges
 - "Government should address strike issues by paying salaries and allowances of staff adequately to curb strike actions."
 - "Government should also fund education more by providing necessary amenities like internet, bursaries for students, monitoring the projects, etc."
 5. Code: Reasons for poor ranking of Nigerian tertiary institutions
 - "Lacking research which bores down to funding of the education sector."
 - "If there is enough funding to sponsor research, Nigeria's educational system will be more valued and climb up the ladder."
 6. Code: National Policy on Education
 - "It is a book that states the guidelines to run each level of education."
 - "Objectives of what to be achieved at each education level is stated and how it should be run by the management or head of such school level."
 7. Code: Conditions for effective running of tertiary institutions/Colleges of Education
 - "Job security through regular payment of salaries."
 - "Conducive environment for learning such as provision of facilities needed for education."
 8. Code: Importance of funding for tertiary education/Colleges of Education
 - "Funding the tertiary education will help to improve the quality of education."
 - "There will be a conducive environment for learning."
 - "People will not be leaving the country for greener pastures."
 9. Code: Financial autonomy and quality of instruction in Colleges of Education
 - "Management of the college will be able to address any of their needs on time."
 - "Salaries will be paid regularly, resources needed will be provided as at when due."
 - "If not checked, it can lead to corruption due to mismanagement."
 10. Code: Sources of funding available to Colleges of Education

"Funding by the government, by private organization donations, businesses run by the College, and through school fees payment by students and TETFund."
 11. Code: Impact of policy on quality of tertiary education/Colleges of Education
 - "Policy will give a guide on how the colleges will be run effectively."
 - "If implemented, it will help achieve the objectives of education that will lead to improvement in quality of learning and education generally."
 12. Code: Impact of funding on quality of tertiary education in Nigeria
 - "Funding is the main problem causing what we are currently experiencing in the country."

- "Strike actions are caused by non-payment of salary and allowances."
 - "Lack of money to fund research is causing low ranking of Nigeria universities."
 - "Lack of fund is causing inadequate resources."
13. Code: Impact of policy and funding on quality tertiary education/Colleges of Education
- "Both of them will lead to improvement of quality education."
 - "Policy is the rules to follow to achieve quality education."
 - "Funding will provide the tools or resources that will help in achieving quality."

These initial codes represent the key concepts and themes discussed in the interview transcript. Please note that these codes are not exhaustive, and further analysis may require refining and expanding the codes as more insights are gained from the data.

Certainly! Here are additional detailed and descriptive codes, along with example quotes from the interview transcript:

14. Code: Conducive learning environment

- "Provision of basic amenities such as internet, electricity, and good infrastructure."
- "Availability of well-equipped classrooms and facilities."
- "Ensuring a favourable atmosphere for learning free from favouritism and political instability."

Quotes:

- "To promote quality tertiary education, it is important to provide a conducive learning environment with basic amenities such as internet, electricity, and good infrastructure."
- "Having well-equipped classrooms and facilities contributes to creating a conducive learning environment."
- "Creating a favourable atmosphere for learning, free from favouritism and political instability, is crucial."

15. Code: Staff welfare and job security

- "Regular payment of salaries and allowances to lecturers and staff."
- "Ensuring job security and stability for faculty and staff members." Quotes:

- "One condition for the effective running of tertiary institutions is the regular payment of salaries and allowances to lecturers and staff, ensuring their welfare."
- "Job security and stability are important to create a conducive environment for quality instruction."

16. Code: Research and innovation

- "Promotion of research activities within the tertiary institutions."
- "Encouraging innovation and creativity among faculty and students."
- "Investment in research infrastructure and resources." Quotes:

- "Promoting research activities within tertiary institutions is crucial for enhancing the quality of education."
- "Encouraging innovation and creativity among faculty and students contributes to the overall quality of instruction."
- "Investing in research infrastructure and resources is essential to foster research and innovation."

17. Code: Collaboration and partnerships

- "Establishing collaborations with other educational institutions and industry partners."
- "Encouraging international collaborations and exchange programs." Quotes:
- "Collaborating with other educational institutions and industry partners enhances the quality of tertiary education."
- "Promoting international collaborations and exchange programs contributes to the global perspective and quality of instruction."

18. Code: Transparent and effective management

- "Adherence to educational policies and guidelines."
- "Efficient management practices in resource allocation and utilization." • "Transparency in decision-making processes." Quotes:
- "Adhering to educational policies and guidelines ensures effective management and quality education."
- "Efficient management practices in resource allocation and utilization contribute to the overall quality of instruction."

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"Transparency in decision-making processes fosters trust and improves the quality of tertiary education."

These additional codes provide more detailed and descriptive aspects related to the interview transcript. The quotes provided demonstrate how each code can be applied to specific sentences or parts of sentences in the text.

19. Code: Low Quality of Education in Nigeria

- Description: Indicating the perception of the interviewee about the low quality of education in Nigeria.
- Example quote: "I would say the quality of education in Nigeria is very low. You can see what is going on around us here, the hopeless look tattered, there is no electricity."

20. Code: Indicators of Quality Tertiary Education

- Description: Identifying indicators or factors that determine the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria.
- Example quote: "I need to see good facilities in place: electricity, lecture halls, and good internet facilities. Staff training and development. Good access road... student-teacher ratio."

21. Code: Funding as a Challenge

- Description: Highlighting funding as a major challenge in achieving quality education.
- Example quote: "The basic challenge of achieving quality tertiary education in Nigeria is corruption... the allocation they give through the education sector is too low."

22. Code: Recommendations for Overcoming Challenges

- Description: Suggestions provided by the interviewee on how to overcome the challenges in tertiary education.
- Example quote: "Proper funding of tertiary institutions... allocate adequate funds... proper management of resources... implementation of government policies... staff salaries and allowances should be paid regularly."

23. Code: Causes of Low Ranking of Nigerian Tertiary Institutions

- Description: Identifying the reasons behind the low ranking of Nigerian tertiary institutions.
- Example quote: "The basic thing is funding... Bad infrastructure such as internet facilities."

24. Code: National Policy on Education

- Description: References to the National Policy on Education and its understanding.
- Example quote: "It's the official book that stipulates the rules and regulations that guide the affairs of the Nigeria educational system from primary to the tertiary institution level."

25. Code: Teaching Conditions for Effective Institutions

- Description: Mentioning the necessary teaching conditions for the effective running of tertiary institutions.
- Example quote: "Conducive teaching and learning conditions... provision of required basic facilities... teacher-student ratio... staff welfare."

26. Code: Importance of Funding for Tertiary Education

- Description: Expressing the significance of funding for tertiary education in Nigeria.

- Example quote: "Funding is the bedrock... without funding, there is no institution of learning... all needed resources can be made available."
27. Code: Financial Autonomy and Instruction Quality
- Description: Exploring the impact of financial autonomy on the quality of instruction in tertiary institutions.
 - Example quote: "Financial autonomy will help the college make faster decisions and get things done in time... can be dangerous if there are no measures to control it, can lead to the mismanagement of funds."
28. Code: Sources of Funding for Tertiary Institutions
- Description: Identifying various sources of funding available to tertiary institutions.
 - Example quote: "Funding from the government, through government allocations, from internally generated revenue, from the private sector, from governmental agencies like TETFUND, from donations."
29. Code: Interactive Effect of Quality, Policy, and Funding
- Description: Examining the interplay between quality, policy, and funding in tertiary education.
 - Example quote: "Policy implementation may determine the quality of education... funding covers all monetary aspects... they work hand in hand for the realization of any quality educational objectives."

Please note that these initial codes are based on the provided text and may need to be further refined or expanded upon during the coding process.

30. Code: Mismanagement of Resources
- Description: Highlighting the issue of mismanagement of resources in tertiary education.
 - Example quote: "Talk about management of the resources... if it's not politicised... proper management of all these resources should be put in place."
31. Code: Overcrowded Lecture Rooms
- Description: Noting the problem of overcrowded lecture rooms in tertiary institutions.
 - Example quote: "The whole lecture rooms are overcrowded... we have over 200 students to just two lecturers taking the course."
32. Code: Lack of Implementation of Policies
- Description: Highlighting the lack of implementation of policies in tertiary education.
 - Example quote: "Our management and policymakers, they are not being sincere... we already have good policy on the ground, but they're not being put to use."
33. Code: Corruption in Education Sector
- Description: Identifying corruption as a challenge in the education sector.
 - Example quote: "The basic challenge of achieving quality tertiary education in Nigeria is corruption... Nigeria's problem is not policy, we already have good policy on the ground, are they being put to use?"
34. Code: Impact of Policy Somersault
- Description: Exploring the effects of policy somersault on colleges of education.
 - Example quote: "Government should put the right peg in the right hole... ensuring the policies are effected and anyone found not performing should be punished."
35. Code: Importance of Staff Training and Development

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- Description: Recognising the significance of staff training and development for quality education.
Example quote: "Staff training and development... providing adequate training facilities."
- 36. Code: Role of Government in Funding
 - Description: Discussing the role of the government in funding tertiary education.
 - Example quote: "Until the government calls the politicians and gives priority to funding of education... funding is essential, it is vital."
- 37. Code: Impact of Good Infrastructure
 - Description: Exploring the positive impact of good infrastructure on the quality of education.
 - Example quote: "Good facilities in place... electricity, lecture halls, good internet facility... the provision of required basic facilities."
- 38. Code: Role of Publication and Research
 - Description: Highlighting the importance of publication and research in improving the quality of education.
 - Example quote: "Publication of journals, research, etc., will put our country in the global eye."

These additional codes capture various aspects related to quality of tertiary education, challenges, policies, funding, infrastructure, and management. Please note that these codes are generated based on the provided text, and further refinement may be necessary during the coding process.

- 39. Code: Dilapidated Infrastructure and Lack of Facilities
 - Description: Refers to the deteriorated condition of infrastructure and the absence of necessary facilities in tertiary institutions.
 - Example quote: "The hopeless look, tattered... there is no electricity... look at the way you are fanning yourself. Is that our college of education?... I need to see good facilities in place, electricity, lecture halls, good internet facility."
- 40. Code: Discontentment among Staff and Students

Description: Represents the dissatisfaction and unhappiness experienced by both staff and students in tertiary education.

 - Example quote: "The staff are not happy; the students are not happy... the staff salaries and allowances should be paid regularly."
- 41. Code: Overburdened Classrooms and High Student-to-Teacher Ratio
 - Description: Signifies the issue of overcrowded classrooms and the imbalance between the number of students and teachers.
 - Example quote: "The whole lecture rooms are overcrowded... we have over 200 students to just two lecturers taking the course."
- 42. Code: Financial Constraints and Inadequate Funding
 - Description: Indicates the financial challenges and insufficient funding that hinder the quality of tertiary education.
 - Example quote: "The basic challenges of achieving quality tertiary education in Nigeria is corruption... funding is essential, it is vital."
- 43. Code: Ineffective Policy Implementation and Corruption
 - Description: Highlights the lack of proper policy implementation and the pervasive issue of corruption in the education sector.

- Example quote: "Our management and policymakers, they are not being sincere... Nigeria's problem is not policy... they're not being put to use... corruption... the government needs to put proper management of all these resources in place."
44. Code: Importance of Adequate Staff Training and Development
- Description: Emphasizes the significance of providing sufficient training and development opportunities for staff members.
 - Example quote: "Staff training and development... ensuring implementation... providing adequate training facilities."
45. Code: Significance of Funding for Quality Education
- Description: Highlights the crucial role of adequate funding in ensuring quality education.
 - Example quote: "Funding is the bedrock... It's from funding that all needed resources can be made available... without funding, there is no institution of learning."
46. Code: Positive Impact of Good Governance and Policy Consistency
- Description: Explores the positive influence of effective governance and consistent policy implementation on the quality of education.
 - Example quote: "Government should put the right peg in the right hole... ensuring policies are effected... commitment by providing basic facilities... they work hand in hand for the realization of any quality educational objectives."
47. Code: Need for Research and Global Recognition
- Description: Highlights the importance of research activities and international recognition in enhancing the quality of tertiary education.
 - Example quote: "Publication of journals, research, etc., will put our country in the global eye... determining quality education... will determine the kind of student or even staff that is employed into the system."
48. Code: Insufficient Access to Information and Communication Technology (ICT)
- Description: Refers to the lack of proper access to and utilization of information and communication technology resources in tertiary education.
 - Example quote: "Bad infrastructure such as internet facilities... provision of good internet facility."
49. Code: Inadequate Road Infrastructure and Transportation Services
- Description: Denotes the lack of proper road infrastructure and transportation services, affecting the accessibility and convenience of tertiary institutions.
 - Example quote: "Good access road... provision of bursaries for students."
50. Code: Mismanagement of Resources and Lack of Accountability
- Description: Highlights the issue of mismanagement of resources and the absence of accountability in the education sector.
 - Example quote: "Proper management of the resources should be ensured... ensuring implementation... proper monitoring of projects."
51. Code: Need for Consistent Policy Implementation and Political Will
- Description: Emphasises the importance of consistent policy implementation and strong political will to overcome challenges in tertiary education.
 - Example quote: "Government should put the right peg in the right hole... ensuring policies are enforced... anyone found not performing should be punished."
52. Code: Importance of Alumni and Private Sector Support
- Description: Highlights the significance of support from alumni and the private sector in enhancing the quality of tertiary education.

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- Example quote: "Funding from the private sector, from alumni donations... from programs organised."
- 53. Code: Student Admission Qualifications and Standards
 - Description: Relates to the importance of setting appropriate admission qualifications and maintaining educational standards in tertiary institutions.
 - Example quote: "The right policy, if implemented properly, will determine the kind of student... employed into the system."
- 54. Code: Need for Transparent and Accountable Budget Preparation
 - Description: Indicates the importance of transparent and accountable processes for budget preparation in tertiary institutions.
 - Example quote: "Circular sent to the department to list their needs for the year... meeting held... deliberate on it... sent to the Ministry of Education... Provost called to the National assembly for defence."
- 55. Code: Role of Financial Autonomy in Decision-Making
 - Description: Explores the impact of financial autonomy on the ability of tertiary institutions to make decisions and execute plans effectively.
 - Example quote: "Financial autonomy will help the college to make faster decisions and get things done in time."
- 56. Code: Importance of Staff Welfare and Regular Payment
 - Description: Highlights the significance of prioritising staff welfare and ensuring timely payment of salaries and allowances in tertiary education.
 - Example quote: "Paying allowances and dues regularly... staff salaries and allowances should be paid regularly."
- 57. Code: Influence of Quality Education on Global Recognition
 - Description: Explores how the provision of quality education can contribute to global recognition and reputation for tertiary institutions.
 - Example quote: "Publication of journals, research, etc., will put our country in the global eye."
- 58. Code: Insufficient Infrastructure and Facilities
 - Description: Refers to the inadequate availability and quality of physical infrastructure and facilities in tertiary education institutions.
 - Example quote: "The whole lecture rooms are overcrowded... provision of good facilities in place, electricity, lecture hall."
- 59. Code: Limited Access to Information and Communication Technology (ICT)
 - Description: Denotes the lack of proper access to and utilisation of information and communication technology resources in tertiary education.
 - Example quote: "Bad infrastructure, such as internet facilities... provision of good internet facilities."
- 60. Code: Inadequate Funding and Financial Resources
 - Description: Highlights the lack of sufficient financial resources allocated to tertiary education institutions, leading to various challenges.
 - Example quote: "The basic challenges of achieving quality tertiary education in Nigeria is corruption... until the government calls the politician and gives priority to funding of education... proper management of all these resources in place."
- 61. Code: Corruption and Mismanagement of Resources

- Description: Focuses on the presence of corruption and mismanagement of resources, hindering the achievement of quality tertiary education.
 - Example quote: "The basic challenges of achieving quality tertiary education in Nigeria is corruption... until the government calls the politician and gives priority to funding of education... proper management of all these resources in place."
62. Code: Inadequate Staffing and Teacher-Student Ratio
- Description: Indicates the insufficient number of qualified staff members and the imbalanced teacher-student ratio in tertiary education institutions.
 - Example quote: "We have over 200 students to just two lecturers... student-teacher ratio."
63. Code: Policy Ineffectiveness and Lack of Implementation
- Description: Refers to the failure in implementing and effectively enforcing policies and regulations in the tertiary education system.
 - Example quote: "Nigeria's problem is not policy... we already have good policy on the ground, but they are not being put to use... they are not implemented."
64. Code: Importance of Alumni and Private Sector Engagement
- Description: Emphasises the significance of involvement and support from alumni and the private sector in improving the quality of tertiary education.
 - Example quote: "Funding from the private sector, from alumni donations... and from programs organised."
65. Code: Need for Transparent and Accountable Budget Allocation
- Description: Highlights the necessity of transparent and accountable processes for budget allocation in tertiary education institutions.
 - Example quote: "Circular sent to the department to list their needs for the year... meeting held... deliberate on it... sent to the Ministry of Education... Provost called to the National assembly for defence."
66. Code: Insufficient Student Support Services
- Description: Denotes the lack of adequate support services for students, such as counselling, career guidance, and academic assistance.
 - Example quote: "Provision of bursaries for students... proper monitoring of projects on staffs."
67. Code: Impact of Quality Education on Global Recognition
- Description: Explores how the provision of quality education can contribute to global recognition and reputation for tertiary institutions.
 - Example quote: "Publication of journals, research, etc., will put our country in the global eye."

Promotion of research activities within the tertiary institutions."

- "Encouraging innovation and creativity among faculty and students."
- "Investment in research infrastructure and resources." Quotes:

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- "Promoting research activities within tertiary institutions is crucial for enhancing the quality of education."
- "Encouraging innovation and creativity among faculty and students contributes to the overall quality of instruction."
- "Investing in research infrastructure and resources is essential to foster research and innovation."

APPENDIX 5

Ethical Approval Confirmation Letter



ETHICAL APPROVAL FEEDBACK

Researcher name:	Anike Adeoye
Title of Study:	SU_22_227 (Amendment of SU_21_187) 'Funding And Policy Implementation as Predictors Of Students' and Staffs' Perception of Quality Tertiary Education in Nigeria.'
Status of approval:	Amendment Approved

Thank you for your correspondence requesting approval of a minor amendment to your Application for Ethical Approval SU_21_187. Please remember that you cannot use participants who take part in the pilot study in your main study. Please discuss the participants for your pilot study with your supervisory team before undertaking it.

Your amended application is approved. We wish you well with your research.

Action now needed:

Your amendment has now been approved by the Ethics Panel.

You should note that any divergence from the approved procedures and research method will invalidate any insurance and liability cover from the University. You should, therefore, notify the Panel in writing of any significant divergence from this approved proposal. This approval is only valid for as long as you are registered as a student at the University.

You should arrange to meet with your supervisor for support during the process of completing your study and writing your dissertation.

When your study is complete, please send the ethics committee an end of study report. A template can be found on the ethics BlackBoard site

Signed:

Date: 23.01.2023

Dr. Sharon Inglis

Chair of the Institute of Education Ethics Panel